

IDH2930: Race, Culture, and Algorithms

Spring 2025

Tuesday (10:40 AM - 11:30 AM)

Instructor information

Instructor

Kevin C. Winstead

Email

KWinstead@ufl.edu

Office location & hours

1012 Turlington Hall
2:00 pm-3:00 pm Tues Thurs
<https://cal.com/kcwins>

Description

This course takes a critical look at the ways race and gender shape the uses and design of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Beginning from the understanding that ICTs have become part of our social infrastructure, the readings for this course have been selected to encourage reflection on how information technologies are mediated by culture; that is, how everyday digital interactions are configured or approached by racial groups, with men, and with women.

Using prominent texts of Black Information Technology, this course strengthens analytical skills by asking you to interrogate the assumptions behind technology's promises of efficiency, progress, and post-racialism – what are the norms and values embodied within the artifacts we use every day?

Although the readings and our discussions will focus mainly on the Internet, it is important to remember that information technology is much more than simply the assemblage of hardware, software, practices, and people that make up our experience of the Internet.

Honors Course

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Under Campus / Academic Resources (or another relevant section), include the Honors Program contact information:

Honors Program, 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519

Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu

Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft

Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>

Objectives

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and analyze the key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

These general education objectives will be accomplished by:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of racialized groups with technology, including their social, cultural, political, and economic relationships and the ways in which they use technology for joy and resistance.
2. Critically analyze the cultural construction of race in science, technology, and in everyday life.
3. Critically evaluate the literature concerning debates of race, technology, and science
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the major shifts in research approaches to technology, science & identity over time.
5. Formulate how science/tech/engineering construct racial difference and how the existence of racial difference influenced the construction of scientific knowledge. The technology of race.
6. Develop a substantive project that contributes to a comparative analysis of some aspect of social movement media, grounded in a concrete movement case and linked to the social movement studies literature. Final projects may take the form of a paper and / or a research tool.

Class Format and Expectations

The class will consist of semi-structured lectures, discussions based on the assigned readings, and learning activities. Dialogue is my preferred mode of instruction, so interactions (class or online) between you, me, and your classmates are the key to getting a good grade.

As a student in this class, you are expected to:

- Bring an open mind and critical perspective to the course materials and class discussions (ASK QUESTIONS)
- Be thoughtful and **Civil** to classmates and instructor.
- Attend Class: Attendance is not optional. Absences due to university-sanctioned excuses will not result in a letter grade reduction. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> (<https://shcc.ufl.edu/forms-records/excuse-notes/>). "The university recognizes the right of the instructor to ... require documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class."
- read the assigned readings **BEFORE** class, not during
- Food is permitted. Bring snacks if needed.
- Turn in all assignments
- Check CANVAS/PERUSALL regularly.
- post required feedback to the class by the agreed-upon deadline
- Complete assignments in a timely fashion

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (<https://it.ufl.edu/helpdesk/>)

- (352) 392-HELP (4357)
- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- Walk-in: The Hub, 1765 Stadium Road

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Accessibility and Special Needs

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Please note that I am a mandated reporter and am legally obligated to report any sexual violence reported to me. The University of Florida offers confidential support for sexual or relationship violence: <https://police.ufl.edu/divisions/behavioral-services/office-of-victim-services/resources-for-victims/>

University of Florida Honor Code

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. UF’s Conduct Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

AI Use Policy

AI-generated content for this class refers to text generated by artificial intelligence in response to your prompting. Students are allowed to use AI-generated text summaries of required readings. Students are NOT ALLOWED to use AI-generated content in their discussion posts or reply posts. Use of AI-generated content in discussion and reply posts is considered to be in violation of UF’s Academic Conduct policy.

UF Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit U.F. Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

U.F. Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road,

Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the U.F. Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [U.F. Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via email at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

Student Assignments & Grading

Reading Discussion Leader	20%
Reflections Blog	20%
Perusall Reading & Annotations	50%
Discussion Responses	10%

Assignments

The course grade will be based on the following elements:

Reading Discussion Leader & Questions	<p>You are required to lead two discussions on a reading of your choice. There are multiple aspects to this assignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating a detailed PowerPoint or Recording a lecture. You must provide an analysis of the arguments made in your assigned reading. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Post your analysis of the assigned week to CANVAS On Monday of the appropriate Week. (This means you must work in advance) 2. In class, lead the discussion by, if possible, offering a (brief) media example that highlights an element or argument found in the reading <p>All discussion leaders must present THREE discussion questions with their analysis.</p> <p>Post your discussion questions to CANVAS of the assigned week for the appropriate reading.</p>	20%
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	<p>Your discussion question can/should be based on current (or recently completed) readings.</p> <p>All Discussion Questions should be posted by 4:30 pm of the Monday of your presentation Week. Late submissions will result in instructor led questions and partial credit for the student.</p>	
Discussion Responses	<p>All discussion responses must be posted on Monday before the start of class.</p> <p>You must follow, post, and contribute to CANVAS for the course if you're not the discussion leader.</p> <p>Participation online can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting questions or responding to other students' forum postings • Providing examples and counter-examples • Performing scholarly, constructive criticism of the assigned reading • Proposing additional literature, websites, or resources • Sharing current news items and media reports that are relevant to class topics <p>The best comments will respond actively to the topic of discussion or extend discussions from the section or even the lecture. Thread-jacking or trolling will not be tolerated and will result in a grade reduction.</p>	10%
Reflection Blogs	<p>Periodically, you will be promoted to discuss a topic in an extended format using original sources, outside information, and experiential knowledge. All Blogs are between 400 and 800 words.</p>	20%
Annotations/Class Participation	<p>Perusal! You will be given a grade for reading and taking notes every week.</p> <p>I firmly believe in annotating readings and making notes in the margins while reading a text. I've had great success showing students how to use Perusal in previous semesters! To annotate each assigned reading as a class. Perusal is an annotation layer for any online content; this tool allows y'all to collaborate on your reading, synthesis, and understanding of the reading selections across the semester. I'll send the invitation link and explain how we use this tool during class.</p> <p>In addition to highlighting snippets of text that you find interesting (or confusing), Perusal! also allows the use of images and other multimedia content within your annotations. I am inclined to offer</p>	50 %

	extra credit to those whose annotations include compelling, relevant multimedia content illustrating complex or interesting concepts in the reading.	
	Your annotations will count towards your participation grade. You must annotate every reading with at least THREE notes to get credit.	

Grade Policies

A good grade requires thoughtful, informed participation in class and in online discussions, well-executed arguments in writing, and an outstanding portfolio. Readings will be DISCUSSED on the day marked on the syllabus. Assignments are due as scheduled.

Course Schedule

Noble, Safiya Umoja. "Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism."
In *Algorithms of oppression*. New York university press, 2018.

Week	Reading	Exercises
Week 1 Jan 13 th -17 th	Welcome to the Class	Watch: Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism - Dr. Safiya Noble
Week 2 Jan 20 th 24 th	Introduction: The Power of Algorithms	
Week 3 Jan 27 th – 31 st		Watch: Presentation at University of Southern California
Week 4 Feb. 3 rd – 7 th	Chapter 1: A Society Searching	
Week 5 Feb 10 th – 14 th		Watch: On Race and Technoculture Reflection Blog #1
Week 6 Feb 17 th – Feb 21 st	Chapter 2: Searching for Black Girls	

Week 7 Feb 24 th -28 th		Watch: DSL CKL Workshops: Catherine Knight-Steele
Week 8 Mar 3 rd – 7 th	Chapter 3: Searching for People and Communities	
Week 9 Mar 10 th – 14 th		Watch: Digital Humanities Virtual Hour: Beyond Hashtags: Digital Media Research & Marginalized Communities
Mar 17th – 21st	Spring Break	
Week 10 Mar 24 th – 28 th	Chapter 4: Searching for Protections from Search Engines	Reflection Blog #2 Due
Week 11 Mar 31 st -Apr 4 th		Watch: Black Twitter: A People’s History
Week 12 Apr 7 th - 11 th	Chapter 5: The Future of Knowledge in the Public	
Week 14 Apr 21 st – 23 rd	Chapter 6: The Future of Information Culture	
Week 15	Final Exam	Reflection Blog #3 Due

Exam schedule

Date	Subject
Reflection Blog # 1	February 14th 11:59 PM
Reflection Blog #2	March 28th 11:59 PM
Reflection Blog #3	April 29th 11:59 PM