

GEOG 9121A – Digital Environments Course Outline: Fall 2023

***Syllabus Subject to Change**

1. Course Information

Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Agnieszka Leszczynski

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

More information about "Accessibility at Western" is available at: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca>

2. Calendar Description

This seminar explores the various ways in which digital assemblages materialize across and produce urban environments. The theme of the Fall 2023 seminar is '**Digital Urban Aesthetics.**' Drawing on an interdisciplinary range of works, we will engage with a variety of examinations, both theoretical and empirical, about how digital phenomena mediate the city.

2-hour seminar, 0.5 course

3. Required Books

- Please see the schedule for required texts.

4. Course Objectives

- Engage with the most recent debates and literatures relating to the intersections of digital media, content, and spatialities, and digital social inequality.
- Identify a range of intellectual traditions, disciplinary approaches methodologies, and empirical subjects/objects that inform the breadth of approaches to researching and theorizing digital social inequality and its spatial dimensions.
- Foster a positive, welcoming, and supportive atmosphere for substantive scholarly exchange and debate.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation Component	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Seminar Participation	40%	Weekly
Seminar - Lead	10%	1 seminar (TBD)
Seminar Paper	50%	Friday Dec 8 th (last day of classes for Fall term; submitted in hardcopy to

Evaluation Component	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
		department mailbox by 4:55 pm) <i>Outline and working bibliography due Nov 8th</i>

Seminar participants will be expected to come to seminar having completed the readings, and be prepared to meaningfully participate in discussions and discussions through constructive and positive engagement with their peers. Seminar participants will also be responsible for convening one of the weekly seminars (a seminar of their preference; every attempt will be made to ensure participants are able to convene the seminar of either their first or second choice).

The **seminar paper** is to be on a topic of participants' choosing that connects to the themes of the course. Possible approaches include engaging with how digital infrastructures materialize in particular places, such as the home or the smart city; or, alternatively, engaging with unexamined impacts of infrastructures, such as the energy requirements/environmental consequences of cloud computing or cryptocurrency mining. The seminar paper will synthesize major themes and debates in academic literatures beyond the seminar reading list, advance an identifiable argument, and engage in a scholarly conversation in ~15 pages. A 1-2 page outline that identifies a prospective topic, working thesis, and relevant literatures is due the week after reading week (November 11th), and is worth 5% of the final course grade. Bullet points are not only allowed but encouraged where appropriate (for the outline).

Students are required to complete and receive a passing grade over all components of this course. There are no exceptions to this. In other words, failing to meaningfully participate in the seminar will mean that a student will be unable to receive a passing grade in the course. Extra assignments to improve grades will not be accepted. Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need.

6. Seminar Schedule

Week 1 | September 13 | Orientations: Digital / Geography

- Ash J, Kitchin R & Leszczynski A (2018) Digital turn, digital geographies? *Progress in Human Geography* 42(1): 25-43.
- Discuss tailoring syllabus to graduate students' interests in later weeks

Week 2 | September 20 | Professor away – no seminar

Week 3 | September 27 | Digital Urban Environments I

- O'Kane J (2022) *Sideways: The City Google Couldn't Buy*. Random House Canada.

Week 4 | October 04 | Digital Urban Environments II

- Mattern S (2021) *A City Is Not a Computer: Other Urban Intelligences*. Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Week 5 | October 11 | Digital Urban Environments III

- Barns S (2019) *Platform Urbanism: Negotiating Platform Ecosystems in Connected*

Week 6 | October 18 | Digital Urban Environments IV

- Degen M & Rose G (2022) *The New Urban Aesthetic: Digital Imaginaries of Urban Change*. London, New York, etc.: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Week 7 | October 25 | Digital Urban Environments V

- Rose G (ed.; 2022) *Seeing the City Digitally: Processing Urban Space and Time*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

November 01 | Reading Week | NO SEMINAR

Week 8 | November 08 | Digital Urban Environments VI

- Cugurullo F (2021) *Frankenstein urbanism: Eco, smart and autonomous cities, artificial intelligence and the end of the city*. Routledge.

Week 9 | November 15 | AI Geographies

- Crawford K (2021) *Atlas of AI*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.

Week 10 | November 22 | TBD

Week 11 | November 29 | TBD

Week 12 | December 06 | TBD

7. University Policy Regarding Illness

7.1. Illness

Please visit the link to the university policy for more information.

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=- Page 12>

If you feel that you have a medical or personal concern that is interfering with your work, you should contact your Instructor, Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

7.2. Attendance

Attendance at, and participation in, seminars is mandatory.

8. Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students

For the complete policy and regulations see:

http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html

9. Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations

Students may appeal an academic decision or ruling in accordance with the appeal procedures set out below. Students have a right to appeal to their graduate programs and, if unsuccessful,

to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Some decisions may be appealed further to the Senate Review Board Academic. The Vice-Provost's rulings in academic matters are final unless overturned or modified on appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

For the complete policy and regulations see:

http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html

10. Support Services

10.1. Support Services

Student Support Services can be reached at: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

10.2. Short Absences

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed lecture notes from a classmate.

10.3. Extended Absences

If you expect to be away from campus for an extended amount of time, please make prior arrangements with your course instructors and/or supervisor. A reminder that attendance at seminars is mandatory.

For the complete policy on registration, see:

http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/4.html

10.4. Academic Concerns

If you are in academic difficulty, it is strongly recommended that you see your Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

11. Other Information

For a list of Graduate Regulations please visit:

http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/index.html

For The University of Western Ontario Senate Regulations, please see the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policies at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

Email Policies: Please respect the fact that Professors receive multiple emails from students and will deal with those emails in a fair, organized and timely manner. Please ensure the subject line contains the name, number and section of the course in question.