

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

DIGITAL SOCIETY

Lecturer(s)	KUMMERLE, HARALD M.
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2025 Fall (2nd Half)
Day/Period	Mon.3/Thu.5
Campus	Mita
Classroom	412 (Mon.3)/453 (Thu.5)
Registration Number	29382
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
K-Number	CIN-CO-00313-2-61

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

Course Description

This course examines the transformative impact of digital technologies on society, addressing multiple dimensions of contemporary life. While adopting a global perspective, it places special emphasis on the unique features of the Japanese context, which have often been overlooked in recent decades.

Learning Outcome

Students will engage critically with the far-reaching implications of digital technologies, developing a nuanced understanding of their societal effects. The course aims to cultivate analytical and creative skills, equipping students to navigate and contribute to an increasingly digital world.

Teaching Method

Besides the main presentation by the lecturer, each session encompasses discussions concerning the week's reading. In these, students build on the reaction papers (150-200 words) they write in preparation. Another key part of the course are the three slightly longer reports (1500-2000 words). Topics for these reports will be assigned after weeks 4, 8, and 12, and will concern the four preceding sessions. They have to be handed in within a week (for exceptions, please consult with the lecturer).

Active Learning Methods ⓘ [Description](#)

Discussions, Debates
Group work

Preparatory Study

For each week except the first one, a reading will be assigned (mostly newspaper / web articles). Students are expected to write a very short reaction paper (about 150-200 words) and hand it in class.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction to Digital Society: Key concepts

Lesson 2

Foundations of the Digital Transformation: Key technologies like AI, Big Data, Cloud Computing

Lesson 3

Digitalisation and Politics: Power, participation, Snowden leaks, color revolutions

Lesson 4

Platform Economy: Origins, app stores, digital ecosystems, gig economy

Lesson 5

Ethics of Digital Technology: Privacy, algorithmic bias, AI ethics

Lesson 6

Surveillance Society: Sousveillance, self-surveillance, health surveillance, facial recognition

Lesson 7

Internet Culture: Gaming, memes, digital art, online communities

Lesson 8

Smart Cities: Urbanization, IoT, sustainability, governance

Lesson 9

Digital Labor and the Gig Economy: Impact on employment, automation, remote work

Lesson 10

Cybersecurity and Digital Sovereignty: Cyber attacks, data protection, national security

Lesson 11

Critical Perspectives on Digital Society: Dataism, surveillance capitalism, data colonialism

Lesson 12

Digital Technology and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Contact tracing, data management, health tools

Lesson 13

Blockchain and Decentralized Systems: Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, Web 3.0, Metaverse

Lesson 14

Future Trends in Digital Technology: Quantum computing, 6G networks, bio-digital convergence

Other

Coursework and Assignments, Office Hours

Method of Evaluation

40%: 3 reports
30%: short weekly reaction papers
15%: attendance
15%: participation

Textbooks

None

Reference Books

Hitachi-UTokyo Laboratory (2020) Society 5.0: A People-centric Super-smart Society. Singapore: Springer.
Lindgren, Simon (2022) Digital Media and Society, 2nd edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
Lyon, David (2001) Surveillance Society: Monitoring Everyday Life. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Roquet, Paul (2022) The Immersive Enclosure: Virtual Reality in Japan. New York: Columbia University Press.
Steinberg, Marc (2019) The Platform Economy: How Japan Transformed the Consumer Internet. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Whittaker, Hugh (2024) Building a New Economy: Japan's Digital and Green Transformation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Other reference literature will be given in class when appropriate.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

Classes will be face-to face on Mita campus. Office hours are by appointment on Zoom.