

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

DIGITAL SOCIETY

Lecturer(s)	KUMMERLE, HARALD M.
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2025 Fall
Day/Period	Mon.3
Campus	Mita
Classroom	412
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 explores the profound social, political, and cultural transformations brought about by digital technologies. It introduces key concepts and theories of the digital society while situating them in concrete case studies. Particular attention is given to Japan, which provides distinctive examples of platform cultures, governance models, and digital transformations that often diverge from the dominant narratives of the United States, China, and Europe. The course emphasizes both the global dynamics of digital media and the need to understand local contexts.

Learning Outcome

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of major theoretical approaches to digital society and their relevance to contemporary debates.
- Analyze digital platforms, datafication, and surveillance capitalism from comparative and critical perspectives.
- Evaluate the relationship between digital technologies, governance, and sustainability, with particular reference to Japan in a global context.
- Develop well-structured arguments in written essays that connect theoretical insights with empirical examples.

Teaching Method

Besides the main presentation by the lecturer, each session includes small group discussions and short in-class writings (ca. 100–150 words) at the end of the session. These activities provide opportunities for active participation and serve as a basis for further discussion. In addition, students complete two longer essays. The midterm essay (1,200–1,500 words) will be assigned in Lesson 5 and is due in Lesson 7. The final essay (2,000–2,500 words) will be assigned in Lesson 12 and is due in Lesson 14. Both essays build on themes covered in class and the readings. Deadlines are strict; exceptions require consultation with the lecturer in advance.

Active Learning Methods ⓘ [Description](#)

Discussions, Debates
Group work

Preparatory Study

For each week, a reading will be assigned, usually from the textbook (Lindgren 2025), sometimes from other sources. Optional additional readings are suggested to deepen understanding and to support the essays, but they are not required.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction to Digital Society

Lesson 2

Social Media Platforms

Lesson 3

Beyond Technological Determinism

Lesson 4

Power and Exploitation

Lesson 5

Datafication, Algorithms, and Artificial IntelligenceEthics of Digital Technology: Privacy, algorithmic bias, AI ethics

Lesson 6

Surveillance Capitalism

Lesson 7

The Computer Is Everywhere and Nowhere

Lesson 8

Interaction and Identity

Lesson 9

Communities and Networks

Lesson 10

The Power of Visual Digital Media

Lesson 11

Digital Activism and Democracy

Lesson 12

Digital Empires: Competing Models of Governance

Lesson 13

Sustainability, Justice, and Digital Futures

Lesson 14

Other

Preparation and writing of midterm and final essays

Method of Evaluation

35%: Midterm Essay (1,200–1,500 words)

35%: Final Essay (2,000–2,500 words)

20%: Participation (attendance, group discussions, oral contributions)

10%: In-class writings (short reflections at the end of each session, credit/no credit)

Textbooks

Lindgren, Simon (2025) Digital Media and Society, 3rd edition. London: SAGE.

Reference Books

Becker, Christoph (2023). Insolvent: How to Reorient Computing for Just Sustainability. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bradford, Anu (2023). Digital Empires: The Global Battle to Regulate Technology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haigh, Thomas & Ceruzzi, Paul (2021). A New History of Modern Computing. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hitachi-UTokyo Laboratory (2020). Society 5.0: A People-centric Super-smart Society. Singapore: Springer.

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.

Zuboff, Shoshana (2019). The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. New York: PublicAffairs.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

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