

Power, Equity and Society

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Course Information

Course Description

This is a course about society and (in)justice. This course invites students to strengthen their understanding of the role that proficiency in STEM fields, as well as other frames that create cultural hierarchy, play in our society and the responsibilities embedded within the practice of associated professions. Through readings, video, solo or group projects and discussion, this course develops capacity for understanding and critiquing how technological decision-making can perpetuate - as well as constructively rebalance - disparities in power, resource access and health in U.S. society.

Course Materials & Books

[The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America](#) (Brown, 2022)

Course Format

This course can be offered in-person or in on-line format, either synchronously or asynchronously. For all formats, readings, discussion postings, individual and group projects, presentations and recorded class content can be shared via Brightspace, Canvas or other on-line platforms as relevant.

Learning Outcomes

Students' knowledge and skills will be developed in relation to the following learning outcomes:

- Articulating the benefits and boundaries of technological frameworks in society;
- Identifying ethical issues involved in the practice and application of technological proficiency;

- Developing the ability to discuss concepts of power and hierarchy in cultural exploration;
- Discussing how STEM proficiency shapes and affects societal roles; and
- Demonstrating skills of effective cultural analysis and communication.

Skills Outcomes

Students will:

- Gain skills in identifying, describing and critically analyzing the social and cultural impacts of technological decision-making in our society;
- Develop ability to demonstrate how power and technology create differences in health and health access as a function of race and socio-economic status in our society; and
- Build capacity in interpreting, presenting and explaining mapped content in ways that highlight underlying patterns and relationships.

Coursework & Grading

Course Grading

Assessment Name	Value
Readings Discussion Group Participation	25%
Readings Discussion Group Coordination Leadership (rotating)	10%
Video Discussion Group Participation	20%
The Black Butterfly - Midterm Assignment	10%
The Black Butterfly - Final Project	25%
Attendance and Engagement	10%
Total:	100%

Assessment Descriptions & Requirements

Weekly Readings | Discussion

Readings that build on class content will be assigned weekly. For each weekly reading, Brightspace discussion will be led by a guiding question posed by classmates (rotating responsibility). Responses to the guiding question should be posted by Wednesday of the week. Each student will need to respond to at least two (2) classmate posts with a follow-up

response that shows thoughtful consideration of the original post and integration of course material in your response. Original and follow-up posts should provide references to discussed materials. There will be a rotating weekly responsibility to pre-review the assigned reading with the instructor and develop a guiding question. The guiding question will be posted by Sunday p.m. of each week. We will organize this responsibility during the initial weeks of class.

Biweekly Video Discussion

Six (6) documentaries will be shared during the semester for more in-depth exploration of course themes. Videos will be accessed through Brightspace and discussion guidance will be provided. As with readings, you will need to post a response to the guiding question and respond to at least two (2) classmate posts with a follow-up that shows thoughtful consideration of the original post and integration of course materials. Video discussions will remain open throughout the semester.

Semester Reading | Project

Over the semester, we will read *The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America*. There will be a written assignment on the first half of the book at midterm and a final written project on the entire book over finals week. These assignments are not exams; they are opportunities to reflect on the book's contents and to consider parallels and differences between experiences shared in the book and one's own experiences and observations.

Writing Style & Formatting

Most importantly, writing should strive for helping classmates follow thinking and rationales. Citations should be included when referencing works (such as the weekly readings on which you will be posting discussions). Citation format can be as parentheticals within the text (example: Brown, 2022) with full citation listed at the end of your post or as a footnote.

Final Examination/Final Project

There is no Final Exam for this course. There will be a final written project on the semester reading assignment. The written project theme will be introduced during the semester and the assignment will be due at the end of Finals week.

Class Schedule

Week & Date	Topics & Checklist Items	Reading and Videos for the Week
Week 1	<p>Introduction To The Course</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Brightspace post – Introduce yourself to your classmates. 	<p>Read (no discussion post Week 1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rohde et al. (2020) ● Pawley (2018) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate discussion postings ● Confirm copies of <i>The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America</i>
Week 2	<p>Technological Centering and the Myth of Equal Access</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Rotating responsibility: weekly assignment to schedule check-in with instructor to develop guidance question for upcoming week reading(s) 	<p>Read (no discussion post Week 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Johnson (2020) – The Broken Heart of America (prologue) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detroit 48202: Conversations along a Postal Route (2019) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk3 by end of Wk2
Week 3	<p>Socio-Technical Understanding – Frameworks and Omissions</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to W3 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat pm. ● Post discussion response to Detroit 48202 and respond to two (2) classmate posts. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is Science only for the Rich? (2016) ● Adams et al. (2021) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detroit 48202: Conversations along a Postal Route (2019) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk4 by end of Wk3

<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Socio-Technical Understanding – Frameworks and Omissions (cont.)</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk4 reading by Wed pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat pm. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rodgers and O’Neill (2012) ● Blomley (2007) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Area (2021) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk5 by end of Wk4
<p>Week 5</p>	<p>20th Century History – Seeing The Cycle and Marginalization of Communities</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 5 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. ● Post discussion response to The Area and respond to two (2) classmate posts 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ueland and Warf (2016) ● Railroads, Highways and Racial Divides <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Area (2021) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk6 by end of Wk5
<p>Week 6</p>	<p>20th Century History – Seeing The Cycle and Marginalization of Communities (cont).</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 6 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carrera and Flowers (2018) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pruitt-Igoe Myth (2014) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk7 by end of Wk6

<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Forced Displacement and the Geography of Indifference</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 7 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. ● Post discussion response to Pruitt-Igoe Myth and respond to two (2) classmate posts. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fullilove and Wallace (2011) ● Cassano and Benz (2019) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pruitt-Igoe Myth (2014) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk8 by end of Wk7
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Social Determinants of Health – Seeing Inequality and Inequity</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 8 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. ● <i>The Black Butterfly</i> midterm assignment due. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balazs and Ray (2014) ● Cushing et al. (2015) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where the Pavement Ends (2020) (optional)
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Break Week</p>	
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>Narrative Challenges and Bias – Solving without Understanding</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 10 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cashin (2004) (selected sections); discussion question provided by instructor <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Priced Out (2019) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk11 by end of Wk10

<p>Week 11</p>	<p>Narrative Challenges and Bias – Solving without Understanding</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 11 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. ● Post discussion response to Priced Out and respond to two (2) classmate posts. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sadler et al. (2021) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Priced Out (2019) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (no readings next week – catch up on assignments)
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>Recontextualizing Power – False Metrics of Reasonableness</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No assigned reading this week <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Garden (2008) <p>Additional assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk13 by end of Wk12
<p>Week 13</p>	<p>Recontextualizing Power – False Metrics of Reasonableness (cont.)</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. ● Post discussion response to Wk 13 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. ● Post discussion response to The Garden and respond to two (2) classmate posts. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carrera and Key (2021) ● Beamish (2002) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Garden (2008) <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion question for Wk14 by end of Wk13
<p>Week 14</p>	<p>ReDesign, Remediate and (Re)-Question: Who is the Work For?</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barra (2021) ● Highway Removal (2022; NYT) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alice Street (2020) (optional)

	<p>and presentation material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post discussion response to Wk 14 reading by Wed. pm; respond to two (2) classmate posts by Sat. pm. 	<p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catch up on Video postings and <i>The Black Butterfly</i> reading
Week 15	<p>ReDesign, Remediate and (Re)-Question: Who is the Work For? (cont.)</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read/review instructor notes and presentation material. 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Orleans Food Sovereignty <p>Additional Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catch up on Video postings and <i>The Black Butterfly</i> reading
Finals Week	<p>Finals Week Writing Project (due end of Finals Week)</p>	

Policies & Expectations

Attendance & Late Work

Attendance will be gauged by consistency of engagement with class discussion posts (reading and video). I am less focused on the ‘rightness’ of posted content than on the consistency and seriousness of engagement with the topics and with each other’s posts. It is important that Discussion posts are made by stated deadlines so that classmates are able to post required responses. If you know you will be missing assignments, please discuss with me beforehand so that we can find a workaround for that assignment. Late work without prior notice will have to result in a zero grade for that assignment.

Classroom Community Expectations

In this course, we will address a range of topics that can be difficult to discuss. For this reason, please approach our course materials and our class discussions with an open mind. Always express agreement, disagreement, and debates with classmates in a civil manner. Similarly, be willing to listen to peers and faculty when they disagree with you or present a different viewpoint. There is a zero tolerance policy for harmful behavior or speech in this class.