



蘇州大學
Soochow University

COM 420 Digital Social Research

Fall 2023

Course Credits: 4

Contact Hours: 56 hours

Instructor: TBA

Email: TBA

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Digital Social Research course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the methodologies, tools, and theories essential for conducting effective research in the digital realm. Students will delve into the intricacies of digital data collection, analysis, reporting, and critiquing, exploring the application of analytic tools from various popular social media platforms, search engines, and other digital platforms. The course also examines theoretical and conceptual frameworks related to the technical, social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of digital data, allowing students to critically assess the impact of digital technologies on diverse fields.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Have knowledge about the distinct nature of digital research methods and how they differ from and may complement conventional methods;
2. Have experience with (freely accessible) software tools permitting extraction and analysis of interaction data and text from internet sites and important social media platforms;
3. Have insight into the main theories as to how digital media and their designs perform social action and affect social experience online as well as more broadly;
4. Appreciate the ethical, legal and social issues related to digital social research and more generally, the use of social research methods to study ICTs and their social implications.



PREREQUISITES

COM 328 SOS 420 Digital Social Research, COM 329 Qualitative Research in Communication

GRADING

Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:

| ITEM | POINTS |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 3 Assignments | 15 Points |
| Group Project | 20 Points |
| Final Paper and Presentation | 30 Points |
| Midterm Exam | 15 Points |
| Final Exam | 20 Points |
| Total | 100 Points |

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F$.

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

Giuseppe A. Veltri, 2019, *Digital Social Research*, John Wiley&Sons, Inc.

Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:

None.

COURSE TOPICS

| MODULE | TASKS |
|---------------|--------------|
|---------------|--------------|



| | |
|----------|---|
| Module 1 | Topics: Topic 1: Social Research Using Digital Data and Methods Topic 2: Self-Reported and Behavioural Data Topic 3: Big Data Topic 4: Digital Structured, Unstructured and Semi-structured Data Assessments: Class Discussion Assignment #1 |
| Module 2 | Topics: Topic 5: Web Scraping and News Sources Topic 6: Collecting Data from APIs Topic 7: Understanding Social Media Data Topic 8: Online Obtrusive Data Collection Methods Assessments: Class Discussion Assignment #2 |
| Module 3 | Topics: Topic 9: Quantitative Analysis and Digital Data Topic 10: Conventional and Computational Approaches Topic 11: Networks and Data Topic 12: Longitudinal Network Analysis Assessments: Group Project Midterm Exam |
| Module 4 | Topics: Topic 13: Text Mining Topic 14: Parts of Speech Tagging Topic 15: Sentiment Analysis Topic 16: Semantic Networks Assessments: Class Discussion Assignment #3 |
| Module 5 | Topics: Topic 17: Social and Cultural Aspects of Digital Data Topic 18: Economic and Political Implications of Digital Data Topic 19: Virality and Trends in Digital Culture Topic 20: Advertising Effectiveness in the Digital Age Assessments: Final Paper and Presentation Final Exam |



ATTENDANCE

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student's frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.

LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50% or greater.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (eg., note taking, reading course documents).



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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.