New information technologies based on digital platforms proliferate in our society. Such technologies now affect everyday life, groups, personal identity, culture, safety, and countless other aspects of existence. From a sociological standpoint, cybertechnology is so pervasively a part of our world as to be almost invisible. The necessity of recognizing impacts of such technologies is of increasing importance. Emphasis in such a course of study will be placed on understanding the beginnings and development of digitalization, the internet in its many manifestations, theories about communication and media, online subcultures, gaming, privacy, information management, cyber-terrorism and bullying, business and corporate interface, identity, key individuals within the subject, relationships, criminal overtones, government interfaces, law, virtual worlds, and mass media. The course will be both in-person and online (Hybrid).

Cyberworlds is an introduction to the information, theory and societal impact surrounding digitalization. The primary objectives of the course are:

♦ familiarize students with the different types of digital technology and their impacts;
♦ expose students to theories concerning sociological, media and technological impacts on society;
♦ give students an opportunity to conduct their own research on topics concerning digital technology;
♦ aid students in developing their skills in formal, factual writing (qualifies as a University Writing Credit).

COURSE OVERVIEW

Evaluation Methods

Most upper-level, undergraduate courses in the social sciences require students to demonstrate mastery of material through successful completion of reading, written assignments, and participation. For SOC 3051, an ongoing research project (rough drafts) will contribute 20% to the course grade, and the finalized microtext will add another 30%. A book analysis with companion topic outline will count 30%. The remaining 20% of the course grade will reflect class participation (notations are made of level of responses during discussions). The purpose of this type of system is to assure maximum results through an ongoing effort by students to stay abreast of course materials, particularly the assigned readings. Success will be greatly impacted by familiarity with information before each class period, with students coming prepared to participate in class discussions (more about all of the assignments in the syllabus).

Suggested Texts

Note: Text (16th Edition) available at Amazon.com for a few dollars plus shipping.  
Special Accommodations

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. Please discuss any concerns with the professor as soon as possible.

Grading Criterion

A  An excellent work in all or nearly all aspects of the assignment. The student exemplifies originality of ideas, superior depth of thought, and extensive grasp of topics as well as technical superiority.

B  A competent work with a lapse here or there. Ideas are clear and properly expressed; the writing is technically solid. The assignment is effective in meeting all criteria but does not rise to distinction.

C  An adequate work, but not good. Student ideas tend to be oversimplified, reductionistic, and lack sufficient explanation or exploration. Problems may also exist with grammar, logic, or ability to express thoughts in a manner reflective of a junior level class.

D  A minimal effort by the student—the work is marred by problems with almost all aspects of the assignment. This is not considered a competent performance.

E  A failing mark, generally reserved for assignments which are not submitted or miss the target on virtually every criteria of the project.

+/-  Plus or minus may be given in addition to each of the grade levels when deemed appropriate.

Grade Range

A  96% and above;  A-  90—95.99%;  B+  85—89.99%;  B  80—84.99%;  B-  75—79.99%;  C+  70—74.99%;

C  65—69.99%;  C-  60—64.99%;  D+  55—59.99%;  D  50—54.99%;  D-  45—49.99%;  E  Below 45%.

PARTICIPATION (20% of course grade)

Given the “hands-on” nature of this course, regular attendance is strongly encouraged. Active participation is also expected. The class will be conducted in a Socratic format with emphasis on professor and student interaction and understanding through questions and comments. The professor will use this forum to present key concepts not detailed in the major texts under consideration. The Socratic model is employed to encourage analysis, critical thinking, preparation, and long-term learning on the part of the student. Each student should come prepared to discuss the subject scheduled on the calendar by citing current, scholarly journal research. Note cards will be marked for every student, and response notes will be given based on the quality of comments offered: + (plus), √ (check), or 0 (zero)—representing roughly the grades of A, B, and E.

BOOK ANALYSIS (30 % of course grade)

Students should choose a book of interest to them relating to digitalization for a report according to the following criteria:

1. 250+ page book published within the last 5 years representing a major topic area of course;
2. Book Analysis will be minimum of 2500 words (place total word count without abstract at end of paper);
3. 10 point font (Arial), double-spaced, 250 word abstract (see sample in CANVAS files);
4. Bloom’s Taxonomy (four highest levels) will be utilized (simple regurgitation of book content’s discouraged);
5. Writing, grammar skills reflective of 3000-level course;

MICROTEXT (30% of course grade)

OVERVIEW

Due to highly time-critical and cutting-edge nature of the subject matter, a traditional textbook will not be utilized in Cyberworlds. Instead, students will create a microtext on the topics chosen for discussion during the semester. The subjects to be covered by chapters are:

1. Introduction
2. A very brief history of cyberworlds—1940 to 2014
3. Entertainment & social media
4. Gaming & virtual worlds
5. Law & cybercrime
6. Government & military
7. Business, education, & medicine
8. Conclusion

**ROUGH DRAFTS (20 % OF COURSE GRADE)**

Each Friday by 9:00am (online), students will submit their chapters on the specific subjects discussed that week in class. The professor will make correction and suggestions for improvement to be implemented by the student for final microtext. All chapters except the Introduction, Chapter 7, Conclusion & Works Cited will be rewrites. Chapters will reflect:

1. A meaningful and specific aspect of subject of hand (in the viewpoint of the student);
2. At least three references from peer-reviewed journals in the various fields of cybertechnology;
3. No less than 1250 words—no more than 1500 words, employing APA style;
4. An emphasis on the four highest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (overview follows this section);
5. 10 point academic font with double spaced lines and 1 inch margins (Arial is suggested);
6. Writing, logic and grammar skills appropriate for a 3000 level sociology/writing course;
7. A word count provided at the end of the essay/chapter (for the rough drafts only).

**FINAL MICROTEXT (30% OF COURSE GRADE)**

At the end of the term, students will create a final, cutting-edge microtext about the digital society. Microtext will include:

1. An original introduction (Chapter 1) 1000—1500 words;
2. An original conclusion (Chapter 8) 750—1250 words;
3. A finalized production of rewritten & improved topic chapters (1250—1500 words);
4. A Works Cited page with correct references from peer-reviewed journals cited within chapters;
5. An Appendix (if necessary) with any relevant and appropriate information, tables, charts or graphs.

The microtext will be submitted ONLINE on Friday, 20 June (no late papers will be accepted).

**BLOOM’S TAXONOMY**

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom found that over 95% of the test questions students encounter require them to think only at the lowest possible level . . . the recall of information. Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain, from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels. For Cyberworlds, students will concentrate on implementing the four highest levels of the Taxonomy:

1. **Knowledge**: arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce state.
2. **Comprehension**: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate,

Four highest levels (to be utilized in Microtext)

3. **Application**: apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
4. **Analysis**: analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
5. **Synthesis**: arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write.
6. **Evaluation**: appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.
COURSE CALENDAR

12 May (M)  Introduction to course material; presentation of syllabus; Bloom’s Taxonomy; using the Student Writer’s Manual & Handbooks

14 May (W)  A very brief overview of cybertechnology—1940 to 2010 (www.computerhope.com/history)

16 May (F)  ONLINE  Rough draft of Chapter 2—History due by 9:00am

19 May (M)  Entertainment—radio, television, print (magazines & newspapers), music, movies

21 May (W)  Social media, the internet, World Wide Web, cell phones, twitter, blogging, Facebook

23 May (F)  ONLINE  Rough draft of Chapter 3—Entertainment & Social Media due by 9:00am

26 May (M)  MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS!

28 May (W)  Gaming & virtual worlds—from Pong to World of Warcraft, online subcultures

30 May (F)  ONLINE  Rough draft of Chapter 4—Gaming & Virtual Worlds due by 9:00am

2 Jun (M)  Law, copyrights, privacy, personal security

4 Jun (W)  Cybercrime

6 Jun (F)  ONLINE  Rough draft of Chapter 5—Law & Cybercrime due by 9:00am

9 Jun (M)  Government, politics

11 Jun (W)  Military, weapons

13 Jun (F)  ONLINE Rough draft of Chapter 6—Government & Military due by 9:00am

16 Jun (M)  Business & commerce—BOOK ANALYSIS Due (paper copy)—In Class

18 Jun (W)  Education, medicine (NO Rough Draft submitted on Chapter 7—Business, Education, & Medicine)

20 Jun (F)  ONLINE  MICROTEXT DUE! Due by 9:00am
That's All, Folks!!

Have a great summer!