



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Foundations of internet research: the age of global communication - 50040*

*Last update 12-09-2019*

*HU Credits: 3*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: Communication & Journalism*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Christian Baden*

*Coordinator Email: [c.baden@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:c.baden@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Christian Baden: Wednesday, 14-16  
Asaf Nissenbaum: Monday, 12:30-13:30*

---

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Christian Baden  
Mr. Asaf Nissenbaum

Course/Module description:

This course deals with a range of aspects of internet research – theoretical, practical, ethical, and more. It takes two main approaches, as well as an approach that combines the two. The first looks at how the internet can be used as a research tool. How can data collected through the internet help us understand the world around us? This includes the use of search engines, online databases, and other digitally-generated resources, such as the discussion pages for Wikipedia articles, hyperlinks, and Facebook profiles. The second looks at research of internet phenomena, such as social network sites, search engines, and more. These phenomena need not necessarily be researched using online tools: we might study online support groups by interviewing members face to face. The third approach is one where we use internet-based tools or data to study online phenomena. In brief, the course asks how we can use the internet as a research tool, and it asks how we can research the internet. Throughout the course special emphasis is placed on different aspects that set the Internet apart from other media environments: multimedia interactive contents, recorded behavior, technological and social structures as well as its capacity to act as a social environment in its own right. While the main class focuses on discussing the conceptual and theoretical implications of Internet Research, the tutorial has a practical orientation, and students will learn hands on how to use new tools.

Course/Module aims:

The main objective of the course is to equip the students with a deeper understanding of the Internet as a site of research and provide them with a range of quantitative and qualitative tools for studying the internet. It also aims to provide students with criteria for assessing the ethics of their own and others' research.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1) Understand how different aspects of the Internet shape the questions and approaches available to studying communication online
- 2) Identify key quality criteria of Internet research
- 3) Methodically collect and archive different kinds of Internet Data
- 4) Use advanced online tools for analysis
- 5) Perform basic kinds of network data analysis
- 6) Create data visualizations
- 7) Use online surveys
- 8) Perform a basic ethics assessment of online research

---

Attendance requirements(%):

85

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Each week there will be a 1.5 hour lecture and interactive discussion, followed by a 45 minute hands on class. The lecture and discussion take place in English.*

Course/Module Content:

28.10.19 Getting to terms: Fundamentals of Internet Research  
04.11.19 Researching the Internet I: Questions & Applications  
11.11.19 The Internet as Content I: Contents & Contexts  
18.11.19 The Internet as Content II: Interactivity, Dynamism & Archiving  
25.11.19 The Internet as Record I: Behavioral Traces  
02.12.19 The Internet as Record II: Analyzing Digital Data  
09.12.19 The Internet as Object I: Infrastructures & Protocols  
16.12.19 The Internet as Object II: Algorithms & Platforms  
23.12.19 The Internet as Structure I: Links, Relations & Networks  
30.12.19 The Internet as Structure II: Analyzing Networked Data  
06.01.20 The Internet as Environment I: Uses & Users  
13.02.20 The Internet as Environment II: Ethics & Research  
20.01.20 Current Developments: The Political Economy of the Internet  
27.01.20 Researching the Internet II: Challenges & Futures

Required Reading:

See course Moodle page

Additional Reading Material:

See course Moodle page

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 66 %  
Presentation 0 %  
Participation in Tutorials 0 %  
Project work 0 %  
Assignments 24 %  
Reports 0 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 10 %  
Participation

---

Additional information:

*In order to participate in the practical classes and complete the various tasks, all students should make sure that they have accounts with the following services:*

- 1) Google*
- 2) Facebook*
- 3) Twitter*

*The accounts do not have to be with your real names, but they are essential for carrying out the exercises.*

*Composition of the grade:*

- 1) 6 exercises during the semester: 24%.*
- 2) Take-home exam: 66%.*
- 3) Class participation: 10%*