# The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## Syllabus

## Digital Platforms and the Politics of Evaluation - 50651

Last update 21-10-2024

_HU Credits:_ 2

_Degree/Cycle:_ 2nd degree (Master)

_Responsible Department:_ Communication & Journalism

_Academic year:_ 0

_Semester:_ 1st Semester

_Teaching Languages:_ English

_Campus:_ Mt. Scopus

_Course/Module Coordinator:_ Dr. Blake Hallinan

_Coordinator Email:_ [blake.hallinan@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:blake.hallinan@mail.huji.ac.il)

_Coordinator Office Hours:_ Monday 1900-2030

_Teaching Staff:_

*Dr. Blake Hallinan*

*Course/Module description:*
  *The field of platform studies responds to the growing social, political, and economic centrality of digital platforms in public life. Like other large corporations, commercial platforms have the resources to conduct massive lobbying campaigns and the cultural appeal to attract advertisers and consumers. However, they also have unique forms of platform power, which include the ability to set standards, form networks, employ automated agents, create information asymmetries, and operate across domains. This class provides an introduction to platform studies research, adopting a sociotechnical approach to understanding the role of platforms in society. The first part of the course examines forms of platform power expressed, for example, through the design of technical infrastructures or content moderation practices. The second part of the course examines forms of platform counterpower, or how users and intermediary actors resist platform interests by, for example, circumventing policies or reappropriating platform tools to novel ends.*

*Course/Module aims:*

*Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:*
  *Objectives:*
• *Understanding of the field of platform studies*
• *Ability to apply theoretical concepts to particular platforms*
* *Ability to engage in debates within the field of platform studies*

*Attendance requirements(%):*

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:*

*Course/Module Content:*
  *Course Topics*

*Introduction*

*Platform power*
*Classification*
*Evaluation*
*Moderation*
*Monetization*
*Public relations*

*Platform counterpower*
*Circumvention*
*Reappropriation*
*Publicity*
*Boycotts & blocking*

*Final paper presentations*

<u>Required Reading:</u>
 *Blackwell, L., Dimond, J., Schoenebeck, S., & Lampe, C. (2017). Classification and its consequences for online harassment: Design insights from HeartMob. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 1(CSCW), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1145/3134659*

*Hallinan, B., & Brubaker, J. R. (2021). Living with everyday evaluations on social media platforms. International Journal of Communication, 15, 1551–1569.*

*Gillespie, T. (2018). All platforms moderate. In Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media (pp. 1–23). Yale University Press.*

*Caplan, R., & Gillespie, T. (2020). Tiered governance and demonetization: The shifting terms of labor and compensation in the platform economy. Social Media + Society, 6(2), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120936636*

*Cotter, K. (2023). "Shadowbanning is not a thing": Black box gaslighting and the power to independently know and credibly critique algorithms. Information, Communication & Society, 26(6), 1226–1243. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1994624*

*Gillett, R., Gray, J. E., & Valdovinos Kaye, D. B. (2023). 'Just a little hack': Investigating cultures of content moderation circumvention by Facebook users. New Media & Society, online first, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221147661*

*Meisner, C. (2023). The weaponization of platform governance: Mass reporting and algorithmic punishments in the creator economy. Policy & Internet, 15(4), 466–477. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.359*

*Reynolds, C. & Hallinan, B. (Forthcoming) User-generated accountability: Public participation in algorithmic governance on YouTube. New Media & Society.*

*Matias, J. N. (2016). Going dark: Social factors in collective action against platform operators in the Reddit blackout. Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 1138–1151. https://doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858391*

 *Additional Reading Material:*

 *Grading Scheme:*
 *Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 40 %*
 *Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %*
 *Personal Guide / Tutor / Team Evaluation 10 %*
 *Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 40 %*

*Additional information:*