The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Digital Platforms and the Transformation of Labour - 50652

Last update 21-10-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Communication & Journalism

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Blake Hallinan

 Coordinator Email: blake.hallinan@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday 9:00-10:00

Teaching Staff:
  Dr. Blake Hallinan

Course/Module description:
  Digital platforms are changing how people work. These transformations include the creation of new types of work, from the highly visible careers of streamers and social media influencers to the less visible jobs of content moderation and training machine learning models, as well as new forms of algorithmic management for gig workers (e.g., Wolt, Uber) and new forms of monetization in the sharing economy (e.g., AirBnB). Social media platforms are also challenging our understanding of what counts as work, prompting scholars to debate whether the generation of content or even behavioral data should be classified as a form of labor. This course critically examines these developments, assessing how different types of platform labor create opportunities for worker empowerment and vulnerabilities to harm. This course also analyzes forms of labor organization associated with platform work, from ad-hoc strategies of resistance to algorithmic management to the formation of unions.

Course/Module aims:

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
  • Ability to historically situate developments in the organization of labor
• Apply theoretical perspectives from the class to different types of platform labor
• Design research project related to class content

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture, small group activities, class discussion, student presentations

Course/Module Content:
  What is platform labor?
Platformization + Precarity

Labor platforms

Gig labor
Labor platform governance
Labor platform inequalities
Labor platform strategies

Social media platforms
Creator labor
Social media platform governance
Social media platform inequalities
Social media platform strategies

Final paper workshop

<u>*Required Reading:*</u>
 Platformization + Precarity

Required Readings:
Poell, Thomas, David Nieborg, and José van Dijck. "Platformisation." Internet Policy Review 8, no. 4 (2019): 1-13. https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1425.
Millar, Kathleen M. "Toward a Critical Politics of Precarity." Sociology Compass 11, no. 6 (2017): 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12483.

Gig labor

Required Readings:
Ticona, Julia, Alexandra Mateescu, and Alex Rosenblat. "Beyond Disruption: How Tech Shapes Labor across Domestic Work & Ridehailing." Data & Society, June 27, 2018. https://datasociety.net/library/beyond-disruption/.
Muldoon, James, Callum Cant, Boxi Wu, and Mark Graham. "A Typology of Artificial Intelligence Data Work." Big Data & Society 11, no. 1 (March 2024). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517241232632.

Labor platform governance

Required Readings:
Vallas, Steven, and Juliet B. Schor. "What Do Platforms Do? Understanding the Gig Economy." Annual Review of Sociology 46, no. 1 (2020): 273–94. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054857.

Labor platform inequalities

Required Readings:
Fiers, Floor. "Inequality and Discrimination in the Online Labor Market: A Scoping Review." New Media & Society 25, no. 12 (December 2023): 3714–34.

https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221151200.
Rosenblat, Alex, Karen E.C. Levy, Solon Barocas, and Tim Hwang. "Discriminating Tastes: Uber's Customer Ratings as Vehicles for Workplace Discrimination: Customer Ratings and Workplace Discrimination." Policy & Internet 9, no. 3 (2017): 256–79. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.153.

Labor platform strategies

Required Readings:
Bucher, Eliane Léontine, Peter Kalum Schou, and Matthias Waldkirch. "Pacifying the Algorithm – Anticipatory Compliance in the Face of Algorithmic Management in the Gig Economy." Organization 28, no. 1 (2021): 44–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508420961531.

Creator labor

Required Reading:
Cunningham, Stuart, and David Craig. "Creator Labor." In Social Media Entertainment: The New Intersection of Hollywood and Silicon Valley, 65–114. New York: New York University Press, 2019.

Social media platform governance

Required Readings:
Shapiro, Aaron, Courtlyn Pippert, Jacob Kenton Smith, and Zari A. Taylor. "Patrons of Commerce: Asymmetrical Reciprocity and Moral Economies of Platform Power." Information, Communication & Society, April 4, 2024, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2331753.

Social media platform inequalities

Required Reading:
Bidav, Tugce, and Smith Mehta. "Peripheral Creator Cultures in India, Ireland, and Turkey." Social Media + Society 10, no. 1 (January 2024). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241234693.

Social media platform strategies

Required Reading:
Stegeman, Hanne M., Carolina Are, and Thomas Poell. "Strategic Invisibility: How Creators Manage the Risks and Constraints of Online Hyper(In)Visibility." Social Media + Society 10, no. 2 (April 2024): 20563051241244674. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241244674.
Ørmen, Jacob, and Andreas Gregersen. "Institutional Polymorphism: Diversification of Content and Monetization Strategies on YouTube." Television & New Media 24, no. 4 (July 11, 2022): 363–473. https://doi.org/10.1177/15274764221110198.

 Additional Reading Material:

 Grading Scheme:
  Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 40 %
  Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %
  Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 40 %
  Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 10 %

Additional information: