

Seattle Pacific University
INF2000: Information and Attention
 Fall Quarter 2019

Professors Michael Paulus and Steve Perisho

Course Description: This class considers the nature of information and the role of attention. In addition to exploring fundamental concepts and challenges associated with information, such as information overload and distraction, students will learn practical strategies for successfully navigating our informationally rich and complex world.

Learning Outcomes

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Related Assessment</i>
1. Students will engage with resources from the Christian tradition to explore the theological significance of the information society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Journal
2. Students will reflect on the role of information and technology to become more intentional about their decisions in their personal, professional, and spiritual lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Journal • Information Ethnography Project
3. Students will use information and technology to become more skillful and ethical participants in the information society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Research Paper and Presentation

Required Resources

Luciano Floridi, *The 4th Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), [ebook](#) available through the SPU Library

James Williams, *Stand out of our Light: Freedom and Resistance in the Attention Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), [open access](#) copy available from Cambridge University Press

Additional texts in the schedule below are available via Canvas.

Schedule

Module 1: Information and Attention Overload		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Due before next class (assignment instructions appear in next section)</i>
Tuesday, October 1	Introduction to course and topics	Read by 10/3: Karl Schroeder, " Noon in the Antilibrary "; Sam

		Wineburg and Sarah McGrew, “Reading Less and Learning More When Evaluating Digital Information”
Thursday, October 3	Discuss texts; Visit the library’s Emmanuel Rare Book Room	Assignment due 10/8: Information Journal Entry (IJE) 1
Module 2: What Is Information?		
Tuesday, October 8	The meaning and history of information and technology; Visit the library’s emerging technologies “lab”	Read by 10/10: Luciano Floridi, <i>The 4th Revolution</i> chapters 1-4
Thursday, October 10	Discuss text	Assignment due 10/15: Information Ethnography Project (IEP) Part I
Module 3: Information Ethics and Culture		
Tuesday, October 15	Information ethics and culture; Campus technology tour	Read by 10/17: <i>The 4th Revolution</i> chapters 5-10; Optional assignment: Facilitate a brief discussion on a relevant Day of Common Learning topic
Thursday, October 17	Discuss text, IEP observations, Day of Common Learning; Information environmentalism workshop	Assignment due 10/22: IJE 2
Module 4: Information and Theology		
Tuesday, October 22	Theologies of information and technology	Read by 10/24: Diogenes Allen, <i>Spiritual Theology</i> chapter 8; Heidi A. Campbell and Stephen Garner, <i>Networked Theology</i> chapter 1
Thursday, October 24	Discuss texts; Guest speaker	Assignments due 10/29: IJE 3
Module 5: What Is Attention and Why Is It Important?		
Tuesday, October 29	Views of attention and cultural considerations	Read by 10/31: James Williams, <i>Stand Out of Our Light</i> chapters 1-9
Thursday, October 31	Discuss text	Assignment due 11/5: IEP Part II
Tuesday, November 5	Visit St. James Cathedral	Read by 11/7: <i>Stand Out of Our Light</i> chapters 10-13

Thursday, November 7	Discuss text, cathedral visit, and IEP II	Assignment due 11/12: IJE 4
Module 6: Reflection and Resistance		
Tuesday, November 12	Strategies for reflection and resistance	Read by 11/14: Sherry Turkle, " Stop Googling. Let's Talk "; John Naughton, " Tim Wu: 'The internet is Like the Classic Story of the Party That Went Sour' "; Kate Crawford and Trevor Paglen, " Excavating AI The Politics of Images in Machine Learning Training Sets "
Thursday, November 14	Discuss texts; Information literacy workshop	Assignment due 11/19: Project proposal
Module 7: Spiritual Disciplines		
Tuesday, November 19	Spiritual practices of attention and attentiveness	Read by 11/20: Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book XI; Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God"
Thursday, November 20	Discuss texts; Proposal workshop	Assignments due 11/26: Project summary post; Read by 11/26: Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, " Anatomy of an AI System "
Module 8: Information and Formation		
Tuesday, November 26	Discuss "Anatomy of an AI System"; Guest instructors of "Digital Literacy and Life" and "Information and Society"	Assignment due 12/3: Comment on project posts; IJE 5
Tuesday, December 3	Visit Axon for ethics discussion	Assignment due 12/5: Presentation
Thursday, December 5	Discuss Axon visit; Student presentations	<u>Final paper due 12/12</u>

Assessments

1. Participation, 25% of grade
2. Information Journal, 25% of grade
3. Information Ethnography Project, 10% of grade
4. Research Project, 40% of grade