1. **Title of the module**

The Regulation of Surveillance/Platform Capitalism (LAWS6600 / LW660)

1. **Division or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Law, Society and Social Justice: Kent Law School

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 6

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

15 credits (7.5 ECTS Credits)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None.

1. **The course(s) of study to which the module contributes**

Optional to all social sciences undergraduate law, SSPSSR, Computing, and Journalism programmes.

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module, students will be able to:**
   1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge and critical understanding of the ideological logic and algorithmic techniques of Surveillance Platform capitalism (SPC).
   2. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of key scholarship and theories on the individual and social effects of SPC from the fields of Surveillance Studies, Algorithmic Governance Studies, and New Media and Society Studies.
   3. Demonstrate critical knowledge of SPC as a global, socio-legal process.
   4. Demonstrate critical knowledge of different modes of governance concerning the techniques, operators, and effects of SPC.
   5. Demonstrate the ability to use key scholarship and theories on SPC to reflect critically on their personal and social encounters with social-media and sharing platforms.
2. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module, students will be able to:**
   1. Critically evaluate an area of law both doctrinally and in terms of its socio-economic consequences.
   2. Undertake a detailed examination of the merits of competing issues and interests and make a reasoned choice between them.
   3. Demonstrate an independence of mind and an ability to critically challenge received understandings and conclusions.
   4. Present research-substantiated analysis and arguments in written work.
   5. Demonstrate self-critical learning skills, including reflection upon learning progress.
   6. Organise their work, engage in independent research, study and use of resources.
   7. Produce written work in an appropriate format, with correct use of spelling, punctuation, grammar, citation and references.
3. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

Surveillance Platform Capitalism (SPC) is the use of highly sophisticated algorithms and artificial intelligence to “mine” or extract commercial value from personal data and information about the behaviour of consumers online. The aim of the module is to examine SPC through a socio-legal lens and to provide students with key concepts and interdisciplinary insights to understand and reflect critically on the on the nature and effects of SPC on individuals and society.

The module is divided into three parts. The first section will define and place SPC in historical and socioeconomic context. It will place SPC within the context of the emergence of the surveillant society, drawing on scholarship from Surveillance and Critical Surveillance Studies. It will then define and explore its ideological logic and algorithmic techniques (e.g., online behavioural tracking and targeting, personalisation and recommendation systems, choice-engineering, nudging) informed by scholarship from Algorithmic Governance Studies.

The second part of the module will look at the effects of SPC on individuals and society, using social media as a case study and drawing on New Media & Society Studies. It will examine the effects of SPC on mental health and self-representation and explore its intersection with questions of identity, particularly gender and race. It will then examine the effects of SPC on the production and consumption of journalistic and political communication (e.g. the challenges of echo-chambers, fake news, political advertising).

The final part of the module will look at the regulatory and governance challenges SPC poses, focusing on social media as a case study. It will examine the potential and limitations of different governance models (e.g., state vs self-regulation) to regulate the algorithmic techniques, operators, and digital content of SPC.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

* Kalpokas, I., 2019. *Algorithmic Governance: Politics and Law in the Post-Human Era*. London: Palgrave.
* Lyon, D. & Ball, . K., 2014. *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*. Abingdon: Routledge.
* O’Reilly, M. et al. (2018) ‘*Is social media bad for mental health and wellbeing? Exploring the perspectives of adolescents*’, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 1(13)
* Ortiz, S. M. (2020) ‘*Trolling as a Collective Form of Harassment: An Inductive Study of How Online Users Understand Trolling’*, Social Media and Society.
* Mbioh, W. R. & Zokaityte, A., *Forthcoming. Inclusive social media? Exploring the role of the law in facilitating user inclusion and participation in social media*. In: T. Williams, ed. *Inclusive Regulatory Practices*. London: Palgrave, pp. 30-59.
* Srnicek, N., 2017. *Platform Capitalism*. 1 ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
* Zuboff, S., 2019. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. 1st ed. London: Profile Books.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Study Hours: 150

Contact Hours: 20

Private Study Hours: 130

1. **Assessment methods.**

13.1 Main assessment methods

Personal Reflective Journal (1,500 words) – 20% AND:

Essay (2,500 words) – 80% OR:

A creative submission (e.g. poster / film) plus written commentary (1,500 words) – 80%

13.2 Reassessment methods

Like-for-like

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section 12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.7 | 9.8 |
| **Learning / teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Combined lecture/seminar | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Private Study | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Personal reflective journal (20%) AND: | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Essay (80 %) OR: | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Creative submission and commentary (80%) | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The Division recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

**a) Accessible resources and curriculum**

1. Preference will be given to electronic resources that meet minimum accessibility standards and support the use of assistive technologies.
2. Module outlines will be made accessible at least four weeks before the module starts.
3. Prioritised reading lists will be made available sufficiently in advance to accommodate the provision of alternative formats and support those with a slow reading speed.
4. Lecture/seminar slides/outlines will be made available in electronic format in advance to allow all students to prepare (particularly students with notetaking difficulties).
5. In accordance with the KLS school-level statement on Lecture Capture, the lecture/seminars will be recorded to assist notetaking unless one or more of the lectures contains sensitive material. The module convenor will notify students in advance of any lecture/seminars (or portions thereof) that will not be recorded.

**b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

The inclusive practices in the guidance (Annex B Appendix A, section b(1) and (2)) have all been considered in order to support all students in their assessments on this module.

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered:**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

The module will take a global perspective of surveillance/platform capitalism and will situate its social and legal effects and challenges within the context of global actors and information technology networks. In addition, students will read and engage with diverse, international scholarship offering different perspectives on surveillance/platform capitalism.

**DIVISIONAL USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6 & 7 cover sheet) |
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