1. KentVision Code and title of the module

SOCI5570: Researching digital culture and society

## Division and School/Department or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module

Division for the Study of Law, Society and Social Justice (School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research)

## The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)

Level 5

## The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents

15 credits / 7.5 ECTS

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

Autumn term (term 1) or Spring term 2

## Prerequisite and co-requisite modules and/or any module restrictions

None

## The course(s) of study to which the module contributes

Compulsory to the following courses:

Cultural Studies and Media BA (as an either/or module)

Cultural Studies joint honours Bas (as an either/or module)

Optional to the following courses:Criminology BA

Criminology joint honours BAs

Sociology BA

Sociology joint honours BAs

Health and Social Care BA

## The intended subject specific learning outcomes. On successfully completing the module students will be able to:

8.1: Demonstrate the practical application of theoretical and research-led ideas and evidence through a creative output.

8.2 Describe and assess a range of theoretical accounts of the significance of digital technologies in contemporary society.

8.3: Engage in and complete an independent research project into the study of cultural forms and practices to a high academic standard, including an academically-informed portfolio, reflective essay, and creative output. Understand the social, economic and cultural dimensions of digital culture.

8.4: Demonstrate presentational skills that foreground both academic research and an understanding of non-academic cultural consumption making use of an understanding of digital culture and methods. Critically assess the ways in which digital culture has resulted in new forms of social cohesion and identity construction.

8.5: Demonstrate and understand the relationships between cultural technologies and academic research and contemporary society.

## The intended generic learning outcomes. On successfully completing the module students will be able to:

9.1: Demonstrate independent research skills including a rigorous methodological approach, fieldwork or desk-based research, theoretical and literature-based context, and methods of analysis.

9.2: To acquire basic research and organisation skills through library and online investigation, critical reflection, essay writing, and report producing.

9.3 Demonstrate personal and professional development in the creation of a potentially public-facing output.

9.4: To develop skills of presentation and debate.

## A synopsis of the curriculum

**Aim**

Introduce students to issues in digital culture and digital research methods. To do this the course would be split between 1) a critical reflection on issues around digital methods and 2) advancements in research methods and changes in the types of data researchers have access to (both born digital and digitised). That is, there will be a split between theoretical grounding in digital data and methods, and introductions to their use in scholarship (with seminars dedicated to hands-on training).

The course would have both scholarly and employability benefits. The former can be seen in the opportunities to learn about emerging scholarly research using digital methods which will allow students to both better assess this type of research by other scholars, and potentially conduct research using these methods themselves. Students interested in the theoretical content will be prepared for SOCI6570 (“Digital Culture”) and SOCI6830 (“Cultural Studies Research Dissertation”/“Creative Project in Cultural Studies”).

The latter benefits are linked to preparation for careers in the digital economy. For Cultural Studies students in particular there may be the opportunity to initiate interest in, and prepare training pathways for, careers in GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), cultural heritage, or cultural analytics industries. This opportunity can be further enhanced by foregrounding other modules that build on these ideas (e.g., SOCI5012 “Analysing Data in the Real World”; MAST5957 “Year in Data Analytics”)

**Content**

Content, as noted, would be split between the theoretical and the practical.

***Theoretical grounding***

Critically study the developments and implications of digital technologies on contemporary culture and society. This will include:

1. An evaluation of what digital culture and data are, and why it is ontologically distinct from other types of data (e.g., hyperlinks, networked, ephemeral, metadata, “digital exhaust”, etc..).
2. An examination into how ICT impact contemporary society (e.g., online social networks, algorithmic mediation, online participatory culture, etc.).
3. Ethics of digital research via critical evaluation (e.g., algorithmic bias).

***Practical training***

The course will be pitched to students with no expertise in quantitative methods. This means practical training will make use of pre-existing software. This training will take place in seminars which will follow a lecture covering the basic ideas, concepts, and use-cases of given methods. These may include quantitative approaches (such as Social Network Analysis; Quantitative Text Analysis; Topic Modelling; etc.) and digital approaches to existing qualitative methods (‘discourse analysis, semiotics, visual analysis, etc.).

On completion of the module a student should be able to:

* Critically assess the impact of digital on society
* Demonstrate familiarity with emerging digital methods
* Evaluate scholarship which makes use of digital methods (including beginning to identify strengths, weaknesses, problems and/or particularities with regard to methods and their application)
* Understand what types of materials/data are necessary and appropriate for various types of digital methods
* Have an understanding which allows for the ability to put basic digital methods into practice with regard to their own research

## Reading list

## The University is committed to ensuring that core reading materials are in accessible electronic format in line with the Kent Inclusive Practices.

## The most up to date reading list for each module can be found on the university's [reading list pages](https://kent.rl.talis.com/index.html).

Amoore, L. (2020). *Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Ourselves and Others*. Duke University Press.

Chun, W.H.K. (2021). *Discriminating Data*. The MIT Press.

van Dijck, J. (2013). *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford University Press.

D'Ignazio, C. and Klein, L.F. (2020). *Data Feminism*. The MIT Press.

Striphas, T.. “Algorithmic Culture” in *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (2015).

Vicari, S. and Kirby, D.. “Digital platforms as socio-cultural artifacts: developing digital methods for cultural research” in *Information, Communication & Society* (2021).

## Contact Hours

Private study hours: 128

Contact hours: 22

Total study hours: 150

## Assessment methods

* 1. Main assessment methods

Coursework - Theoretical essay (1500 words) – 40%

Coursework - Practical project – 40%

Coursework - Seminar participation – 20%

* 1. Reassessment methods

100% Coursework

## Map of module learning outcomes (sections 9 & 10) to learning and teaching methods (section 13) and methods of assessment (section 14)

**Module learning outcomes against learning and teaching methods:**

| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Private study* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| *Lectures* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| *Seminars* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |

**Module learning outcomes against assessment methods:**

| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Seminar* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| *Essay* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| *Practical project* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |

## 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

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

## Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered

Canterbury

## Internationalisation

The discussion and application of the module topics is undertaken in an international context. The range of generic skills which will be developed are applicable to international contexts and the specific skills have potential international relevance.

**DIVISIONAL USE ONLY**

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

| Date approved | New/Major/minor revision | Start date of delivery of (revised) version | Section revised  (if applicable) | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 19/12/2022 | New | 2023-24 | N/A | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |