Course Overview:

How should we think about the role of information technology in governance? The use of information and technology in governance is a vexed subject. Civil society clamors for release of information about the state (openness) while the State wants more information about its citizens (surveillance). Technology plays a role in amplifying these respective intentions resulting in an unprecedented gathering and release of information, thereby bringing the issue of information, technology and its role in governance to sharp focus. This seminar course will encourage students to think broadly about how technology confronts developmental visions.

The seminar will challenge students to look at information, technology and governance critically and in its social and political contexts. We will be concerned with both how the state sees its citizens and how the citizens may see the state. The role of how information and technology mediates this project of "seeing" is the core of our concern. In this seminar, we will read and discuss selections from books and papers. The field that spans information technology and governance is interdisciplinary and global. We will read ethnographies, historical writings as well as theories that discuss the state, information and technology. Most of the readings will be made available in Canvas.

Students are expected to do all the reading and write their reflections on the material before class. You are also expected to read other students postings before class. The class time is used for discussion and to deepen our understanding of the material.

Assignments and Grading:

Grades will be assessed based on the following:

- Class participation (25%)
- Reading reflections (20%)
- Statement of personal theory about technology, state and society [800-1600 words each] (15%).
- Final paper [4000-6000 words] (40%)
  - 2 page proposal 10%
  - Final paper 30%

**Participation**

Active contribution to the seminar discussion is the most important requirement of participation in the course. In order to make the class time the most effective, everyone will be asked to post some thoughts on the readings to the rest of the class on the internal discussion thread. These posts are meant to just flag what aspect of the readings you found particularly interesting, or most problematic. They are not meant to be a summary or even an exposition of your own position. Please limit these to 250 words as the maximum. In addition you are also expected to read other people’s posts before coming to class.

**Written work**

- Assignment 1: "First" day: [400-1200 words] On the first day of class you will be asked to provide your own theory of how state, technology and society interact. [Those missing the first day of class will be asked to submit this at the next possible class.]
- Reading Reflections: DUE Every Monday 10pm via Canvas.
- Assignment 2: DUE: 10PM, November 30 2: [800-1600 words] - A revision of your theory on how the state, technology and society interact. How have the readings supported your understanding? Have the readings challenged your understanding and in what ways?
- Final Paper: (DUE: December 10, 5PM) [6000-8000 words] - You should choose an empirical case, either a current contemporary issue in the news or an empirical case that you have and want to confront the readings from the class with.
  - Whatever you choose, you need to send a 2-page proposal outlining what is the case you want to address. What are the questions that you are going to raise? What “data” you are going to use and describe your method? This is due by 5PM. October 19. (10 points)

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to follow Brown University’s guidelines on academic honesty, which can be found here: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/curriculum/documents/principles.pdf
Technology in the Classroom
As a general rule, the use of the Internet will not be allowed during class since its use inhibits face-to-face discussion.

Special Accommodation
If you need any special accommodation during the class – e.g., for a disability, for scheduled conflicts, etc. – please let the professor know in advance. Reasonable arrangements will be made for understandable issues to the extent possible.

Readings
All readings and other course materials will be on Canvas. Readings will include articles, book chapters. You may also be asked to watch videos.

Week 1: Introduction (No readings)
September 9
Course introduction.

For the first class you will be asked to write down your own understanding of how information technology and the state interact. How do you understand the state, information technology and the connection between the two? This will serve as a baseline for future iterations, it won’t be graded. [400-800 words or 2-3 pages]. No reference to Internet or other materials needed.

Week 2: Spectre of "seeing"
September 16
Reading:

Scott, J.C. Seeing Like a State. 1998. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. [chapters: Intro, 2, 3, 9; pages 1-10; 53-103;309-342]


Week 3: Citizens "seeing the state"
September 23
Reading:

Corbridge, Stuart, Williams, G., Srivastava, M., and Veron, R.  2005. Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality In India. [chapters: Intro, 1; pages 1- 87]


Week 4: Embedding information in society?
September 30
Reading


**Week 5: How to think about technology?**
October 7


**Week 6: (No Readings.)**
October 14
Be prepared to bring your 2-page outline of your project to be discussed in class.

**Week 7: Empire and Information**
October 21

Reading
Bayly, C.A. 2000. Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870. [chapters 1, 5, 10; pages 1-56; 180-212;338-365]

Dandekar, Christopher. 1990. Surveillance, power and modernity: Bureaucracy and discipline from 1700 to the present day. (TBD)

**Week 8: Governance as anti-politics machine?**
October 28

Li, Tania. 2007. The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics. [chapters: intro, 4, 7; pages 1-10, 123-155, 230-269]


**Week 9: Documents as information technology in the state**

November 4


**Week 10: Technology and surveillance**

November 11


Zuckerman, Ethan. 2014. New Media, New Civics.

**Week 11: Targeted Transparency or Democratizing Surveillance?**

November 18


Gurstein, M. B. (2011). Open data: Empowering the empowered or effective data use for everyone? First Monday, 16(2)


**Week 12: Liberation Technology? Hope or Hype? (Wrap up)**

December 2