Data and Society
SYLLABUS
Fall 2020
What to Expect

CSCI 6370 (Grads) / 4370 (Undergrads)
ITWS 6960 (Grads) / 4960 (Undergrads)

• Class time: 10:10-12:00 Mondays and Thursdays
• All on-line
• A lot of discussion, everyone participates
• 30-ish minute chunks
• Reading, writing, speaking
• Cool famous guest speakers 😊
• Attendance is mandatory and part of your grade
• Please keep your camera on during class and mic muted when you’re not speaking
Who am I?

• Professor: Dr. Fran Berman

• Office Hours: By appointment (send email to bermaf@rpi.edu). Let’s talk!

• Course website (linked off Fran’s RPI web page): https://www.cs.rpi.edu/~bermaf/Data%202020

• My research interests (FYI): data policy, data cyberinfrastructure, Internet of Things, social impacts of technology
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Class is a safe space for you and your opinions

Zoom etiquette for all of us:

• Keep your camera on during class. No recording.

• Keep your mic muted when you’re not speaking

• Everything we can see you wearing should be what you would wear to an on-site class

• Backgrounds and behavior should not be distracting ...

• Be respectful of everyone

• Use chat only for class-related stuff and only in “everyone” or host mode

• Your Zoom presence should be something your Parents/Grandparents/Advisor/Kids/etc. would be proud of ...
## Learning Objectives and Outcomes, Grads/Ugrads

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<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<td>Develop greater data literacy</td>
<td>Be able to understand and explain the role that data plays as well as its limitations in various areas of research, commerce and modern life.</td>
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<td>Develop critical thinking skills around data</td>
<td>Be able to read, understand, assess, and discuss data-oriented professional and popular publications and articles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop communication skills around data</td>
<td>Be able to advance an evidence-based argument about data, data cyberinfrastructure and data-oriented efforts to both knowledgeable specialists within the field as well as non-specialists.</td>
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- **There will be slightly different expectations for grad students and undergrads:** Students will be assessed at a level appropriate to *their* educational level (undergrad or grad)
Academic Integrity

• Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments that students turn in are their own. Acts, which violate this trust, undermine the educational process. The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities defines various forms of Academic Dishonesty and you should make yourself familiar with these.

• In this class, all assignments that are turned in for a grade must represent the student’s or group’s own work. In cases where help outside project expectations was received, a notation on the assignment should indicate your collaboration. If references or other materials are used, they should be cited. Submission of any assignment that is in violation of this policy will result in a penalty.

• If found in violation of the academic dishonesty policy, students may be subject to two types of penalties. The instructor administers an academic (grade) penalty, and the student may also enter the Institute judicial process and be subject to such additional sanctions as: warning, probation, suspension, expulsion, and alternative actions as defined in the current Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities. If you have any question concerning this policy before submitting an assignment, please ask for clarification.
Grading

• Class participation (1): 10 points (includes attendance)

• Op-ed (1) / persuasive writing: 14
  • October

• Personal Essays (4) / storytelling: 4 X 8 = 32
  • 2 in September, 1 in October, 1 in November

• Talks (2) / oral communication: 2X15 = 30

• Briefing (1) / informative writing: 14
  • November

You are responsible for managing your assignments and participating in class discussion. No late work.

Grade Distribution

Fran Berman, Data and Society, CSCI 4370/6370
Attendance and writing assignments

• Attendance
  • I will take attendance at the beginning of each class (10:10-10:15)
  • If you decide to drop the class, please let me know (bermaf@rpi.edu) and I will let in someone on the waiting list.

• Writing assignments and presentations.
  • Send them to bermaf@rpi.edu before the date/time they are due.
  • Send writing assignments in MS .docx. I will give you comments in track changes.
  • Send presentations in .pptx or .pdf. I will use these for references when I grade your presentations.
  • None of these will go on the web unless otherwise specified.
Course Materials and Syllabus

• Course website (https://www.cs.rpi.edu/~bermaf/Data%202020) will have all up-to-date information and materials
  • Syllabus may evolve slightly
  • Fran’s lectures will be on the web after they are given
  • All readings will be on the web

• Presentation articles will be on the web for the day they are to be presented

• No student-authored materials or presentations will go on the web unless otherwise indicated
Class Participation

- Class participation (10 points based on attendance and engagement):
  - Students are expected to attend at least 24 out of 27 class meetings for full Attendance credit.
    - Attendance taken at the beginning of class
    - Students are expected to stay until the end of class
  - You are expected to participate in class discussions and be an attentive audience (and question asker) for speakers
Personal Essays / Storytelling

• **GOAL:** Tell me (Fran/general public) an interesting (true) story on the assigned topic

• **PURPOSE:** Personal essays explore a *specific experience* and tell the story from your point of view. They may illustrate how a personal conflict or event left a lasting impression or how it changed your views or perspective.

• **TONE:** Can be more conversational than formal writing but should establish you as an articulate and credible individual.

• **FORMAT:**
  - **Introduction** -- Grab the reader and summarize your points
  - **Body** – main text that tells the story / provides information / explains and supports your points
  - **Conclusion** – may include a lesson, message, moral, take-away
Tips and Grading Rubric for Personal Narratives

TIPS

• Create an **outline** of the piece (don’t turn this in) before you write with the main points.

• Do **more than one draft** before turning your piece in.

• **Spell and grammar check** your piece

• Relevant statistics or facts should be cited and included as endnotes.

• Resources for writing personal essays:
  - [https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-a-personal-essay](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-a-personal-essay)

GRADING RUBRIC

(8 points total)

• **4 points – content**
  - Is the story compelling?
  - Does the content comply to the personal essay format?

• **4 points – writing**
  - Is there a clear tone and narrative?
  - Is it well-written (English, grammar, spelling, flow)?
Presentation components and grading metrics

Presentation components (12 minutes presentation + 6 minutes Q&A):

• Summary and main points
  • What is the article about?
  • What are the main points/questions/issues described of the article?

• What are the data issues?
  • How is data used to support the article’s point of view?

• Discussion
  • What questions/issues arise from reading this article?

Note: You may need to read additional publications, websites for your presentations

Presentation Grading Metrics:

Talk (5 pts):
• Is the presentation compelling?
• Does the presentation tell an interesting story?
• Did the speaker use the timeframe effectively?

Visuals (4 pts):
• Are the slides well-organized and informative?
• Do the slides help tell the story?
• Are the slides visually interesting?
• Is the font readable, are images used to help convey the points, etc.?

Content (4 pts):
• Does the speaker understand the topic?
• Has the speaker leveraged appropriate additional materials as needed to support their presentation?

Q&A (2 pts):
• Is the speaker well prepared for questions? Can they respond to them articulately?
More about presentations

Do 2 of these, 15 points each

• You are responsible for ensuring that you sign up for 2 during the semester
• Presentation articles will be given in class and can be found on the class website
• Send your slides as a .pdf attachment (please include your name) to bermaf@rpi.edu 15 minutes before the beginning of the class in which you will present.

TIPS:

• Practice your presentation. Use this as an opportunity to become a better public speaker
• DO NOT SPEND MOST OF THE TALK READING YOUR NOTES
• Talk so your audience can hear you. Engage with your audience
• Be prepared for questions and have an intelligent form of “I don’t know”
• Use visuals and text to make your slides interesting. Don’t make the font too small.
Other Instructions and Grading Rubrics

• Instructions and the Rubric for the Op-Ed and Briefing will be given later in the semester. Check the website for details.
You get out of the course what you put into it

• **Spend time on the readings, writings, and presentations.** Don’t do this at the last minute.
  • Do more than one draft of all writings and presentations
  • Practice your presentations before you give them
  • Have someone “red team” the assignments for feedback
  • Talk to Fran during office hours (by appt.)
  • Read all readings and be prepared to discuss / answer questions

• Be prepared to **engage in class.**

• **You make the effort,** Fran = scorekeeper. Focus on building skills as an outcome of this class.

**Skills you can improve if you spend time on the assignments and participating in class:**

• Persuasive writing
• Storytelling
• Informative writing
• Presentation style
• Communication skills
• Thinking on your feet (questions, discussion)
• Critical thinking / evidence-based reasoning