

# Data & Society (SOC 225)

Spring Quarter, 2021

## Class Schedule

Lecture: Asynchronous  
EC Discussion Wednesday 10:00 - 11:20 (Synchronous)  
Lab BA: Virtual, Friday 1:30-2:20  
Lab BB: Virtual, Friday 2:30-3:20  
Lab BC: Virtual, Friday 3:30-4:20  
URL: <https://canvas.uw.edu/>

## Professor

**Name:** Zack W. Almquist  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment  
**Email:** [zalmquist@uw.edu](mailto:zalmquist@uw.edu)

## Teaching Assistants

**Name:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Email:**

**Name:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Email:**

**Name:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Email:**

## Course Description

Social implications of the digital revolution, including ethical issues associated with algorithmic design and privacy. Discusses data science as a new occupation that uses data to understand or influence people's behavior. Students will use a sociological lens to explore how our increasingly digital lifestyle changes institutions and social relations.

- [Sociology and Social Inquiry Exemplars](#)

## Course Objectives

- Be able to identify how companies and governments use Big Data and algorithms to benefit and harm at the individual and societal level.
- Be able to identify how companies and governments use Big Data and algorithms to identify and target individuals.
- Be able to identify how Big Data has changed the social sciences and how it will affect the social sciences in the future.
- Be able to write up an effective 1-2 page business-style memo on a data and society Topic.

## Prerequisites

None.

## Course Requirements

### Asynchronous Format

Due to COVID-19 this class will be asynchronous. That means that we will NOT meet at any pre-specified time. I will assign readings and videos that you can do at any time that is convenient for you. I will assign activities and discussions that you can do at any time that is convenient for you. This is because we all have disrupted schedules, due to childcare, illness, internet access, sharing laptops, etc. Some of you might even be with your families in other countries, making our regularly scheduled class-time in the middle of the night for you. An asynchronous class will ensure that everyone can learn and participate fully in this trying time. Participation activities will generally be assigned on Monday and do end of day (EOD) Friday.

The problem with an asynchronous class is that we will not get to meet, to know each other well, or to share ideas in person. In addition, I will not be there in class to look over your shoulder and make sure you've all done your reading on time. This means you'll have to be

independent and take your own learning in your hands. There is a lot to learn about social science research and it's exciting. It really is.

While we won't have class time in person or together online, we can still communicate. I will hold a combination of group office hours and individual office hours via Zoom. I encourage you to sign up for my office hours and we can talk via Zoom video conferencing. You can sign up for 10 minute slots during office hours on our canvas website. A document describing how to sign up is under the files tab on canvas. I encourage you to email me at [zalmquist@uw.edu](mailto:zalmquist@uw.edu) and the TAs as needed. Emails are our preferred method of communication (rather than Canvas messages). I will respond to your email within 72 hours. I encourage you to participate in the class discussion on our canvas website. I will monitor and participate in the canvas discussions. Both TAs will also hold group and individual office hours.

## Asynchronous Rhythm

- Lecture Videos will be released Monday Evening
  - I record them Sunday and Monday.
- Reading assignments will be released at the same time.
  - Read Late Work Policy: [SOC 225 - Late Policy](#)
- All participation activities will be due on Sunday at Midnight.
  - Read Late Work Policy: [SOC 225 - Late Policy](#)
- Weekly in person Discussions via zoom (Weeks 1-8) on Wednesdays from 10:00 - 11:20.
  - Extra Credit of .5% of your grade for a total of 4% of your grade can be obtained this way. To get extra credit you need to provide a discussion question before the meeting. See [SOC 225 Weekly Discussion](#) for details.

## EC Synchronous Format

Extra Credit of .5% of your grade for a total of 4% of your grade can be obtained this way. To get extra credit you need to provide a discussion question (half the EC) before the meeting and attend (the other of EC each week).

- See [SOC 225 Weekly Discussion](#) for details.

## Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment or at the end of the discussion section. For lecture material your first point of contact should be me ( [zalmquist@uw.edu](mailto:zalmquist@uw.edu) ) and for Lab material your first point of contact should be the Teaching Assistants:.

## Google Documents

We will make extensive use of Google Drive and google documents.

To log into your UW gmail account to access it. If you have not set it up I recommend going here ([Getting Started with UW G Suite | IT Connect](#)). If you have it set up, you simply need to use the NETID SSO <http://gmail.uw.edu>.

**A note about accessibility for grading:** You should create a folder that you share with [zalmquis@uw.edu](mailto:zalmquis@uw.edu) where you complete all assignments for the course (e.g. Memos and Reading Responses).

## Readings

Weekly readings assignments can be found on the course syllabus. All readings are assumed to be completed before each lecture/seminar. You are expected to read over the class notes each week and make sure you are familiar with the material as the course progresses. Questions are encouraged.

## Reading Responses

At the beginning of each week (Monday) I will post a question about the reading for you to write about in the context of the current week's lectures. You will submit each reading response via canvas with a link to a google document at the end of the week (Sunday). Expectation is that each reading response should be around 200-500 words and be relevant to topics and readings of the week. Readings will be graded as 0, 0.5 or 1 score.

**Your lowest Reading Response grade will be dropped.**

## Participation

Individuals are expected to engage with every weekly module, to have completed every reading, and to participate with questions and discussion on each topic as presented. Participation will be grade as 0, 0.5 or 1 score. Class participation will be based on:

- Data collection tasks (e.g. [google forms](#))
- Data management and analysis (e.g. [google sheets](#))
- Python tutorials through [JupyterHub](#)
- Discussion boards
- Occasional individual and small group activities

**Your 5 lowest Participation grade will be dropped.**

## Memos

Over the quarter you will be asked to write three 2-page Business Memos centered around the concepts covered in the course. See [Course Calendar](#) for due dates. The memos will be structured as follow:

- 1) Research Design

- 2) Data Collection
- 3) Data Analysis

**Your lowest Memo grade will be dropped.**

## Plagiarism

All memos will be run through [SimCheck](#) the University approved plagiarism detection software. The University has a license agreement with SimCheck, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources. The SimCheck Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.

## Grading

### Section A

Base Credit:	1%
Participation:	49%
Reading Responses:	20%
Memos:	30%

### Section B (lab)

Section A Grade:	60%
Section B Grade:	40%

[Section B Final Grade is  $0.4 * (\text{Section B Grade}) + 0.6 * (\text{Section A Grade})$ ]

### Note about grading

Lectures, readings, labs (when relevant), and review sessions are provided for each student's benefit. It is the responsibility of the student to take advantage of these opportunities to acquire and demonstrate mastery of course material, so as to achieve his or her desired grade.

### Letter grade assignment

% Points Earned	Number grade	Letter Grade
100-97	4.0-3.9	A
96-90	3.8-3.5	A-
87-89	3.4-3.2	B+
86-84	3.1-2.9	B

83-80	2.8-2.5	B-
79-77	2.4-2.2	C+
76-74	2.1-1.9	C
73-70	1.8-1.5	C-
69-67	1.4-1.2	D+
66-64	1.1-0.9	D
63-60	0.8-0.7	D-
59-0	0	F

## Reading

### Text Books

- **BB** - Matthew Salganik (2017). *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*.
  - [Bit By Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age \(Free Digital Version\)](#)
  - [Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age](#) (Amazon)
- **SB** - Sarah Brayne (2021). *Predict and Surveil: Data, Discretion, and the Future of Policing*.
  - Available for **FREE from UW Library** - [LINK](#) (Requires sign in)
  - [Predict and Surveil: Data, Discretion, and the Future of Policing](#) (Amazon)
- **MS** - Mario Small (2017). *Someone to Talk to*.
  - Available for **FREE from UW Library** - [LINK](#) (Requires sign in)
  - [Someone To Talk To: How Networks Matter in Practice](#)(Amazon)
- **MK** - Michael Kearns and Aaron Roth (2020). *The Ethical Algorithm: The Science of Socially Aware Algorithm Design*.
  - Available for **FREE from UW Library** - [Link](#) (Requires sign in)
  - [The Ethical Algorithm: The Science of Socially Aware Algorithm Design](#) (Amazon)
- **MR** - Mathew Rafalow (2020). *Digital Divisions: How Schools Create Inequality in the Tech Era*.
  - Available for **FREE in UW Library** - [LINK](#) (Requires sign in)
  - [Digital Divisions: How Schools Create Inequality in the Tech Era](#) (Amazon)
- **BC** - Brian Christian and Tom Griffiths (2016). *Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions*.
  - [Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions](#) (Amazon)

### Research Articles/Popular Press/Online Resources

- See weekly readings.

# Course Calendar

	DOW	Date	Holidays	Reading Response	Participation	Memo	Readings	Lectures
Week 0	Introductions							
	Mon	3/29/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">00 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	3/31/2021						<a href="#">00 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 1	Data Science							
	Mon	4/5/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">01 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	4/7/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">01 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 2	Privacy - Overview							
	Mon	4/12/2021				Memo 1 Available	<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">02 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	4/14/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">02 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 3	Privacy - Location Systems							
	Mon	4/19/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">03 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	4/21/2021		Due Sunday Midnight		Memo 1 Due Sunday Midnight		<a href="#">03 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 4	Social Media - Privacy and Information Passing							
	Mon	4/26/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">04 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	4/28/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">04 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 5	Algorithms - Overview							
	Mon	5/3/2021				Memo 2 Available	<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">05 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	5/5/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">05 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Week 6	Algorithms - Decision Making							

	Mon	5/10/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">06 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	5/12/2021		Due Sunday Midnight		Memo 2 Due Sunday Midnight		<a href="#">06 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
<b>Algorithms - Bias</b>								
Week 7	Mon	5/17/2021					<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">07 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	5/19/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">07 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
<b>Sociological Inquiry and Big Data - Overview &amp; Education</b>								
Week 8	Mon	5/24/2021				Memo 3 Available	<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">08 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	5/26/2021		Due Sunday Midnight				<a href="#">08 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
<b>Sociological Inquiry and Big Data - Police and Prisons</b>								
Week 9	Mon	5/31/2021	Memorial Day				<a href="#">Readings</a>	<a href="#">09 Week Part 1 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
	Wed	6/2/2021		Due Sunday Midnight		Memo 3 Due Sunday Midnight		<a href="#">09 Week Part 2 - SOC 225: Data and Society</a>
Final Week								

## University of Washington Policies

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form available at: [Religious Accommodations Request Form](#)

### DISABILITY ACCESS & ACCOMMODATIONS:



It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor (me) and DRS. DRS information can be found at: [Disability Resources for Students](#).

### **SOCIOLOGY DIVERSITY STATEMENT:**

The Department of Sociology at the University of Washington values [diversity, equality, and inclusivity](#) in our community. We realize these goals in our classrooms by questioning assumptions in our texts, discussions, and our own thinking, and by holding all members of our community to the highest standards of respectful and open communication, as laid out in the [UW Student Conduct Code](#).

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

See [Student Conduct Code | Community Standards & Student Conduct](#) for crucial information regarding academic integrity. The library also has an extremely useful website with resources at [Library Guides: Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Prevention Resources: Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](#). You are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the University of Washington Student Code, and you will be held responsible for any such violations whether they were intentional or not. A clear list of rules and examples of violations can be found here: [Student Academic Responsibility](#)

### **MANDATORY REPORTING STATEMENT**

\* CAUTION! Please note that we are mandatory reporters, which means that we may be required to report it to the University if you share with me experiences of past abuse or plans to harm yourself and others.

## **UW Student Resources**

### **STUDENT RESEARCH RESOURCES:**

- *Libraries:* [University of Washington Libraries](#)
- *Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS):* [Home | Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences](#)

- *Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR)*: [The Center for Social Science Computation and Research](#)  
*Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE)*: [Computing](#)

## UW WRITING CENTERS

- *Sociology Writing Center* (open to all students enrolled in this course): SAV 203; [Sociology Writing Center](#) 206.221.0972  
Students who want to make an appointment should email [writesoc@uw.edu](mailto:writesoc@uw.edu).  
Students may also make appointments by calling or visiting the Advising Office.
- *Odegaard Writing and Research Center* (open to all students) : [Odegaard Undergraduate Library — UW Libraries](#). Phone 206.221.0972 and 206.543.5396.
- *Center for Undergraduate Learning and Education (CLUE)*: email [clue@uw.edu](mailto:clue@uw.edu)  
[This Week at CLUE: UW Academic Support Programs](#).

## OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

### Dispute Resolution and Bias Reporting Supports

- *Office of the Ombud*: [Office of the Ombud](#) 206-543-6028
- *Bias Report* (for incidents of bias in any form): [Report Bias](#)
- *Community Standards & Student Conduct*: [Making a report | Community Standards & Student Conduct](#)
- *Title IX/ADA Coordinator* if complaint is related to disability accommodation, sex/gender discrimination, or sexual harassment (Title IX): (scroll down to bottom of page to “Grievance Procedures & Barrier Reporting”) [Policy, law and reporting | Compliance](#)

### Financial Assistance

- *Emergency Aid*: [Seattle | Emergency Aid](#)
- *Office of Student Financial Aid*: [Contact us | Student Financial Aid](#)
- *Short Term Emergency Loans*: [Short-term loans | Student Financial Aid](#)
- *Campus Food Pantry*: [Get-Food](#)
- *Housing Assistance*: [Other assistance | Student Financial Aid](#)

### Mental Health Supports

- *Health and Wellness office*: [LiveWell Center for Student Advocacy, Training, and Education](#) 206.543.6085
- *Hall Health*: <http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/>
- *Hall Health Mental Health*: [Hall Health](#)
- *Counseling Center*: [About the Counseling Center | Counseling Center](#)
- *Resources Re: Sexual / Relationship Trauma*:\* [Sexual Assault Resources](#)

### Building Community

- *Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity*: [Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity](#)

- Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center: [Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural](#)
- Q Center (for Queer community, including Questioning): [Q Center](#)
- Intellectual House (for Indigenous community): [wələbʔaltx<sup>w</sup> – Intellectual House | Diversity at the UW](#)
- International Student Center: [International Student Services - International Student Services](#)
- Deaf and Disability Cultural Center (D Center): HUB 327 [D Center at the University of Washington](#)
- Undocumented Student Resources: [Undocumented student resources | Admissions](#)

Technology Supports (and remote learning related supports)

- IT Connect (tech support services for students): [Teaching and Learning Tools](#)
- Internet connection and free wifi hotspots (enabled during COVID-19 outbreak) [Internet connectivity for learning, teaching and working remotely](#)
- Laptop Loans Remember that through the technology fees that you pay you can reserve a laptop if you need to! [Laptops for takeout or delivery: Student technology program readies for spring quarter](#)
- Online Academic Success Coaching: [Success Coaching: UW Academic Support Programs](#)
- Online Study Skills Resources: (e.g. time management) [Study Skills: UW Academic Support Programs](#)
- Video on preparing for online learning: <https://vimeo.com/4012001600>