UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Videosorveglianza, Datafication e Nuove Forme di Controllo

2425-2-F8803N012

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of video surveillance, datafication and control practices in contemporary society. Students will explore the sociological, ethical and legal implications of surveillance and how it affects power relations, privacy and security. At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. critically analyse video surveillance and datafication practices;
2. evaluate the ethical and legal implications of surveillance technologies;
3. critically analyse algorithms and automated decision-making processes;
4. articulate informed positions on current debates regarding surveillance and control by exploring future alternatives to surveillance.

Contents

The course will cover the following topics:
Theories of social control: from disciplinary society to biopolitics and the securitarian state;
Video surveillance between security and social control;
Resistance and alternatives to surveillance: opposition movements and evasion techniques;
Datafication and Big Data: definitions, concepts and social impacts;
Ethical and legal aspects of surveillance: privacy and data protection.

Detailed program

Module 1: Control and Surveillance Practices

- Penalties and social control
- Panopticon and disciplinary society
- Birth of Biopolitics: security measures
- Securitarian state and surveillance normalisation

References:
M. Foucault, La verità e le forme giuridiche, par. 4 e 5, «Archivio Foucault. Interventi, colloqui, interviste», vol. 2: «1971 - 1977. Poteri, saperi, strategie» in (a cura di A. Dal Lago e A. Petrillo), Michel Foucault. Prigioni e intorni. Detti e scritti tratti dall'«Archivio Foucault», Feltrinelli, Milano 1997, pp. 42-63
M. Foucault, Diritto di morte e potere sulla vita, cap. V de La Volontà di Sapere. Storia della sessualità vol. 1, Feltrinelli, Milano 1991, pp. 119-142
G. Agamben (2017), Per una teoria del potere destituente. Conferenza pubblica (Atene, 16 novembre 2013), trascrizione a cura di ??????. Traduzione di Giacomo Mercuriali

Module 2: City surveillance and video surveillance

- Surveillance and social control in cities
- History and theory of video surveillance
- National security and video surveillance
- Surveillance and big events

References:
D. Lyon, La società sorvegliata, Tecnologie di controllo della vita quotidiana, Feltrinelli, Milano 2002, capp. 1, 2, 4.
T. Monahan (2018), The Image of the Smart City: Surveillance Protocols and Social Inequality. In Handbook of Cultural Security, edited by Y. Watanabe. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 210-226.
F. Zambelli (2015), Videosorveglianza e grandi eventi: Una questione di legacy. Sicurezza, Terrorismo e Società, 1, pp. 191-212.
C. Fonio (2011), The silent growth of video surveillance in Italy. Information Polity, 16, pp. 379-388.

Module 3: Datafication and social control

- Definition and concepts of datafication
- Big Data and society
- Algorithms and automated decision-making processes
- Ethical impacts of surveillance and datafication

References:
D. Lyon, La cultura della sorveglianza, Luiss, Roma 2020 (cap. 1, 2, 3, 5)
S. Zuboff, Capitalismo della sorveglianza, Luiss, Roma 2019 (cap 1,2,3,4)
C. O' Neil, Armi di distruzione matematica. Come i Big Data aumentano la disuguaglianza e minacciano la democrazia, Bompiani, Milano/Firenze 2017 (cap 5)

Module 4: Resistance and Alternatives to Surveillance

- Movements against surveillance
- Tools and techniques for evading surveillance
- Alternatives to surveillance

References:
Miconi, A. (2024). On digital fetishism: a critique of the big data paradigm. Critical Sociology, 50(4-5), 629-642.
Moretti, V. (2023). If you see something post something. Percezione del rischio e sorveglianza digitale nei campus americani. Bologna University Press. (Cap 7 e conclusioni)
Terranova, T. (2017). Red Stack Attack: Algorithms, Capital and the Automation of the Common'. In: Across and Beyond. A Transmediale Reader on Post-Digital Practices, Concepts and Institutions. (pp. 202-220). Sternberg Press.

Prerequisites

no prerequisites

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 hours, of which approximately 50% is delivered through lectures (face-to-face lessons with support tools) and 50% through interactive teaching (exercises, work in subgroups, presentation of case studies from which to develop individual and subgroup work, prepared and discussed during the course).

Assessment methods

There are two different ways of evaluating learning. The first consists of the presentation of a series of papers based on instructions that the teacher will provide in class. At the end of the course there will be a final discussion for an overall evaluation that also takes into account the intermediate evaluation provided by the papers.
The second option consists of an oral exam at the end of the course.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. G. Agamben (2017), Per una teoria del potere destituente. Conferenza pubblica (Atene, 16 novembre 2013), trascrizione a cura di ??????. Traduzione di Giacomo Mercuriali
2. C. Fonio (2011), The silent growth of video surveillance in Italy. Information Polity, 16, pp. 379-388.
3. M. Foucault, La verità e le forme giuridiche, par. 4 e 5, «Archivio Foucault. Interventi, colloqui, interviste», vol. 2: «1971 - 1977. Poteri, saperi, strategie» in (a cura di A. Dal Lago e A. Petrillo), Michel Foucault. Prigioni e intorni. Detti e scritti tratti dall'«Archivio Foucault», Feltrinelli, Milano 1997, pp. 42-63
4. M. Foucault, Diritto di morte e potere sulla vita, cap. V de La Volontà di Sapere. Storia della sessualità vol. 1, Feltrinelli, Milano 1991, pp. 119-142
5. D. Lyon, La società sorvegliata, Tecnologie di controllo della vita quotidiana, Feltrinelli, Milano 2002.
6. D. Lyon, La cultura della sorveglianza, Luiss, Roma 2020
7. Miconi, A. (2024). On digital fetishism: a critique of the big data paradigm. Critical Sociology, 50(4-5), 629-642.
8. T. Monahan (2018), The Image of the Smart City: Surveillance Protocols and Social Inequality. In Handbook of Cultural Security, edited by Y. Watanabe. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 210-226.
9. V. Moretti (2023). If you see something post something. Percezione del rischio e sorveglianza digitale nei campus americani. Bologna University Press.
10. C. O' Neil, Armi di distruzione matematica. Come i Big Data aumentano la disuguaglianza e minacciano la democrazia, Bompiani, Milano/Firenze 2017
11. Terranova, T. (2017). Red Stack Attack: Algorithms, Capital and the Automation of the Common'. In: Across and Beyond. A Transmediale Reader on Post-Digital Practices, Concepts and Institutions. (pp. 202-220). Sternberg Press.
12. F. Zambelli (2015), Videosorveglianza e grandi eventi: Una questione di legacy. Sicurezza, Terrorismo e Società, 1, pp. 191-212.
13. S. Zuboff, Capitalismo della sorveglianza, Luiss, Roma 2019

Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS