COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Ai

2425-2-F551MI027

Learning objectives

To introduce students to major current issues underpinning critical approach to Artificial Intelligence and algorithmic studies vis a vis the political economy of media and communication;
To develop the students' understanding of the underlying ideological assumptions behind digital media technology, mediated representations and informational and communicative labor;
To shift the perspective from 'artificial' to social intelligence.

Expected learning outcomes:
-To provide an array of tools to deconstruct complex ideological constructs such as 'technological solutionism,' 'technological determinism' and 'technological fetishism;'
-To be able to crack open the so-called black box of current digital and AI-driven technology from a critical sociological perspective;
-To be able to assess the role played by AI (and Information Communication Technology in general) in producing and reproducing capitalist structures;

-To be able to treat technology not as a product but a socially and historically determined process;
-Possess general knowledge of the ethical implications of existing AI driven technologies
how they shape and are shaped by society.

Contents

This course provides a synthetic social and intellectual history of the idea Artificial Intelligence, of algorithms, computational reasoning and the process of datafication.

Detailed program

Industrial age:
-Babbage and the mechanisation of mental labor
-the machinery question
-the origin of Marx's General Intellect
-the abstraction of labour
Information age:
-the self organisation of the cybernetic mind
-the automation of pattern recognition
-Hayek and the epistemology of connection
-the invetion of Perceptron

Sociology of Algorithms
-Culture in the code
-Code in the Culture
A theory of machine habitus
-Techno-social Reproduction

Prerequisites

Teaching methods

The Course consists of 24 hours, of which approximately 50% with didactic delivery (lectures with use of slides, audio and video) and 50% with interactive teaching (exercises, subgroup work, presentation of case studies from which to develop individual and subgroup work, prepared and discussed during the course)

Assessment methods

Final Paper
weekly assesments
Weekly reading facilitations

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Textbooks:
Pasquinelli, M. (2023). The eye of the master: A Social History of Artificial Intelligence. Verso Books.
Airoldi, M. (2024) Machine Habitus. Sociologia degli algoritmi. Luis University Press.

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | ZERO HUNGER | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | DECENT WORK AND

ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS