The “information society”—an information-intensive world in which information and technology form the basis of employment and every-day activities, with the promise of increased wellbeing, economic advancement, and quality of life—has been proclaimed since the 1973 publication of Daniel Bell’s book, The Coming of Post Industrial Society. By all the evidence—from smart phones, to the cloud, to wearable technology—it is clear that we now live in an information society. But has it delivered on its promises of increased quality of life and work?

This course will take a critical look at the promises and perils of the information society. The purpose is to develop critical thinking about the promises, unintended consequences, and future challenges for the information society by those who will be helping to create and lead it.

Topics to be Included

In the class we will look together at issues for some key aspects of the information society such as: the economy and innovation, democracy, the information professions, globalization, higher education and social inclusion. Students will also do an independent project which will be shared with the rest of the class in seminar fashion. A combination of learning approaches will be used in the course including lecture, discussion, independent research and writing, and seminar. The first half of the class will be instructor-driven, with predetermined topics and assigned readings. The second half of the course will be student-driven with seminar presentations based on students’ individual project topics.

Target Audience

This course is intended for those who will be creating the information society: junior and senior undergraduate students in the College of IST. This course might also be a 400-level option for IST graduate students.

Evaluation Methods

The course will include a semester-long, independent project. Evaluation of the course will include participation in class activities and discussions, written assignments, and project presentation and report.