

# SOCY 309: Surveillance & Visibility

Winter 2020

Monday (8:30-10), Thursday (10-11:30)

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## Instructor

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## Course description

Surveillance is a defining feature of our social, political, and economic lives. Whether we know it or not – and whether we consent or not – we are all being surveilled in one way or another. We are subjects of surveillance when we access healthcare, go shopping, attend university, and travel across the border. Despite the serious consequences these surveillance systems can have for our daily lives, we know relatively little about how these systems operate and how their consequences are differentially distributed and experienced across social groups.

In this course, we will learn theories of how surveillance systems are built, how they work, and their consequences. In doing so, we will work to move beyond the binary that equates “surveillance = visibility = bad” and “privacy = invisibility = good.” Instead, we will ask: how does surveillance make some things visible but others invisible, with what benefits, and to whom?

The course is organized in two parts. During the first six weeks of the term, we will learn several surveillance theories that conceptualize what surveillance is, how it operates, and what consequences it has for social order and inequality. What exactly is *new* or *different* about surveillance? How has digitization shaped the form, scope, and depth of surveillance? How does surveillance target and produce racialized, gendered, and classed populations? In the second half of the course, we will apply these theories to six different institutions: consumption and work; policing; education; health; social services; and collective action. Our goal will be to explore how surveillance is deployed in various contexts in ways that generate, alleviate, or reinforce inequalities. What are these systems making (in)visible? What kinds of knowledge about social groups do they produce, and how does this shape how raced, gendered, and classed individuals interact with social institutions? Throughout, we will also keep an eye on how surveillance systems *themselves* are made to be (in)visible. What do we know about these systems? How does this knowledge shape our understandings of social processes?

## Learning objectives

1. *Theory*. By the end of the course, students will be able to distinguish between theories of surveillance, identify their assumptions and core arguments, and apply them to empirical examples.
2. *Analysis*. Students will develop analytic skills that will help them understand and critically assess contemporary developments of surveillance systems.
3. *Communication*. Students will be able to communicate to lay persons how contemporary surveillance systems work and how they impact social life.

## Organization

This course will be taught through two lectures per week. Starting Week 3 (Jan 20), there will be 8 unannounced, pop in-class assignments to be completed on paper during the last 20 minutes of the lecture. This means it is important that you attend class regularly and keep up with the readings.

## Readings and resources

There is no textbook for this course. All readings, lecture slides, and contact information will be available via onQ. Note that this material is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in the course. Do not distribute or disseminate this material to anyone other than students registered in the course. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate's Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

## Assignments, grading, submissions, and late policy

Your grade in this course will be made up of 4 assignments: eight in-class reading reflections and three short essays.

*Reading reflections*. There will be **eight** pop in-class assignments throughout the term. The goal of the reflections is for you to articulate what you have learned from the reading and lecture from that day. The reflections will only ask about material assigned and taught on the day of the reflection. I will set aside 20 minutes at the end of lecture for you to complete the reflection. You are not permitted to use any electronic devices while you write your reflection. I will not announce them beforehand. You may miss one reading reflection without penalty.

*Surveillance reflection*. To get you started thinking about how surveillance permeates many aspects of our daily lives, the first assignment asks you to reflect on your experiences being under surveillance. Using Foucault's theory of the panopticon and internalization of surveillance, you will be asked to provide and reflect on personal experiences to explore how surveillance shapes behavior.

*Theory paper*. To assess your understanding of the first half of the course, there is a 4-5-page theory paper due at the end of Week 6. The assignment asks you to explore in-depth one surveillance theory of your choice and explore how it conceptualizes surveillance and visibility.

*Final essay.* The final assignment brings together everything you have learned about in the course. I will ask you to use 1-2 theoretical approaches to explore a surveillance technology of your choice.

<b>Grade component</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Reading reflections	Jan 20 – March 30	20%
Surveillance reflection	Feb 9	25%
Theory paper	March 8	25%
Final essay	April 5	30%

Grading will be equally distributed between myself and your two Teaching Assistants. Grading groups will be announced after enrollment closes on January 17.

All assignments are submitted through onQ. I only grant extensions in exceptional circumstances which are out of your control, and in these cases I require documentation (e.g. QSAS accommodations, a doctor's note). Assignments submitted without an approved extension will be deducted 5% of the overall grade per day.

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Range</b>
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

## Academic integrity

Queen's students, faculty, administrators, and staff all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)) and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing, and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the regulations concerning academic integrity. General information on academic integrity is available at [Integrity@Queen's University](mailto:Integrity@Queen's University), along with Faculty or School specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery, and falsification. Actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

For additional tips on how to avoid unintentional plagiarism, please see the following websites:

- <https://www.queensu.ca/academicintegrity/students/avoiding-plagiarismcheating>
- <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing>
- [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_paraphrase.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_paraphrase.html)

## Accommodations

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website.

## Academic considerations

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time.

Each faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and portal where a request can be submitted at: <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations>. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

**Copyright on course materials**

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell, or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale, or other means of dissemination without the instructor's *express consent*. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

## Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignments
**	**	<b>Part I. What is surveillance?</b>	
1	Jan 6, Jan 9	Defining surveillance and visibility	
2	Jan 13, Jan 16	Panopticism & post-panopticism	
3	Jan 20, Jan 23	Surveillance & the digital	
4	Jan 27, Jan 30	The political economy of surveillance	
5	Feb 3, Feb 6	Racializing & gendering surveillance	#1 Due: Feb 9
6	Feb 10, Feb 13	Lateral surveillance	
7	Feb 17, Feb 20	<b>**Reading Week**</b>	
**	**	<b>Part II. Surveillance &amp; contemporary institutions</b>	
8	Feb 24, Feb 27	Consumption & work	
9	Mar 2, Mar 5	Policing	#2 Due: Mar 8
10	Mar 9, Mar 12	Education	
11	Mar 16, Mar 19	Social services	
12	Mar 23, Mar 26	Interpersonal relationships	
13	Mar 30, Apr 2	Collective action and resistance	#3 Due: April 5

## Readings

### Week 1: Defining surveillance and visibility

- Mon, Jan 6 // Course overview
  - Lyon, David. 2007. "Spreading Surveillance Sites." Pp. 25-45 in *Surveillance Studies: An Overview*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Thurs, Jan 9 // Visibility, truth, and objectivity
  - Goodwin, Charles. 1994. "Professional Vision." *American Anthropologist* 96(3): 606-633.

## Week 2: Panopticism & post-panopticism

- Mon, Jan 13 // Theorizing surveillance with and beyond the panopticon
  - Foucault, Michel. 1995 [1977]. "Panopticism." Excerpts from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books.
- Thurs, Jan 16 // Theorizing surveillance with and beyond the panopticon
  - Mathiesen, Thomas. 1997. "The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' Revisited." *Theoretical Criminology* 1(2): 215-234.

## Week 3: Surveillance & the digital

- Mon, Jan 20 // Producing, dissecting, and combining data
  - Haggerty, Kevin D. and Richard V. Ericson. 2000. "The Surveillant Assemblage." *British Journal of Sociology* 51(4): 605-622.
- Thurs, Jan 23 // Big data, pre-emption, and prediction
  - Kitchin, Rob. 2014. "Big Data, New Epistemologies and Paradigm Shifts." *Big Data & Society* 2: 1-12.

## Week 4: The political economy of surveillance

- Mon, Jan 27 // Data capitalism, Part I
  - Sadowski, Jathan. 2019. "When Data is Capital: Datafication, Accumulation, and Extraction." *Big Data & Society* 1: 1-12.
- Thurs, Jan 30 // Data capitalism, Part II
  - Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. "The Discovery of Behavioral Surplus." Pp. 63-97 in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.

## Week 5: Racializing surveillance

- Mon, Feb 3 // Racializing and gendering surveillance
  - Browne, Simone. 2015. "Notes on Surveillance Studies." Pp. 16-18, 31-56 in *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Thurs, Feb 6 // Race and the politics of inclusion
  - Benjamin, Ruha. 2019. "Coded Exposure: Is Visibility a Trap?" Pp. 97-136 in *Race After Technology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

## Week 6: Lateral surveillance

- Mon, Feb 10 // Surveilling each other
  - Marwick, Alice. 2012. "The Public Domain: Social Surveillance in Everyday Life." *Surveillance & Society* 9(4): 378-393.
- Thurs, Feb 13 // Responsibilizing Risk
  - Andrejevic, Mark. 2005. "The Work of Watching One Another: Lateral Surveillance, Risk, and Governance." *Surveillance & Society* 2(4): 479-497.

## Week 7: READING WEEK

## Week 8: Consumption & work

- Mon, Feb 24 // Sorting consumers
  - Lauer, Josh. 2017. "Running the Credit Gantlet: Extracting, Ordering, and Communicating Consumer Information." Pp. 104-125 in *Creditworthy: A History of Consumer Surveillance and Financial Identity in America*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Thurs, Feb 27 // Producing 'good' workers
  - Levy, Karen and Solon Barocas. 2018. "Refractive Surveillance: Monitoring Customers to Manage Workers." *International Journal of Communication* 12: 1166-1188.

## Week 9: Policing

- Mon, March 2 // Police body cameras: who gets to see what?
  - Beutin, Lyndsey P. 2017. "Racialization as a Way of Seeing: The Limits of Counter-Surveillance and Police Reform." *Surveillance & Society* 15(1): 5-20.
- Thurs, March 5 // Surveillance at the border
  - Nuñez, Adriana C. 2019. "Collateral Subjects: The Normalization of Surveillance for Mexican Americans on the Border." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* pp. 1-14.

## Week 10: Education

- Mon, March 9 // Children at school
  - Williamson, Ben. 2015. "Algorithmic Skin: Health-Tracking Technologies, Personal Analytics and Biopedagogies of Digitized Health and Physical Education." *Sport, Education and Society* 20(1): 133-151.
- Thurs, March 11 // Security in the wake of mass shootings
  - Gillum, Jack and Jeff Kao. 2019. "Aggression Detectors: The Unproven, Invasive Surveillance Technology Schools Are Using to Monitor Students." *ProPublica* <https://features.propublica.org/aggression-detector/the-unproven-invasive-surveillance-technology-schools-are-using-to-monitor-students/>

## Week 11: Social services

- Mon, March 16 // Automating social services
  - Eubanks, Virginia. 2017. "The Allegheny Algorithm." Pp. 127-173 in *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Thurs, March 19 // Monitoring the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor
  - No reading – Finish Eubanks from Monday.



### **Week 12: Interpersonal relationships**

- Mon, March 23 // Anticipating surveillance: Self-presentation online
  - Duffy, Brooke Erin and Ngai Keung Chan. 2018. "You Never Really Know Who's Looking': Imagined Surveillance Across Social Media Platforms." *New Media & Society* 21(1): 119-138.
- Thurs, March 26 // Who wants privacy from whom?
  - boyd, danah. 2014. "Privacy: Why Do Youth Share So Publicly?" Pp. 54-76 in *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

### **Week 13 // Collective action & resistance**

- Mon, March 30 // Critiquing surveillance
  - Rider, Karina. 2018. "The Privacy Paradox: How Market Privacy Facilitates Government Surveillance." *Information, Communication & Society* 21(10): 1369-1385.
- Thurs, April 2 // No class
  - Myself and TA's will hold office hours instead