

Syllabus: GBDA 302

Course Description

In this course, students will engage in advanced study of digital culture and globalization. They will work on a project focusing on social and environmental change in its wider context, to use systems thinking as a guiding approach to understanding complex global challenges. Students will prepare and present a complete digital systems map designed for the international “Map the System” Challenge.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

A. Develop research and written communication skills:

- Conducting relevant, credible research
- Communicating in writing and oral presentation the values, meaning and social implications of a design project

B. Collaborate effectively in virtual teamwork by:

- Proactively identify, analyze, and address problems in collaborations
- Cultivating a collaborative mindset: appreciate the benefit of diversity, embrace productive conflict, cultivate empathy, and be open-minded

C. Develop a familiarity with Systems Thinking by:

- Identify a complex problem, the stakeholders, solutions at play, and levers for change
- Creating a better understanding of the social, cultural, economic, political, and technological interactions related to your topic and how they impact global trends
- Creating a system map by visually mapping out a problem in its wider context
- Articulating the findings in a way that viewers can meaningfully understand and engage with

Course Project

Oxford University's 2021 [Map the System](#) challenge will be used as the course project. Each team will pick one of the topics listed below to work on for the duration of the course:

- 1) Social and Environmental Impact
- 2) Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning
- 3) Gender and Inclusive Design
- 4) Big Data, Algorithms

Required Reading

Each team will select one book from the list below as the topic of their choice:

1. Lee, Kai-Fu. **Ai Superpowers**. 2018. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (Artificial Intelligence)
2. O'Neill, Cathy. **Weapons of Math Destruction**. 2017. Broadway Books (Big Data and Inequality)
3. Perez, Caroline Criado. **Invisible Women**. 2019. Abrams Press (Gender and Inclusive Design)
4. Rosling, Hans. 2018. **Factfulness**. Flatiron Books (Social Impact)

These books will be used as the course textbooks. Each week, one of the teams will lead and facilitate a virtual **book club**, an interactive class discussion on a chapter of the book of their choice. You are only required to read one of these books, but I highly recommend you are reading all four, because [#gbdaReads](#) 🤖

Course Assessment

The following table represents the grade breakdown of this course.

	Activities and Assignments	Weight (%)	Due Date
Team	Industry Project: Map the System	45	

	Activities and Assignments	Weight (%)	Due Date
	1 - Systems Map: Visual Systems Map	(60)	Apr 2, 7 PM EST
	2 - Systems Map: Written Summary of Research (max 3,000 words)	(10) pass/fail	Apr 2, 7 PM EST
	3 - Systems Map: Bibliography	(10) pass/fail	Mar 26, 7 PM EST
	4 - Systems Map: Video Submission	(20) pass/fail	Apr 2, 7 PM EST
	Facilitated Virtual Bookclub	20	TBA
Individual	Topic Reflection	25	Apr 16, 7 PM EST
	Surprise Assignments * (x2, 5% each)	10 (pass/fail)	Jan 22, Feb 19, 7 PM EST

This reflects 35% of individual work and 65% of group work.

*You will be required to complete 2 small surprise assignments throughout the semester. These may include quizzes, short activities, or other formats as determined by the instructor.

Map The System (MTS) 📍

Visual Systems Map, written summary, bibliography, and video submission

More detailed information for these assignments can be found on the [Map the System Canada](#) website. I will be discussing more details in the lectures ahead.

Course Communication 📞

[Slack](#) will be used as the main class communication tool. Teams **MUST** use their designated Slack channel for all course-related communication in order for the teaching team to provide assistance and support.

Deadlines 📅

All assignments are due on the day and time indicated in the [class schedule](#) and uploaded to the designated Dropbox folder. Extensions to assignment deadlines will be granted only in cases of illness or emergency. Extensions are granted based on the discretion of the instructor. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make their requests and provide credible documentation (such as a doctor's note or a Verification of Illness Form).

Late Work 🙄

All assignments submitted late without approved extensions will be subject to late penalties. 5% will be deducted for projects that are handed in within 24hrs after the deadline and an additional 5% per day thereafter (including weekends) up to a maximum of 50%. After that time a grade of 0% will be assigned for the late work. Late penalties are not recoverable.

For group work: If one of you happens to be sick, the rest of your team members will be there to present for you or to upload your work. Ensure that you use your Slack team channel for sharing your slides, research, design, other documents and media so that any team member can theoretically present all material involved, and a backup plan is in place if your key presenter cannot be present.

Course and Department Policies

University Policies

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy

and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit an alternate assignment.

University policies are from the course outline template: June 15, 2009 (updated March 2018)**Coronavirus Information**

Coronavirus Information for Students

This resource provides updated information on COVID-19 and guidance for accommodations due to COVID-19.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports and resources when they are needed. You can reach out to [Campus Wellness](#) and learn about the variety of services available to promote your mental health and wellbeing.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Even though this semester is virtual, our university is built on land that is not ours. Given that in this course, GBDA 302, we are looking to better understand the world we live in, I encourage you to learn about the Indigenous People that are the original owners of these lands.

🎓 As a side note, at the time of this writing, Jan 8, 2021, I have enrolled in a free Coursera course called '[Indigenous Canada](#)' to learn more about the Indigenous peoples of our country. If you got this far in reading the syllabus and you would like to join me in this course, we'd be students together! Here is the land acknowledgement:

"We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Neutral, [Anishinaabeg](#), and [Haudenosaunee](#) peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the [Haldimand Tract](#), the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River."

Course Copyright © Karin Schmidlin