

CS300T- Computers in Society

Fall 2025

Course Syllabus

There is no textbook. There are no exams.

1. Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have gained an increased awareness of the relative impact that technological development and the digital computer have had on society. More specifically, students will be able to:

- Examine and summarize the impact of computer technology on historical and contemporary societal issues.
- Describe the influence of digital communication and social networks.
- Analyze the impact of computer crime and fraud.
- Analyze intellectual property rights and constitutional issues in the context of historical and contemporary computer technology.
- Analyze technological reliability in the context of historical failures (e.g., Therac-25).
- Identify contemporary computer systems (hardware and/or software) and investigate the technological reliability in these contemporary systems.
- Describe and differentiate ethical and unethical uses of computer technology.
- Explain the fundamental importance of privacy and encryption in contemporary systems.

Course information exists as content modules in CANVAS. Students are responsible for reading and completing these modules according to the course schedule.

Course Limitations

The subject area of "Computers in Society" is so vast that CS300T can do nothing more than scratch the surface. We will aim for breadth rather than depth in the course modules and for depth rather than breadth in assignments. We will strive to strike a balance between a systematic approach provided through the course documents and a current-event dominated approach for the research-oriented parts of the course.

2. Course Modules

1. History of Computers
2. History of the Internet
3. Societal Issues
4. Communication

5. Privacy, Crime and Prevention
6. Education
7. Medicine
8. Transportation
9. Intellectual Property and Constitutional Issues
10. Reliability
11. Professional Ethics and Responsibilities
12. Finance and Business
13. Entertainment
14. Marketing and Trade

3. Group Assignment & Calendar

During the second week of class, each student will be assigned to a color-coded group. This assignment will be visible under the *Groups* section of CANVAS. This designation determines topics and deadlines for all assignments.

The **Calendar** in your group webpage provides a list of all assignment deadlines for your group only. **All Assignments are due on the listed dates no later than 11:59pm ET (GMT -05:00).**

4. Assignment Overview

Each major assignment corresponds to a specific Module—with the exception of the Research Paper. Review the full documentation for all assignments. **The requirements for each assignment include guidance and samples.**

Biography Blog

The Biography Blog serves as an introductory assignment. It provides students an opportunity to introduce themselves to their colleagues. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on CANVAS under **Blog -> Requirement.**

Blog Posts

The Blog Posts are **individual** assignments. All six Blog Posts are required. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on CANVAS under **Blog->Requirement.**

Presentation

The Presentation is an **individual** assignment. It is composed of two parts:

1. Presentation Thesis & Outline
2. Final Presentation.

All students will submit an **individual** Presentation during one of six weeks based on their Group. Each student will select a thesis that relates to the assigned Module. All Presentations must pertain to the assigned Module. **For web courses, students must include either audio or a transcript indexed to the individual slides.**

Presentation Critiques:

This is also an **individual assignment**. All students will submit Presentation Critiques for all presentations **including** those submitted by their own group members. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on CANVAS under **Presentation->Requirements**.

Research Paper

The Research Paper is an **individual** assignment. It is composed of three parts:

1. Research Thesis & Outline
2. Rough Draft
3. Final Research Paper

Students will individually select a topic for the Research Paper. Students will then create a thesis with a preliminary outline and submit it for feedback. Students will submit their Rough Draft (one submission attempt) to Turnitin, a plagiarism checking tool.

Students will check if their Turnitin Originality score exceeds 25% and are advised to evaluate the issues raised by the report. Students will submit a Final Research Paper, after making corrections to the draft if necessary.

A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on CANVAS under **Research Paper->Requirements**.

Extra Credit Paper (Optional)

The Extra Credit Paper is an **individual** assignment. Students may write **one** extra credit paper to receive up to 10 extra credit points. A grade of 0 will be awarded if the length is substantially below the required length. **Grades for the Extra Credit Paper will be posted during the last three weeks of the course.**

The Extra Credit Paper can be on any topic within the following modules:

- Module 1: History of Computers
- Module 2: History of the Internet
- Module 7: Medicine
- Module 8: Transportation
- Module 11: Ethics

Extra Credit Papers may be included/integrated into the Modules for future offerings of CS 300T. By staying registered in the course, students agree to this use of their contributed material.

5. Course Grading

You can see your progress in the course in the total column in CANVAS Grade Center. The total column is your total grade for the semester, computing all un-submitted and un-graded assignments as '0.'

All assignments will be graded within 14 days. The Research Paper Outline/Thesis, and Presentation Thesis/Outline are exceptions and feedback will be provided by the Sunday of the week it is submitted. For details see the appropriate requirements documents.

Graded Element	Points Towards Final Grade
Blog Posts – one introduction, six module specific	
Biography Blog Post	2

Module Blog Posts	(4 points each) 24
Presentation	
Thesis & Outline	2
Complete Presentation	25
Presentation Critiques – six critiques	(2 points each) 12

Research Paper	
Thesis & Outline	4
Rough Draft	1
Final Draft	30

Total Points	100
Bonus – Extra Credit Paper	10

CS 300 uses the following grading schema:

A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	0-59

With the exception of Presentation Critiques, a completed rubric will contain feedback for each assignment grade. You will be able to access the completed rubrics by visiting **Grades** on the Navigation bar and clicking on the corresponding assignment grade.

You are permitted one submission attempt per assignment. If you experience technical difficulties—e.g., an incomplete file is submitted or the file upload is unsuccessful—**contact the instructor before the assignment deadline**. Include the issue you experienced, CRN, and assignment—as an attachment—in your email.

6. Course Policies

Any assignment submission turned in after the corresponding due date will be assigned a grade of **ZERO**, unless the instructor has provided **prior permission**. Any student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the presentation or research paper may possibly not pass the course regardless of overall point total.

Plagiarism & ODU Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the ODU Honor Code. This means that *all* assignments are to be the exclusive work of the student. For more details on the ODU honor code, refer to the honor pledge, <https://www.odu.edu/about/monarchcitizenship>.

Any plagiarism will be dealt with severely with a minimum penalty of a grade of **ZERO** for the assignment. This is considered a violation of the Honor Code and could result in formal charges.

7. Communication

All communication must remain professional and respectful. All course related communication MUST be done through CANVAS and ODU email. Questions and concerns will be read by the instructor and/or a teaching assistant.

My Contact Information

Title:	Instructor
Name:	Rekha Gupta
Office Location:	1100c DRAGAS HALL
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 1 - 2 pm
Email:	rgupta@cs.odu.edu
Phone:	757-683-7733

Contact Policy

I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. For any course-related communication, please use your ODU email, as I will not respond to non-ODU emails.

8. Computer Competency

All students are expected to be familiar with and able to use Microsoft Office, specifically Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. The Research Paper and Presentation must be completed using Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint, respectively. Old Dominion University provides access to Office365 for all registered students. More information can be found on the ITS home page, <https://www.odu.edu/ts/software-services/office365.html>.

Formatting

Formatting is not preserved when content is copied between Microsoft Word and CANVAS (in either direction). This is an artifact of how different software platforms handle formatting data when "Copying and Pasting" and is not unique to CANVAS. In practice, you have probably encountered this before (e.g., spacing in email).

Apply formatting only in the final tool (e.g., if you are working on a Blog Post, applying formatting directly in CANVAS).

9. Technical Issues and Questions

Students having technical issues accessing or using certain systems should consult first the available online documentation and tutorials in CANVAS. If problems persist, contact next the teaching assistants who specialize in the area of the problem before communicating with the instructor for your course section. This can be done through email or posting your questions under **Discussions > Do you have questions?**--where the instructor or students can post responses from which all students can benefit.

Teaching Assistants

TA Information is located under **Professor & TAs**. Questions concerning health and wellness in connection with course load or individual assignments should be directed to your instructor.

10. Educational Accessibility

Old Dominion University is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you experience a disability which will impact your ability to access any aspect of my class, please present the instructor with an accommodation letter from OEA so that we can work together to ensure that appropriate accommodations are available to you.
- If you feel that you will experience barriers to your ability to learn and/or testing in my class but do not have an accommodation letter, please consider scheduling an appointment with OEA to determine if academic accommodations are necessary.

The Office of Educational Accessibility is located at 1021 Student Success Center and their phone number is (757) 683-4655. Additional information is available at the OEA website: <http://www.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>

Students are encouraged to self-disclose disabilities that have been verified by the Office of Educational Accessibility by providing Accommodation Letters to their instructors early in the semester in order to start receiving accommodations. Accommodations will not be made until the Accommodation Letters are provided to instructors each semester.