GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION

Proposal for NEW course "Media Literacy and Data Ethics"

1. **Principal Investigator Name(s) and Academic Title(s)**

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   Cultural Studies

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3. Is this a new course or a currently existing course?   NEW

4. List the course title and course number of the proposed/enhanced course
5.
   CLCS 2XXX: Media Literacy and Data Ethics (LCL)

6.
This course will introduce students to "information literacy" on the basis of media studies, research methods in the humanities, and media and data ethics. The course will be divided into three interconnected areas that are pivotal to gathering, analyzing and disseminating information in today's research and data landscapes: **1) what media? 2) which data? 3) whose ethics?**

Part one (**what media?**) will introduce students to critical media studies, an international field of inquiry comparable to cultural studies that analyzes and discusses the history, economy and ecology of media in use and at our disposal today. The focus in this section is to make students aware that media are structures, a network of middles, activated by the users and facilitated by apparatuses we employ on a daily basis. Most of the time, we do not investigate either these structures nor the apparatuses in any detail, making our everyday media usage seem "easy" while hiding functions we would be advised to learn more about. Google, for example, is a medium ubiquitous for everyone with internet access, but rarely dissected as an apparatus. What should we know about how it functions and why? How exactly do we use search tools, how are they built to be used, and are they the only tools we have at our disposal to search for and find information or data?

Part two (**which data?**) will focus on research methods in the humanities to facilitate students' understanding of data re/sources, beyond facile online searches. How do we find out more about what we don't know (yet)? How do we ask which questions and why? How do we distinguish between the "right" and the "wrong" data? How do we read information and data (including archival information, images, numbers, graphs, etc.) such that we can interpret multimodal communication and dissemination forms? What, exactly, is knowledge design? Students will be exposed to examples of cross- and intermedia formats in order to read data and analyze information design that requires more than one interpretive approach and to introduce them to multiple hermeneutics of data.

Part three (**whose ethics?**), finally, will guide students to analyze and discuss questions and facts related to data privacy, plagiarism, artificial intelligence and machine learning, algorithms, and more. There are moral dimensions to all kinds of data, and using data and information responsibly has become a central issue for any researcher or gatherer of information. Questions include: Whose or what data is being gathered, how, and for what purpose? How can it be shared, if at all? What are standardized and recognized models and methods for

disseminating information? What are the legal parameters for collecting and sharing data, in which country? What role does ethics play in the use of social media?

The objectives for this course are as follows. Students will develop
- Processes to critically evaluate different types of media used for data gathering and information dissemination
- A notion of the deep history of media, beyond mass media and media technologies
- Appropriate documentation of information or data used in one's own research or (academic) output
- An understanding of the historical and cultural construction of media as a middle
- An understanding of the ethical responsibility inherent to collecting, using, and disseminating information

6. How do you intend to evaluate project objectives once the course, as proposed, is offered? Please identify intended *learning outcomes* and *assessment tools*.

Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course students should be able to
- understand and list the basic principles of critical media studies and information or media literacy
- explain the meaning of media and apparatus/tool, data, and ethics
- demonstrate awareness and provide examples of diversities in media, data, literacy, and ethics
- demonstrate an ability towards critically assessing and reflecting affective, cognitive, and communicative elements in media structures and data ethics

Assessments: Assessment in this course will consist of
- self and peer assessment (rubrics for short writing forms such as rapid writing, op-eds, intellectual self-description, reviews, etc.)
- e-portfolio with a variety of multimodal assignments (using Portfolium)
- participation in online exchanges, including interviews with (inter)national partners
- workshops with stakeholders in other areas, including the library and computer science
- traditional writing and composition work (to be collected using Portfolium)
- programming basics

7. Describe how the course will fit into UConn's General Education curriculum.
The course complies with several criteria specified in the General Education Guidelines, including "critical judgment, moral sensitivity, awareness of their era and society"; "consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience"; and "a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge."

8. For which *content areas (CA1-4), competencies (W, Q), or literacies (Environmental – E)* will the course be proposed and how will it address the *specific criteria* for courses in these content areas and/or competencies?
This course, given its home of CLCS/LCL, will foster "investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience" and "investigations into the modes of symbolic representation" (Arts and Humanities, CA1); "emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity" and "emphasize that interpretive systems and/or social structures are cultural creations" (Diversity and Multiculturalism, CA4).

Most importantly, the criteria of information or media literacy will focus on an understanding of media used, data gathered, and ethics applied. (The course is proposed for areas CA1 and CA4 and Information Literacy).

9. How will the course *add to and/or enhance existing course offerings?*

This course is the first to explicitly address "information literacy" in the entire GEOC catalog. The course will emphasize integrative learning by taking theory into practice (collaboration with the library and public humanities outlets) and by uncovering pivotal nodes within the complex networks of today's information dissemination. The course offers a meta-level of research engagement for students who require analytical skill sets and intellectual depth to negotiate the connections they are to make within their (inter)disciplines while negotiating a plethora of media formats in the private, public, and professional environments within which they live and work. The course also incorporates high-impact practices, including "common intellectual experiences"; "collaborative assignments and projects"; "undergraduate research"; "diversity/global learning"; and "eportfolios."

10. Will your course serve as a model to assist others in their efforts to improve the general education curriculum? If so, how?

This course can serve as a model for others who are interested in developing sophisticated learning environments for today's media-saturated student. Information literacy is distinct from media literacy, and before students can begin to understand information and its dissemination they are required to dig deeper into the media with which information is delivered. Media, as an object of study, are historically, culturally, technically, and socially marked, and cultural production today is generated by multi- and intermedia apparatuses, in structures and within networks that require the same analysis as print texts or print media. As a member of the "information literacy" task force within GEOC, I look forward to developing this course as a model in order to enhance this area of literacy for General Education at UConn.

11. Is your proposal linked to any others being submitted in this competition? If so, explain the added benefits that will accrue to students from taking the courses as a group.

No.

12. Has this course even been submitted for this grant in the past?   Yes / No / Unsure

No.

13. Has this course been funded *by this grant* in the past? Yes / No / Unsure
(Note: All previous competition winners are available through links at http://geoc.uconn.edu/course-development-grant-competition/)

No.

14. Has this course or will this course be funded *by any other* non-departmental source, e.g. CETL grant, non-university grants, etc? Yes / No / Unsure

No.

15. Complete the **Budget Form** (found at http://geoc.uconn.edu/course-development-grant-competition/) where you will explain how the funds will be used to support the course development activities.