

COURSE SYLLABUS FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

Name of the course	Field of study and its code	Faculty	
Theories and Research of Digital Inequality	Communication and information S 008	Communication	
Study method	Number of credits ECTS	Study method	Number of credits ECTS
Lectures		Consultations	2 ECTS
Individual work	5 ECTS	Seminars	

Course abstract

The aim of the subject is to gain knowledge on the theories and models of digital inequality discussing its causes, structure and manifestation in various contexts and at different levels. The development of the theoretical explication of digital inequality is outlined. The subject is intended to help students gain theoretical and methodological access to the manifestation of inequality in digital environments, especially the unevenness of the use of digital media. Students are also expected to reflect on the exclusion stemming from digital inequality and an increase in inclusion in the context of other social and economic inequalities.

At the end of the course, students are expected to be able to comment on the origin of the different theories of digital inequality, the key points of these theories and their differences, to analyze their fundamental statements, strengths and weaknesses, to align their theoretical attitude to digital inequality to the applicable methods of research, and to apply the theories for field investigation.

Content of the subject

The manifestation of the levels of digital inequality in various cultures and regions; inequality among different social groups. Theoretical models of digital inequality generalizing on the manifestation of digital inequality between different regions of the world and nation states, and also within a specific country or region. The concepts of absolute and relative inequality and their application in the research of digital inequality. Manifestation of digital inequality and its consequences at various levels: physical and material, skills and capacities, motivation and benefits. Empirical research providing foundations for the theories of digital inequality and the application of the theories in Lithuania and worldwide. The concepts of digital exclusion and inclusion, the scope and methods of their research. Research of the reduction of digital exclusion and the promotion of digital inclusion featuring firsthand participation of research subjects.

Study methods

1. Individual consultations with the lecturers supervising the subject.
2. Individual research of scholarly literature and the preparation of an academic paper on the subject outlined and worded jointly by the student and the Professors supervising the subject.

Methods of assessment

1. Academic paper (from 20 000 to 25 000 symbols including spaces) on a topic focusing on the questions posed by the Professors supervising the subject.
2. Oral discussion based on the academic paper.

Note: along with the outlined main literature of the subject, doctoral students are expected to look further sources of literature conforming to the academic interests of the doctoral student, the topic of the paper and the profile of the doctoral thesis.

Course literature

Dutton, W. H., & Reisdorf, B. C. (2019). Cultural divides and digital inequalities: Attitudes shaping Internet and social media divides. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(1), 18–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1353640>

Hargittai, E. (2002). Second-level digital divide: Differences in people’s online skills. *First Monday*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v7i4.942>

Helsper, E. J. (2012). A corresponding fields model for the links between social and digital exclusion. *Communication Theory*, 22(4), 403–426. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2012.01416.x>

van Deursen, A. J. A. M., Helsper, E. J., Eynon, R., & van Dijk, J. (2017). The compoundness and sequentiality of digital inequality. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 453–473. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68921/1/Helsper_Compoundness%20and%20sequentiality.pdf

van Dijk, J. (2020). *The digital divide*. Polity Press.

Dutton, W. H., & Reisdorf, B. C. (2019). Cultural divides and digital inequalities: Attitudes shaping Internet and social media divides. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(1), 18–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1353640>

Name of consulting lecturer	Academic rank	Major works published in the last 5 years
Elena Macevičiūtė	Prof. Dr	Ilako, C., Bukirwa, J. M., & Maceviciute, E. (2025). “The library is my everything”: Mapping the meaning of university library spaces in Uganda. <i>The Journal of Academic Librarianship</i> , 51(6), straišnis 103145. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2025.103145
		Wilson, T. D., & Macevičiūtė, E. (2025). Information seeking in a time of war: Coping with stress in Lithuania during the Russia/Ukraine war. <i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 81(7), 31–62. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-06-2024-0156
		Yousefi Mojir, K., Maceviciute, E., Olson, N., & Gebka, E. (2025). Application of human-centered design in citizen engagement in wildfire management. Iš J. Wei & G. Margetis (Red.), <i>Human-centered design, operation and evaluation of mobile communications. HCII 2025 (Lecture Notes in Computer Science</i> , t. 15824). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-93064-5_21
		Maceviciute, E., & Olson, N. (2023). Real experienced needs for accessible and inclusive cultural heritage - First results in MuseIT. Iš O. Alonso, H. Cousijn, G. Silvello, M. Marrero, C.

		<p>Teixeira Lopes, & S. Marchesin (Red.), <i>Linking theory and practice of digital libraries. TPDL 2023</i> (Lecture Notes in Computer Science, t. 14241, p. 396–402). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-43849-3_32</p>
		<p>Macevičiūtė, E., Manžuch, Z., & Gudiničius, A. (2023). The role of curiosity triggers and features in digital literacy training. <i>Library & Information Science Research</i>, 45(4), straipsnis 101268. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2023.101268</p>
		<p>Macevičiūtė, E., & Kepalienė, F. (2022). Factors influencing Lithuanian researchers' use of open access repositories as a publishing channel. <i>Information Research</i>, 27(Special Issue), straipsnis 2210. https://doi.org/10.47989/irisic2210</p>
		<p>Wilson, T. D., & Macevičiūtė, E. (2022). Information misbehaviour: Modelling the motivations for the creation, acceptance and dissemination of misinformation. <i>Journal of Documentation</i>, 78(7), 485–505. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-05-2022-0116</p>
<p>Ingrida Kelpšienė</p>	<p>Assoc. Prof. Dr</p>	<p>Kelpšienė, I., Luengo, P., & Dallas, C. (2024). Mining Social Media for Museum Quality Evaluation. In Babić D (Eds.). <i>International Perspectives on Museum Management</i> (p. 79-103). Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003000082-10/mining-social-media-museum-quality-evaluation-ingrida-kelp%C5%A1ien%C4%97-pedro-luengo-costis-dallas</p>
		<p>Kirtiklis, K., Laužikas, R., Kelpšienė, I. and Dallas, C. (2023). An Ontology of Semiotic Activity and Epistemic Figuration of Heritage, Memory and Identity Practices on Social Network Sites (2023). <i>SAGE Open</i>, 13(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231187367</p>
		<p>Kelpšienė, I. and Dallas, C. (2023). Battle or Ballet? Metaphors Archaeological Facebook Administrators Live By. <i>Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage</i>, 10 (2), 107-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/20518196.2022.2157566</p>
		<p>Kelpšienė, I., Armakauskaitė, D., Denisenko, V., Kirtiklis, K., Laužikas, R., Stonytė, R., Murinienė, L. and Dallas, C. (2023). Difficult heritage on social network sites: An integrative review. <i>New Media & Society</i>, integrative review. <i>New Media & Society</i>,</p>

		25(11), 3137-3164. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221122186s
		Kelpšienė, I. (2021). Dalyvaujamas paveldas socialiniuose tinkluose: pagrindinių teorinių sąvokų aiškinimas. <i>Informacijos mokslai</i> , No. 910, p. 100-119. https://doi.org/10.15388/Im.2021.91.54
Andrius Šuminas	Prof. Dr	Silva, C., Zamora-Medina, R., & Šuminas, A. (2025). Experience, don't tell! Integration of IDN into journalistic narratives. In J. T. Murray & M. C. Reyes (Eds.), <i>Interactive storytelling. 17th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, ICIDS 2024, proceedings, Part I</i> (pp. 311–329). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-78453-8_20
		Petreikis, T., Šuminas, A., Grigas, V., & Gudiniavičius, Arūnas. (2024). Lietuvos mokslo žurnalų leidybos kiekybiniai pokyčiai 2015–2022 m.: Viešojo ir privataus sektorių prisitaikymas prie kintančių sąlygų. <i>Knygotyra</i> , 82, 206–242. https://doi.org/10.15388/Knygotyra.2024.82.8
		Šuminas, A. (2022). Lietuvos politikų ir partijų rinkiminių žinučių tematika 2020 m. Seimo rinkimų kampanijos metu [Topics of electoral communication of politicians and parties during 2020 Lithuanian parliamentary elections]. In <i>Politikos ir komunikacijos sankirtoje: Tendencijos, diskursai, efektai: Straipsnių rinkinys</i> (p. 95–104). Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas.
		Šuminas, A., Pričins, M., Toode, Ü., & Januškevičiūtė, J. (2022). Similar aims, different approaches: An analysis of campaign video ads in the Baltic States. In <i>The 2019 European electoral campaign: In the time of populism and social media</i> (p. 219–239). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98993-4_12
		Levratto, V., Šuminas, A., Schilhab, T., & Esbensen, G. (2021). Smartphones: Reading habits and overuse. A qualitative study in Denmark, Lithuania and Spain. <i>Educación XXI</i> , 24(2), 167–188. https://doi.org/10.5944/educxx1.28321

Approved by the Doctoral Committee of the field of Communication and Information of the Social Sciences area on 15 December 2025, minutes of the meeting No. (7.17 E)15600-KT-667

Chair of the Committee Prof. Dr Aušra Navickienė