



Short Syllabus

Course Title	Credits
A Critical Look at Bitcoin, Neobanks and other Fintech	2
Lecturer	
Dr. Galit Wellner	
Contact details	
GalitWellner@tauex.tau.ac.il	
Semester	
fall	
Short Description	
<p>Financial technologies, also known as Fintech, seek to transform how we function economically. Instead of paying in cash, checks and credit cards, we switch to payment apps and virtual currency; instead of talking to our insurance agent, we receive an insurance policy created by an algorithm; and instead of talking to a broker to manage our investments, again we interact with an algorithm. This new reality urges us to rethink basic concepts, such as banks, insurance or money. On a deeper level, we need to rethink some of our basic experiences such as trust, human-technology relations and democracy. Humanities enables us to rethink in these directions, outside the framework of "homo economicus." Consequently, new questions arise: Can we replace the political flexibility by an algorithmic rigidity? Is it a better solution? Is Bitcoin trying to bypass democratic institutions by new platforms that are not subjected to democracy's rules? Similarly, does the anonymity involved in algorithmic trade disrupts the meaning of human trade? In order to think of these questions and many others, the course is composed of two elements: on one hand, becoming familiar with major Fintech trends such as P2P loans, crowd sourcing, digital banking, algo-trading, insurtech, and bitcoin/blockchain/NFT/DAO. On the other hand, we will critically examine fintech technologies and the transformation they may bring not only in the financial markets but also in the sense of the self, social structures and the sense of time and space. We will study contemporary theories describing the shift from the discipline society to society of control, the ways in which we delegate tasks to technologies and platformization processes. The various fintech technologies will serve as examples and manifestations to these theoretical structures.</p>	
Final grade components	
<p>Midterm: A short essay of 2 pages – 15%.</p> <p>Final requirement: An essay of 5-6 pages, 1250-1500 words – 75%.</p> <p>Participation: Active participation in class - 10%.</p>	
Attendance	
<p>Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unauthorized absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.*</p>	



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Academic Conduct

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.*

Final assignment

Exam dates and submission deadlines are published on the Liberal Arts website. Courses with a final exam also have a second make-up exam. Students requiring an extension for a final paper must submit an Academic Committee Request Form to the Liberal Arts office in advance of the deadline. Late papers will be subject to a point deduction.*

Additional requirements

* See Liberal Arts academic handbook for further details