# A Short Intro

## ...to The Course With The Longest Title

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# As they say on the Net: WTF…?

- In the Year One of the IT College (2000 AD), a course called "Risk and Safety Management" was offered to students

- Unfortunately, people did not like it at all. And the then-Rector (who is the Director now) decided to replace the course

- He found an obscure EU proposal for a course with a Really Weird Name, but actually sensible content

- He also found a guy who once did his PhD in parallel with him, and granted him pretty much total freedom to develop a new course in the vein of the EU proposal

- It seemed to work. The rest is history

# Still, what's the point?

- Information technology does have influence far outside the technological realm. Sometimes it helps to think about it

- IT is not just boxes n'cables. IT is people as well

- Self-expression is typically not the *forte* of IT guys (akin to a German Shepherd: pretty intelligent, seems to understand most of your speech, can follow orders - but expression is limited to some mimics, barking and wagging the tail)

- In a bit more serious way – SPEAIT is a generic course on various issues in IT culture, plus the first training towards the future thesis (both in writing and presentation)

# The topics will include

- Some philosophy (information society)

- Some history (IT, Internet)

- Some psychology (online communication)

- Some law (copyright, patents, licenses)

- Some culture (Internet, FLOSS, hackerdom)

- Some technology (Linux etc)

- Some security and privacy etc

# Organization / formal stuff

- Everyone needs to
    - Prepare one (another one is optional) presentation set:
        - A paper (5-10 pages of content) on a topic freely chosen (within the overall course theme, which is really large) but agreed upon with the lecturer before starting)
        - A set of approx. 10 slides for the presentation
        - Oral presentation in a seminar (in the 2nd half-term)
    - Review another student's work
    - Pass the exam – but with enough activity during the term, it may become easy or be omitted altogether
    - Plus optionally
        - Write a course-themed blog (~10 posts)
        - Review some relevant books

- The grading system is a typical one for Estonia:
    - 50 or below – 0 (fail)
    - 51 - 60 - 1 (poor)
    - 61 – 70 – 2 (satisfactory)
    - 71 – 80 – 3 (good)
    - 81 – 90 – 4 (very good)
    - 91 or more – 5 (excellent)
- Presentation sets: first 25+10+15, second 20+5+10
- Review max 10
- Blog max 10
- Book reviews max 10 (5+5)
- Exam max 40 ( => dropping in without points at all does not work)
- Bonus points (1-3 per case) can be awarded for e.g. active participation in discussions)

# Another guy

- ... in charge of group 2 Thursday morning seminars (group 1 seminars at noon will be led by me)

- Kristjan Karmo, visiting lecturer (https://ee.linkedin.com/in/kristjankarmo)

- He will generally use the same set of arrangements (but can change some things if needed)

- In general, group 2 will also do the exam with him (exceptions are possible but have to be negotiated)



Source: https://www.asaquality.ee/akadeemia/koolitajad/
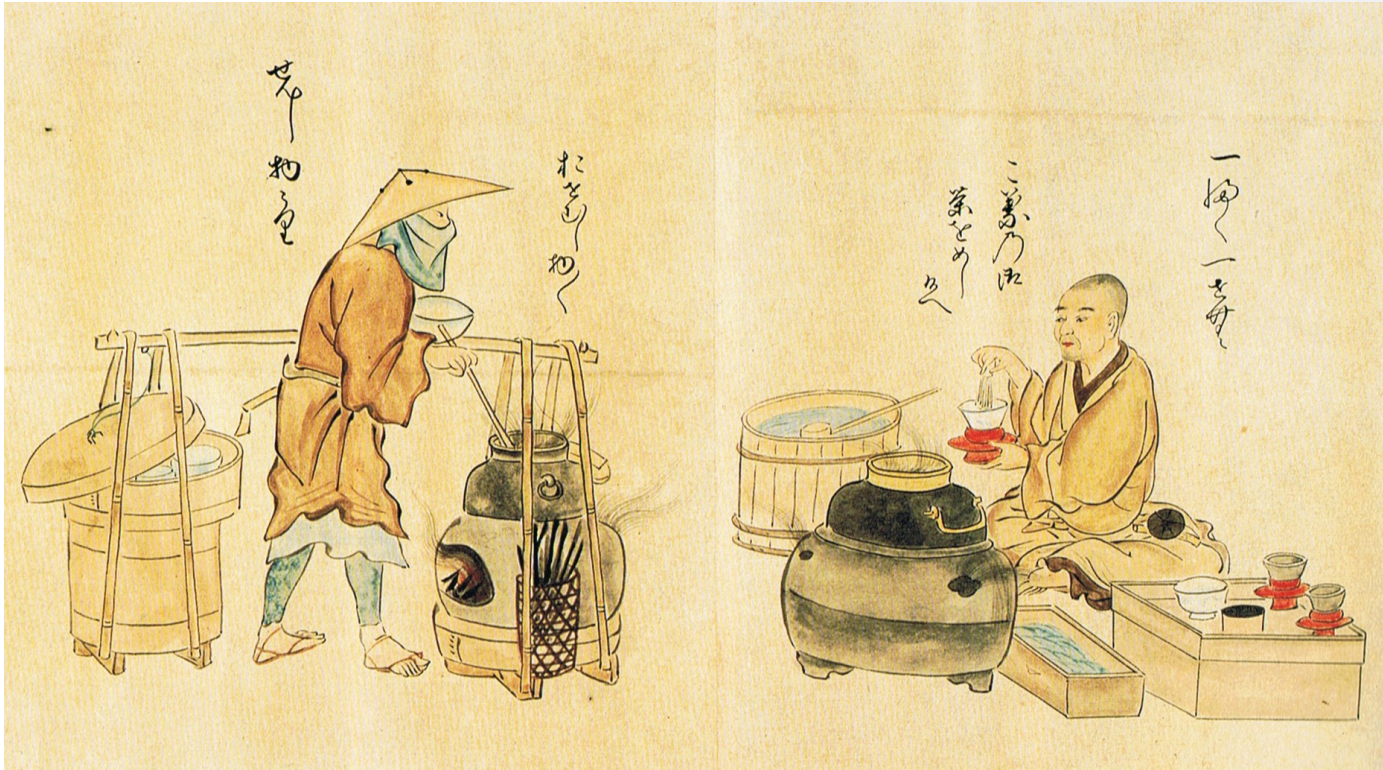
# Some more regulations

- The time for the first presentation must be agreed upon by Week 7 (March 13; seminars will start in Week 9, on March 30) – in person or by e-mail (it is also recommended to set the topic, but this is not mandatory)

- In order to do Presentation 2, the first one must be fully done (all three components)

- The paper must be presented before or with the presentation. Being late will result in losing points every week – 10%/30%/50%/100%. Deadline for other works is May 19.

- Optionally, the papers can be written to the College wiki at https://wiki.itcollege.ee (prearrangement recommended)

- In some years, there was a steep drop in attendance before the end of the term. Few people => boring seminars

- So now we have an attendance check – everyone should pass at the lecturer sometime during the seminar (in general, beginning or end), identify him/herself (student card or other – showing up and saying your name will work later on) and get the attendance registered

- To pass the course, <u>at least 5 seminars out of 8</u> must be attended (so there is some room for maneuvering)

- There is the Oriental story about ten guys having a tea party...



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_tea_ceremony#/media/
File:Kan%C5%8D_Osanobu_71_utaiawase.jpg

# One more note on attendance

- Formally, lecture attendance is optional

- All lectures are recorded, so it is possible to be retroactive

- Still, it makes sense to attend, as

  - you can ask questions and give feedback on-site

  - if you fall between two grades at the exam, seeing or not seeing someone in the class may tip the balance

  - you may actually learn something new

# Homework: the paper

- Like your future thesis, it should contain both referred material and your own contribution

- The volume is 5-10 pages of content (+ title page etc)

- Proper language and looks

- **References!** Who has no experience so far, should start to get familiar with proper academic style

- A big recommendation: pick a topic that actually matters to you! The lecturer does not know your experience and interests (yet), so asking for a finite topic is a bit problematic – although asking for opinions and guidance is absolu

# A side note: AI

- The current hot topic: ChatGPT/OpenAI and others

- Not recommended as a ghostwriter - due to the need to present the work at the seminar (and answer at least some questions)

  - It makes a big difference if you have done the research by yourself or not – and the seminar will show it

  - In the long run, you would also have less training towards your final thesis

- In the even longer run, one day it will say "I wrote all your papers at the university, so you cannot mind if I take your job in return. And you… You would actually be most useful as… a battery. :-P"

- At the same time, all this makes a very good topic for homework and seminar presentation (written by you)!

# Homework: slides and presentation

- For many, it may be the first public speech – but definitely not the last. So it is the place for practice

- The duration has been 15-20 minutes – but depending on the total number of presentations, we can extend it  a bit

- A good idea is to rehearse – you could work in pairs and present to each other as a training measure

- Warning: all kinds of errors (from punctuation to questionable statements) will hit much harder on screen than in written text!

# Homework: review

About one page, evaluating a peer's effort (at least the paper, but can also review the presentation)

- Both form and content (main points, terminology, language, speaking skills...)

- You are welcome to send the review to the author as well and ask questions, although it is not mandatory

- Everyone will choose the reviewed work by him/herself (the rules do not allow lecturers to forward papers to other people)

# Optional: blogging

- Blogging, and writing in general, is a good way to improve both thinking and expression skills

- Can be useful for documenting a lengthy process (e.g. people have developed their thesis in blogs)

- Can be a good venue for discussion

- Helps to maintain mental discipline (no one likes comments in the style of "Dude, WTF?")

- For this course, both dedicated new blogs and relevant writings in existing ones may be submitted

- Points will be given according to the work (a rule of thumb for relevant posts might be "one post, one point")

# Optional: book review(s)

- The point is to make people read some books that may prove useful later on

- About one page

- Contains: short data on the book, short overview, opinions, questions/arguments. Harsh (but argumented) criticism is absolutely fine

- In principle, a more extensive book review can also be done as a paper

# What to review

- The book should be relevant to the course or at least have some influence in tech culture in general. Examples include

    - *Hacker Ethic* by Pekka Himanen

    - *The Wealth of Networks* by Yochai Benkler

    - *Viral Spiral* by David Bollier

    - *Hackers: the Heroes of the Computer Revolution* by Steven Levy

    - *Neuromancer* by William Gibson

    - *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow

- The list is by no means closed!

# A word of warning

- An Estonian quality is to be slow to start and slow to stop... At first, nobody wants to speak, later everyone does

- Note: in this course (unlike the Autumn version), there will be some prep time for everyone, as seminars start on March 20

- One seminar can have 4-5 presentations at most. It means 8 times 5 or max 40 presentations per group in total – makes sense to book the first presentation ASAP!

- Do It Yourself. A proven case of plagiarism will definitely flunk the course, but can go worse (the University has been pretty angry in recent cases)

- Using ghostwriting is not a bright idea – you will have to master the content to present it anyway (and after all, who do you study for...?)

- In some years, some people did not present in their appointed time and the seminars ran dry. <u>So now, if someone misses their presentation time without a valid reason, there will be no other chance during this term.</u> You can always negotiate (and valid cases will get a new opportunity) – but BEFORE the deadline

# Exam

- Two versions (you pick one):

  - Oral – 10 computer-picked short questions to answer on site. <u>No communication or study aids</u> (the traditional way)

  - Written – an about 2-page essay on one of the three computer-picked topics (i.e. you get three random ones, pick one of them). <u>Study aids (books, articles, Internet) are permitted,</u> but the work is mostly an opinion piece, showing YOUR take on the issue

- The points (up to 40) will be <u>added</u> to the existing score

- Every year so far, some folks get the max grade already before the exam. With the score > 50, you can take the grade on points only, omitting the exam (e.g. "got 72 points, grade 3 is fine")

- THEREFORE: who plans to fail the course, must be either
  a) extraordinarily thick, or b) supremely lazy

# A note for exchange students

- If you came from ERASMUS/EuroTEQ exchange, this is for you

- If you plan to leave <u>before the exam season</u>, you have these options for passing the course:

    - Plan ahead to work harder when the seminars start and aim for max grade without exam (the best way)

    - Try to get at least 51 points during your stay and take the grade on points (if the number is not that important)

    - Doing the exam ahead is also possible but takes prearrangement

# One more thing

- The particular course has a lot of facts, but also a notable share of opinions that may differ

- Opinions given by the lecturer are to be taken with a grain of salt – and they are <u>not supposed to be parroted at the exam</u>

- However, it is crucial for an IT person to <u>form his/her opinion</u> on an issue and be able to <u>defend it with arguments</u> (especially needed for exam essays). You will need it in the future – if bosses see a sheep, they will try to fleece it

- *U53 ur h34d, d00d!*

# Materials and contacts

- The course home page is https://akadeemia.kakupesa.net/SPEAIT - it will also have all the lecture texts and slides (dual-licensed as GNU FDL and CC BY-SA)

- E-mail: kakk@kakupesa.net
  (primary; the TTU/Taltech or Google ones work too)

- Can also be found on the University's MS Teams

- Mobile: +372 50 64 464

- Location at the College: Room 524

- Course points will be published weekly at Kakupesa after the start of seminars (a password-protected table). Stay tuned!

# On to the first lecture...