

Cultural Literacy for the Information Age

We did not mature in the Information Age, but we find ourselves transformed by its dynamism, complexity, and confusion. This new seminar is for people who wish to cross the divide of the two cultures of science/technology and the humanities, to achieve a measure of information age literacy. The only qualification is to be interested. It's not a computer or technology course, but primarily history, science, and philosophy, for those who have wondered why information is truly different today, what its underlying philosophy is, and how this emerged from our cultural heritage. Along the way we will demystify some of the challenging concepts of our time for a confident understanding of information theory, bits, codes, digital, computation, algorithms, AI, big data, and more. We will go deeper, exploring what today's paradigm of information says about determinism, evolution, and learning.

There will be 12 units over 8 sessions, exploring a wide range of topics: interacting with info; representation and language; info theory; culture and the evolving paradigm; computation; info in the sciences; experiential and social factors; organizing info; complexity; conscious and unconscious info; info in physics; emergence and evolution.

For each topic there will be a presentation, but also questions and propositions for discussion. All readings for this course are optional, but there will be weekly emails with details of the next class and postings of insightful articles and excerpts, accessible for download. There will also be a bibliography for enthusiasts.

LEADER: Mark Edelman is retired from a career in information sciences and services, with government agencies, financial, and health sciences companies. For over 30 years, his research interest has been the nature of information, its cultural history, principles, and technology.

THURSDAYS: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., 8 weeks: February 27 through April 16

LOCATION: PSRC, Maximum 16 seats