

INTL 4665: Global Politics and Digital Media¹

Dr. Rongbin Han

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Assistant Professor

(TR, 9:30-10:45; MLC 207)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 15:00-16:00 pm or by appointment (322 Candler Hall)

**** See the instructor if you have a disability that needs classroom accommodations. ****

Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to the complicated relationship between digital media and politics in contemporary world. Through the semester, we will examine, with particular focus on the United States and China, how democratic and non-democratic regimes shape the institutions and functions of digital media and how digital media, in a variety of forms, influence domestic politics and foreign relations. We will also discuss a series of important implications of the expansion of new media in democratic, authoritarian and transitioning regimes.

Course Materials (Available in UGA Library or ELC)

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Final Grade Ranges:

	A 93-100	A- 90-92.99
B+ 87-89.99	B 83-86.99	B- 80-82.99
C+ 77-79.99	C 73-76.99	C- 70-72.99
D 60-69.99	F 0-59.99	

Attendance and Participation (20%; Attendance 10%; Participation 10%)

Attend classes regularly. One absence is allowed for ANY reason. Additional absences will need legitimate reasons and documentation (ex. doctor's note). The course is **discussion based**. Please read and reflect upon assigned readings before coming to class. You are also encouraged to participate electronically through our course ELC platform through online discussion.

Presentation and Reflection Essay (15%, 10% for presentation and 5% for reflection essay)

You need to do one 5-minute mini presentation on the date you select. The presentation shall focus on the most important points in the readings and try to stimulate discussion. You can use PowerPoint (preferable 3 slides or less) or handouts, and shall try to engage the class. **The presentation is graded based on how prepared, organized, clear, and interactive it is.** The reflection essay (3 pages, double spaced) is based on your reading and presentation. It shall not be laundry list summary of the readings. Summarize the reading in one page and put more emphasis on critically evaluating the readings and advancing your own arguments. Stay focused rather than picking up many points without any single one of them articulated sufficiently.

Midterm Case Report (20%)

Pick one digital media event/phenomenon that strikes you most and write a case-study report (double spaced, maximum 10 pages). Explain the event/phenomenon (what, who, when, how

¹ The syllabus is a general plan for the course; updates and revisions may be necessary.

and why) and highlight the role of digital media—in what ways the new ICTs have made a difference; how are the actors involved taking advantage of the Internet to different degrees? What is the role of big companies and the state in the process? You may pick any topic—Lady Gaga, ISIS, Russian trolls in the presidential election, #MeToo, and so forth. In the report, please explain how you see how digital media has (or has not) changed the socio-political life today. Talk to the instructor if you have questions regarding selection of the topic.

Digital Media Experiment (30%)

You are required to generate at least **three entries of online content** (in any format) on topics such as the readings and ongoing local, national, or global socio-political events. Promote the content online using all the means you feel comfortable. Based on your experience, write a **1500-word summary report**. The report should contain the following sections: (1) The experiment goal and experiment design (what do you want to test; how you are going to do it; what is your hypothesized findings); (2) an introduction to the content generation and circulation strategy; (3) the content of the posts (time posted; platform; your presence on the platform, if applicable, and screenshot of or the link to the content); (4) outcomes (reactions in terms of likes, retweets, comments, etc) and findings of the experiment; (5) your reflections.

Final Think Piece (15%)

This is a think piece: Based on course materials and your own experiences, what do you think is the biggest threat or benefit (just pick either threat or benefit, not both) the Internet age has brought about? Explain why you think it is the biggest threat or benefit with empirical and theoretical evidence and what you think we can do about it. It should be about 5 pages (double spaced) or slightly longer.

Important Deadlines

March 7th Midterm Case Report Due

This is also the time you should start designing and implementing your digital media experiment

April 30th Summary of Digital Media Experiment due

May 7th Final Think Piece Due

Grade Dispute:

If you have any questions about your exam grade, you shall report to the instructor **within one week** from the time you receive the grade. You need to present a written appeal explaining why you think your grade should be changed. Please also bear in mind that disputing grade may end up with higher, lower or no change in your grade.

Academic Honesty:

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. **Plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. Approach the instructor if you are unclear about what is plagiarism.**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

January 10 *Welcome! Course Introduction*

Week 2

January 15 Comparative Framework

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, “*Comparing Media Systems*,” in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass Media and Society* (Bloomsbury USA, 2005), Chapter 11.

January 17 News Production in the U.S.

* Lynne Cooke, “A visual convergence of print, television, and the internet: charting 40 years of design change in news presentation,” *New Media & Society* 7:1(2005), 22-48.

Week 3 China: An example of Authoritarian Media System

January 22 China’s Propaganda System

* David Shambaugh, “China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy,” *The China Journal* 57 (2007), 25-58.

January 24 Commercialization, Reform and Investigative Journalism

* Jingrong Tong and Colin Sparks, “Investigative Journalism in China Today,” *Journalism Studies* 10: 3 (2009), 337-352.

* Daniela Stockmann and Mary Gallagher, “Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China,” *Comparative Political Studies* 44:4 (2011), 436-467.

The Digital Era

Week 4

January 29 History of Social Media

* Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison, “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13:1 (2007), 210–230.

* Tarleton Gillespie, “The Stories Digital Tools Tell,” in John Caldwell and Anna Everett (eds.), *New Media: Theses on Convergence Media and Digital Reproduction* (Routledge, 2003).

January 31 Introducing Theory

* Manuel Castells, “A Network Theory of Power,” *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011), 773-787.

* Yochai Benkler, “Networks of Power, Degrees of Freedom” *International Journal of Communication* 5(2011), 721-755.

Week 5

February 5 Digital Divide

* Helen V. Milner, “The Digital Divide: The Role of Political Institutions in Technology Diffusion,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 39:2 (2006), 176-199.

February 7 Network Neutrality

* Tim Wu and Christopher Yoo, “Keeping the Internet Neutral?: Tim Wu and Christopher Yoo Debate” *Federal Communications Law Journal* 59:3 (2007), 575-592.

* Rob Frieden, “Keeping the Internet Neutral?: A Response to the Wu-Yoo Debate,” *Federal Communications Law Journal* 59:3 (2007), 621-624.

- * Tim Berners-Lee, “Long Live the Web: A Call for Continued Open Standards and Neutrality,” *Scientific American Magazine* (December 2010), 80-85.

Week 6

February 12 Governing the Internet

- * David R. Johnson, Susan P. Crawford, and John G. Palfrey, “The Accountable Net: Peer Production of Internet Governance,” *Virginia Journal of Law and Technology* 9, no. 97 (2004): 1–33.
- * Michel J. G. van Eeten and Milton Mueller, “Where Is the Governance in Internet Governance?,” *New Media & Society* 15, no. 5 (2013): 720–36.
- * Gautham Hagesh, “ICANN 101: Who Will Oversee the Internet?”
<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2014/03/17/icann-101-who-will-oversee-the-internet/>

February 14 Big Internet Corporations

- # Rebecca MacKinnon, *Consent of the Networked* (Basics Books), Ch. 8, 9 and 10.
- * Jenna Wortham, “With Twitter, Blackouts and Demonstrations, Web Flexes Its Muscle,” *New York Times* (January 19, 2012).
- * Jonathan Weisman, “After an Online Firestorm, Congress Shelves Antipiracy Bills,” *New York Times* (January 21, 2012).

Week 7

February 19 Hacking and Hacker Practice

- * E. G. Coleman and A. Golub, “Hacker Practice: Moral Genres and the Cultural Articulation of Liberalism,” *Anthropological Theory* 8, no. 3 (2008): 255–77.

February 21 Digital Media and Privacy

- * B. Wessels, “Identification and the Practices of Identity and Privacy in Everyday Digital Communication,” *New Media & Society* 14, no. 8 (2012): 1251–68.
- * Danah Boyd and Eszter Hargittai, “Facebook Privacy Settings: Who Cares?,” *First Monday* 15, no. 8 (2010).
- * Danah Boyd, “Real Name Policies are an Abuse of Power,”
<http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2011/08/04/real-names.html>

Week 8

February 26 Web 2.0

- * Urs Gasser & John G. Palfrey, “The Strategic Tool of Working with Others (or Not),” *Fast Company*, <http://www.fastcompany.com/1842884/strategic-tool-working-others-or-not> (July 17, 2012).
- * Andrew Lih, *The Wikipedia Revolution* (Hyperion Books, 2009), chap. 5, 7, 8.

February 28 Digital Media and News Industry

- * Paul Starr, “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption),” *New Republic* (March 4, 2009).
- * *Economist*, “Social Media: The people formerly known as the audience,” (July 7th, 2011).
- * Joshua Braun and Tarleton Gillespie, “Hosting the public discourse, hosting the public,” *Journalism Practice* 5:4 (2011), 383-398.
- * Noah Shachtman, “How Andrew Breitbart Hacks the News” *Wired Magazine* (March 2010).

Week 9

March 5 E-Government

- * John C. Bertot, Paul T. Jaeger, and Justin M. Grimes, "Using ICTs to Create a Culture of Transparency: E-Government and Social Media as Openness and Anti-Corruption Tools for Societies," *Government Information Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2010): 264–71.
- * K. Hartford, "Dear Mayor: Online Communications with Local Governments in Hangzhou and Nanjing," *China Information* 19, no. 2 (July 1, 2005): 217–60.

March 7 Digital Media and Democracy

- * Markus Prior, "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science* 49:3 (2005), 577-592.
- * R. Michael Alvarez, et al., "Voting Advice Applications: How Useful and for Whom?" *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 11:1 (2014), 82-101.
- * Alex Hern, "Cambridge Analytica: How Did It Turn Clicks into Votes," *Guardian* (May 6, 2018), <https://goo.gl/9sjYfh>

Week 10 Spring Break, No Class

Week 11

March 19 Digital Media and Contentious Politics

- * Clay Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media," *Foreign Affairs* (January 2011), 28-41.
- * Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, "The Logic of Connective Action," *Information, Communication and Society* 15:5(2012), 739-768.

March 21 Arab Spring and beyond

- * Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *New Yorker* (October 4, 2010).
- * Lev Grossman, "Iran Protests: Twitter, the Medium of the Movement," *Time* (June 17, 2009).
- * Cory Doctorow, "We Need a Serious Critique of Net Activism," *The Guardian* (Jan. 25, 2011).
- * William Lafi Youmans, and Jillian C. York, "Social Media and the Activist Toolkit," *Journal of Communication* 62:2(2012), 315–29.

Week 12

March 26 Cyber Politics in Strong Authoritarian Regimes: Cyber Activism

- * Ashley Esarey and Xiao Qiang, "Political Expression in the Chinese Blogosphere: Below the Radar," *Asian Survey* 48:5(2008), 752-772.
- * Florian Toepfl, "Managing public outrage: Power, scandal, and new media in contemporary Russia," *New Media & Society* 13:8 (2011), 1301-1319.

March 28 Cyber Politics in Strong Authoritarian Regimes: State Responses

- * Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *APSR* (2013), 1-18.
- * Rongbin Han, "Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace: China's 'Fifty-Cent Army'," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 44:2(2015), 105–134
- * Neil MacFarquhar, "Russia Quietly Tightens Reins on Web with 'Bloggers Law'," *New York Times* (May 7, 2014).

Week 13

April 2 Cyber Politics in China: Media and Political Attitudes

* Lei Ya-Wen, "The Political Consequences of the Rise of the Internet: Political Beliefs and Practices of Chinese Netizens," *Political Communication* 28:3 (2011), 291-322.

April 4 Cyber Politics in China: Implications on Political Change?

* Jonathan Hassid, "Safety Valve or Pressure Cooker? Blogs in Chinese Political Life," *Journal of Communications* 62 (2012), 212-230.

* Jiangnan Zhu, Lu Jie, and Shi Tianjian, "When Grapevine News Meets Mass Media," *Comparative Political Studies* 46:8 (2012), 920-946.

Media and Politics beyond National Borders

Week 14

April 9 (Tuesday) Freedom and Security: Wiki Leaks, NSA, and Snowden

* Yochai Benkler, "A Free Irresponsible Press" *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 46:2 (2011), 311-397. [Read 311-350 only]

* Lisa Lynch, "We're Going to Crack the World Open: WikiLeaks and the Future of Investigative Reporting," *Journalism Practice*, 4: 3 (2010), 309-318.

* Edward Snowden entry of Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden]

April 11 Cyber Warfare?

* Jon Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare," *Security Studies* 22:3 (2013): 365-404.

* Emily Parker, "Hack Job: How America Invented Cyberwar," *Foreign Affairs* May/June (2017).

* Dai Xu, "The Only Type of Warfare That Could Destroy China," *Chinascopie* 67 (2014), 24-25.

* Michael Schmidt, "Chinese Hackers Extending Reach to Smaller U.S. Agencies, Officials Say," *New York Times* (July 16, 2014).

Week 15

April 16 Terrorism in the Digital Age

Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* (Columbia University Press, 2015), Ch. 1 [esp. pp. 15-46]. [[E-version of the book available from UGA library](#)]

Phil Williams, "Transnational Criminal Networks," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (eds.), *Networks and Netwars* (Rand Corporation 2001), Ch. 3.

April 18 Digital Media and Transnational Social Movements

Luther P. Gerlach, "The Structure of Social Movements," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (eds.), *Networks and Netwars* (Rand Corporation 2001), Ch. 9.

* Kony 2012 entry of Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kony_2012]

Week 16 Themed Debate and Discussions

April 23: Is technological development a blessing or an ill for human society?

April 25: Findings of the Digital Media Experiment