INTL 4665: Global Politics and Digital Media

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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.99</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.99</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.99</td>
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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

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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

January 17 News Production in the U.S.

Week 3 China: An example of Authoritarian Media System
January 22 China's Propaganda System

January 24 Commercialization, Reform and Investigative Journalism

The Digital Era

Week 4
January 29 History of Social Media

January 31 Introducing Theory

Week 5
February 5 Digital Divide

February 7 Network Neutrality
Week 6

February 12 Governing the Internet
* Gautham Hagesh, “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.

Week 7

February 19 Hacking and Hacker Practice

February 21 Digital Media and Privacy
* Danah Boyd, “Real Name Policies are an Abuse of Power,”

Week 8

February 26 Web 2.0

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).
Week 9

March 5 E-Government

March 7 Digital Media and Democracy

Week 10 Spring Break, No Class

Week 11

March 19 Digital Media and Contentious Politics

March 21 Arab Spring and beyond
* Cory Doctorow, “We Need a Serious Critique of Net Activism,” The Guardian (Jan. 25, 2011).

Week 12

March 26 Cyber Politics in Strong Authoritarian Regimes: Cyber Activism

March 28 Cyber Politics in Strong Authoritarian Regimes: State Responses
Week 13

April 2 Cyber Politics in China: Media and Political Attitudes

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

Media and Politics beyond National Borders

Week 14

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

April 11 Cyber Warfare?

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.

Week 16 Themed Debate and Discussions
April 23: Is technological development a bless or an ill for human society?
April 25: Findings of the Digital Media Experiment