INTL 8405 Comparative Politics & Digital Media

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The University of Georgia

Location: Gilbert Hall 309  
Office: 322 Candler Hall  
Class Time: Wednesdays, 3:35-6:35 pm  
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description
This seminar critically examines the central role of digital media in today’s world by engaging a selection of key themes at the conjunction of comparative politics and digital media. The course will first familiarize you with digital media and its development across the globe by examining the history, key concepts and theories, and methodological approaches related to the rise of digital media. We will examine the debates about the political implications of digital media, particularly its impact on state-society relations in both democratic and authoritarian regimes. For instance, we will cover themes like digital media and electoral politics, digital media and social activism, digital media and revolutions, digital media and e-government & governance, as well as cyber security and cyber warfare. You will also have to opportunity to include any theme that you are particularly interested in by writing and presenting a research paper on a topic of your selection. I expect to have one-on-one meetings with you to help with your project.

Course Materials:
The course assigns several books, which you can purchase, rent or borrow from the library. Please make sure that you read the assigned the books. Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor or available online. You are also recommended to read on traditional media systems and politics. Approach the instructor for suggestions.

** If you have a disability and require reasonable classroom accommodations, please see me after class. **

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A 93-100</td>
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<td>B+ 87-89</td>
<td>B 83-86</td>
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<td>B- 80-82</td>
<td>C+ 77-79</td>
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<td>C 73-76</td>
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<td>D 60-69</td>
<td>F 0-59</td>
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Participation (25%) You are expected to attend classes regularly. Absences will be excused only in cases of health problems or family emergencies with the appropriate documentation. Please contact the instructor immediately if you have any emergent situation. If you miss more than 1/3 of the classes, you will fail the course automatically. No electronic device will be allowed except note taking.

Reading Responses (15 %) Write responses (3-4 pages, double spaced) to the assigned readings for the weeks of your choice and email them to the class two days before the relevant seminar (Monday noon if you need a firm deadline). The reading responses may take a variety of forms, but should

* The syllabus is a general plan for the course; updates and revisions may be necessary.
include basic ideas and arguments of the readings, and more importantly your own questions, comments, and reflections. You are also welcome to draw on materials outside assigned readings.

**Book Review (20%)**  Write a book review of one or more books related to the course. In the essay, you shall summarize the argument, compare/contrast the book to course readings and other studies, and offer your own critique. Focus on analysis/critique and develop one coherent theme rather than providing a “laundry list” of comments. **The book review is due April 24th in class.**

**Research Paper (40%)**  Write a paper on a topic of your choice. The paper should start with an empirical or theoretical puzzle, present relevant hypotheses based on existing literature, and test your hypotheses with empirical data. You are encouraged to employ innovative research methods, including but not limited to online ethnography, computer-aided content analysis, survey experiment. You can produce a full-fledged research paper or a solid research design. You are expected to present your project for feedback from the class before submitting the final paper. **Please email your proposal or paper to the class beforehand and include your major concerns and the types of comments and suggestions you are seeking.**

*Note: If you are submitting the same paper to two or more courses, please make sure that the paper meets the expectation of each course. Failing to do so may result in lower grades from both/all courses.*

**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. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.
CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Welcome! Course Introduction


WEEK 2 Digital Media, Web Spirits, and Digital Sovereignty


Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 3 Digital Media and Power in Cyberspace


Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 4 Digital Media and Politics: A Quick Survey


Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 5 The Power of Digital Media?

# Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody* (Penguin, 2008). [I found an E-version online]


Discussants: 1) 2)
WEEK 6  Men Are Not Born Equal in Digital Era


Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 7  Digital Media, Democracy, and Electoral Politics


Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 8  Digital Media and Social Movements


Discussants: 1) 2)
WEEK 9  Digital Media and Arab Spring


# Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain, Democracy’s Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring (Oxford University Press, 2013). [I found an E-version online]

Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 10  The Power and Limits of the Internet in China


* Ashley Esarey and Xiao Qiang "Political Expression in the Chinese Blogosphere," Asian Survey 48 (2008), 752-772.


# Rongbin Han, Contesting Cyberspace in China: Online Resistance and Regime Resilience under Authoritarianism (Columbia University Press, 2018).

Discussants: 1) 2)

WEEK 11  Digital Media and E-Governance


Discussants: 1) 2)
WEEK 12  Cyber Terrorism and Cyber Warfare


Discussants:  1)  2)

WEEK 13  Digital Media and Research Methods Innovation


Discussants:  1)  2)

WEEK 14  Class Presentation

WEEK 15  Class Presentation

Final Paper due May 8th 11:59pm