

## INTL 8405 Comparative Politics & Digital Media\*

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The University of Georgia

Location: Gilbert Hall 309

Class Time: Wednesdays, 3:35-6:35 pm

Office: 322 Candler Hall

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

A 93-100	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72	D 60-69	F 0-59

**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

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\* 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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.



## WEEK 6 Men Are Not Born Equal in Digital Era

# Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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

Discussants: 1) 2)

## WEEK 7 Digital Media, Democracy, and Electoral Politics

\* Philip N. Howard, "Deep Democracy, Thin Citizenship: The Impact of Digital Media in Political Campaign Strategy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 597:1 (2005), 153-170.

\* Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Messages, Micro-Targeting, and New Media Technologies," *The Forum* 11:3 (2013), 429-435.

\* Sasha Issenberg, "How President Obama's Campaign Used Big Data to Rally Individual Voters," *MIT Technology Review*, December 19, 2012.

\* Alex Hern, "Cambridge Analytica: How Did It Turn Clicks into Votes," *Guardian* (May 6, 2018), <https://goo.gl/9sjYfh>

\* New Knowledge, *The Tactics & Tropes of the Internet Research Agency* (2018), pp. 76-101. Available: <https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/533-read-report-internet-research-agency/7871ea6d5b7bedafb19/optimized/full.pdf#page=1>

\* Nathaniel Persily, "Can Democracy Survive the Internet?" *Journal of Democracy*, 28:2 (2017), 63-76.

Discussants: 1) 2)

## WEEK 8 Digital Media and Social Movements

\* Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, "The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics," *Information, Communication and Society* 15:5(2012), 739-768.

\* Todd Gitlin, "Occupy's Predicament: The Movement and the Prospects for the Movement," *British Journal of Sociology* 64:1 (2013), 3-25.

\* Jeffrey Juris, "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere," *American Ethnologist* 39:2 (2012), 259-279.

\* Alasdair Roberts, "Why the Occupy Movement Failed," *Public Administration Review* 72:5 (2012), 754-762.

Discussants: 1) 2)

## **WEEK 9 Digital Media and Arab Spring**

\* Robert Brym, Melissa Godbout, Andreas Hoffbauer, Gabe Menard and Tony Huiquan Zhang, "Social Media in the 2011 Egyptian Uprising," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 65:2 (2014), 266–292.

# 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**

\* Guobin Yang, "The Co-Evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China," *Asian Survey* 43:3 (2003), 124-141.

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

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

\* Gary King, Jennifer Pan and Margaret Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *American Political Science Review* (May 2013), 1-18.

# 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**

# Daniel Lathrop and Laurel Ruma (eds.), *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice* (O'Reilly, 2010), selected chapters.

# Beth Simone Noveck, *Wiki Government: How Technology Can Make Government Better, Democracy Stronger, and Citizens More Powerful* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2009). [[E-version available from UGA library](#)]

\* Y. N. Chen, H. M. Chen, W. Huang, and R. K.H. Ching, "E-Government Strategies in Developed and Developing Countries: An Implementation Framework and Case Study," *Journal of Global Information Management* 24:1 (2006), 23-46.

\* Yuen Yuen Ang, "Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why 'I-Paid-A-Bribe' Worked in India but Failed in China," *Comparative Politics* 47:1 (2014): 21–40.

Discussants: 1) 2)

## **WEEK 12 Cyber Terrorism and Cyber Warfare**

# Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* (Columbia University Press, 2015). [[E-version available from UGA library](#)]

\* 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).

Discussants: 1) 2)

## **WEEK 13 Digital Media and Research Methods Innovation**

\* Sean Aday, Henry Farrell, Marc Lynch, John Sides, John Kelly, and Ethan Zuckerman, "Blogs and Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics," *Peaceworks*, USIP, September 2010.

\* Zeynep Tufekci, "Engineering the Public: Big Data, Surveillance and Computational Politics," *First Monday* 19: 7 (2014).

\* Justin Grimmer, "We're All Social Scientists Now: How Big Data, Machine Learning, and Causal Inference Work Together," *PS: Political Science & Politics* (forthcoming).

\* Kate Crawford, Kate Miltner, and Mary Gray, "Critiquing Big Data: Politics, Ethics, Epistemology," *International Journal of Communication* 8 (2014), 1663-1672.

\* Michael Lieberman, "Visualizing Big Data: Social Network Analysis," CASRO Digital Research Conference, San Antonio, Texas (March 11-12, 2014).

\* Angela Cora Garcia, Alecea I. Standlee, Jennifer Bechkoff, and Yan Cui, "Ethnographic Approaches to the Internet and Computer-Mediated Communication," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38: 1 (2009), 52-84.

Discussants: 1) 2)

## **WEEK 14 Class Presentation**

## **WEEK 15 Class Presentation**

**Final Paper due May 8<sup>th</sup> 11:59pm**