

## INTL 4665: Global Politics and Digital Media<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Rongbin Han

(Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45; Caldwell Hall 102)

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 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 (15 %)*

You will do two short mini presentations on the dates you select. The presentations shall focus on the most important points in readings and try to stimulate discussion. You are encouraged to use PowerPoint (preferable 3 slides or less) or handouts, and to engage the class. **The presentation is graded based on how prepared, organized, clear, and interactive it is.**

#### *Midterm Case Report (15%)*

Pick one digital media event/phenomenon that strikes you most and write a case-study report (double spaced, about 8 pages). Explain the event/phenomenon (**what, who, when, how 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.

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

### *Field Project (20%)*

Conduct a project to answer an empirical question of your own choice regarding (1) digital divide, (2) digital privacy, or (3) digital experiences and democracy. Sample questions include: What factors affect digital divide? Does education level affect one's online privacy behaviors? Does partisan inclination affect one's consumption of online news? After pick your question, you may either design a questionnaire that measure relevant variables and recruit a sample of at least 10 people or focus on a small group of people to do in-depth observation or interview. Based on the data you collect, write an analysis report, which shall include the research question, how you selected your research subjects and how you collected data, as well as your analysis. The grade will be based on the rigor of the research design (for instance, whether you control variables when doing the quantitative analysis), your data collection effort (sample size, sample quality, etc.), and the writing of the report (how organized, how compelling, how clear, etc.). Please consult the instructor for questions related to topic selection and research design.

### *Digital Media Experiment (30%)*

You are required to design and implement a digital media experiment (e.g. generate **three entries of online content** on topics like ongoing local, national, or global socio-political events and then promote the entries using all the means that you feel comfortable; you may vary the substance and/or format of the content, time, platform, promoting strategy, etc. in the process while controlling other variables) to learn what factors shape online information spreading and to what extent Internet is empowering). Based on your experience, write a **1500-word summary report**. The report must 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. Note that **you shall not post unethical content as part of this experiment**

## **Important Deadlines**

<u>February 27</u>	<u>Midterm Case Report Due</u>
<u>March 31</u>	<u>Field Project Report Due</u>
<u>April 30<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>Summary of Digital Media Experiment due</u>

### **Grade Dispute:**

For questions about your exam grade, report to the instructor **within one week** from the time you receive the grade, with a written appeal explaining why you think your grade should be changed. Please 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](http://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 7 *Welcome! Course Introduction*

#### January 9 **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.

### Week 2

#### January 14 **Media, Democracy and News Production in the U.S.**

\* Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapter 2.

\* 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.

Suggested: # USAID Center for Democracy and Governance, *Role of Media in Democracy*, June 1999 <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/200sbc.pdf>.

#### January 16 **China: An example of Authoritarian Media System**

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

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

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

## The Digital Era

### Week 3

#### January 21 **History of Social Media and Politics in the Digital Era—Overview**

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

\* Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapter 5.

#### January 23 **History of Social Media and Politics in the Digital Era—Overview**

\* 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

#### January 28 **Digital Divide**

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

\* Karl Vick, “The Digital Divide: A Quarter of the Nation Is Without Broadband,” *Time*, March 30, 2017.

\* Laura Silver et al, *Mobilize Divides in Emerging Economies*, Pew Research Center, 2019, pp. 3-24.

## January 30 Network Neutrality

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

## Week 6

### February 4 Governing the Internet

- \* Tim Wu, “Cyberspace Sovereignty?—The Internet and International System,” *Harvard Journal of Law & Technology* 10:3 (1997), 648-666.
- \* Gautham Hagesh, “ICANN 101: Who Will Oversee the Internet?”  
<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2014/03/17/icann-101-who-will-oversee-the-internet/>
- \* Merrit Kennedy, “New Russian Law Gives Government Sweeping Power Over Internet,” NPR, November 1, 2019.
- \* Hasan Chowdhury, “Russia's test-run for its alternative internet a success, says Kremlin,” *The Telegraph*, December 14, 2019.
- \* Jessica Baron, “Cyber-Sovereignty and China's Great Firewall: An Interview With James Griffiths,” *Forbes*, April 8, 2019.

### February 6 Governing the Internet—Continued

- \* 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: 97 (2004): 1–33.
- \* Michel J. G. van Eeten and Milton Mueller, “Where Is the Governance in Internet Governance?,” *New Media & Society* 15:5 (2013): 720–36.

## Week 6

### February 11 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).

### February 13 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, “The Politics of ‘Real Names’: Power, Context, and Control in Networked Publics,” *Communications of the ACM* 55:8(2012), pp. 29-31.

## Week 7

### February 18 Web 2.0 & Internet Co-production

- \* Andrew Lih, *The Wikipedia Revolution* (Hyperion Books, 2009), chap. 5, 7, 8.
- \* 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).

## February 20 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 7<sup>th</sup>, 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 8

### February 25 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: 3 (2010): 264–71.
- \* K. Hartford, “Dear Mayor: Online Communications with Local Governments in Hangzhou and Nanjing,” *China Information* 19: 2 (2005): 217–60.

### February 27 Digital Media and Democracy

- \* Seth Flaxman, Sharad Goel, and Justin M. Rao, “Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Online News Consumption,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80:1(2016): 298–320.
- \* Elizabeth Dubois and Grant Blank, “The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media,” *Information, Communication, and Society* 21: 5(2018), pp. 729-745.

## Week 9

### March 3 Digital Media and Democracy—Continued

- \* Alex Hern, “Cambridge Analytica: How Did It Turn Clicks into Votes,” *Guardian* (May 6, 2018), <https://goo.gl/9sjYfh>.
- \* Nir Grinberg, Kenneth Joseph, Lisa Friedland, Briony Swire-Thompson, and David Lazer, “Fake news on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. presidential election,” *Science* 363, no. 6425 (January 25, 2019): 374–78.
- \* Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris, Hal Roberts, and Ethan Zuckerman, “Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda,” *Columbia Journalism Review* (March 3, 2017).
- \* Christopher A. Bail et al, “Assessing the Russian Internet Research Agency’s impact on the political attitudes and behaviors of American Twitter users in late 2017,” *PNAS* (2019), pp. 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1906420116>

### March 5 Freedom vs. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden)

## Week 10 Spring Break, No Class

## **Week 11**

### **March 17 Deep Web, 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.
- \* Roshni Chakraborty, "The Deep Web: For the Nefarious or the Democratic?" *Harvard International Review* 39:4 (2018), pp. 18-21.

### **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.

## **Week 12**

### **March 24**

**Movie: Deep Web (Available on Amazon Prime Video)**

### **March 26 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 13**

### **March 31 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.

### **April 2 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).
- \* Paul Mozur and Alexandra Stevenson, "Chinese Cyberattack Hits Telegram, App Used by Hong Kong Protesters," *New York Times* (June 13, 2019).

## **Week 14 Cyber Warfare and Cyber Terrorism**

### **April 7 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).

#### **April 9 Terrorism in the Digital Age**

# Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* (Columbia University Press, 2015), Ch. 1 [esp. pp. 15-46].

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

#### **Week 15 The Future?**

##### **April 14 Technological Evolution and Future Implications**

\* Chris Stokel-Walker, "DeepMind AI thrashes human professionals at video game StarCraft II" *New Scientist* (January 24, 2019),

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2191910-deepmind-ai-thrashes-human-professionals-at-video-game-starcraft-ii/>

\* Samantha Cole, "There is No Tech Solution to Deepfakes," *Motherboard* (August 14, 2018),

[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/594qx5/there-is-no-tech-solution-to-deepfakes](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/594qx5/there-is-no-tech-solution-to-deepfakes)

\* Stanford GSB, *Blockchain for Social Impact: Moving Beyond the Hype*,

<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sites/gsb/files/publication-pdf/study-blockchain-impact-moving-beyond-hype.pdf>

Suggested: Mark G. et al, Blockchain and Suitability for Government Applications, *DHS 2018 Public-Private Analytic Exchange Program*,

[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2018\\_AEP\\_Blockchain\\_and\\_Suitability\\_for\\_Government\\_Applications.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2018_AEP_Blockchain_and_Suitability_for_Government_Applications.pdf)

##### **April 16 Technology, State, and the Business**

\* Xiao Qiang, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: President Xi's Surveillance State," *Journal of Democracy* 30:1 (2019), 53-67.

\* Shoshana Zuboff, "Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization," *Journal of Information Technology* (2015) 30, 75-89.

\* Recommended movie: *Matrix* (1999, 2003, 2003)

#### **Week 16 Themed Debate and Discussions**

**April 21: Debate: Is technological development a blessing or an ill for human society?**

**April 23: In Class Discussion: Findings of the Digital Media Experiment**