

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

Dr. Rongbin Han

(MWF, 11:30 - 12:20; Caldwell Hall 107)

Office Hours: Monday 13:30-14:30 or by Appointment

## 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 & Participation (25%)*

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. Please note **you should definitely not attend the meetings and go to the doctor if you have any symptoms**.

### *Response Paper (10 %)*

Please write one mini response paper (two-page, single spaced) on the date you select. The response paper shall (1) effectively summarizing assigned readings and (2) critically engage and reflect on one or more points you derive from the readings; (3) include one or two discussion questions. **Please submit the response paper two days before the date you pick** (for example: if you select August 25, you shall submit the response paper by August 23 midnight). Response paper writers are expected to facilitate discussion.

### *Midterm Case Report (25%)*

Pick one digital media event/phenomenon that strikes you most (cyber terrorism, Russian trolls in the presidential election, #MeToo, any hacking incidents, etc) and write a case-study report (double spaced, about 8 pages). Explain the event/phenomenon (**what, who, when, how and why**) and highlight in what ways digital media has made a difference and how involved actors (state, companies, social organizations, individuals, etc) use the Internet to different degrees? In particular, 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 and updates may be necessary. See the instructor if you need special classroom accommodations.

### *Digital Media Experiment or Final Reflection Essay (35%)*

You may opt to conduct a digital media experiment to learn about the impact of digital media on our social life or factors that shape the effects of the digital media. Based on your experience, write a **2000-word summary report**, explaining (1) The experiment goal and design (what you want to test; how you implement it); (2) findings & reflections. Please bear in mind **ethical concerns when doing the experiment**. Consult the instructor about your plan.

You may write a final reflection essay addressing the following question: What can the United States (including the government, platforms, individuals, etc.) do about online misinformation and disinformation (and the implications)?

### *Movie Review (5%)*

We will have movie days. Please select one movie and write a review (about 600-1000 words), covering the stories (plot) and analyzing how it is relevant to themes covered in the class. You may also pick a movie to review on your own. Check with the instructor in this case.

## **Important Deadlines**

October 11                      Midterm Case Report Due

December 7                      Summary of Digital Media Experiment or Final Reflection due

December 15                      Movie Review due

## **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.**

## **Resources**

UGA has a vast array of resources to support students facing challenges. Please don't hesitate to come speak with me or contact these resources directly. Note that UGA faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault/relationship violence to UGA's Equal Opportunity Office. UGA's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention can speak to students confidentially.

- **Office of Student Care & Outreach** (coordinate assistance for students experiencing hardship/unforeseen circumstances) – 706-542-7774 or by email [sco@uga.edu](mailto:sco@uga.edu)
- **Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)** - 706-542-2273 (during regular business hours) *After Hour Mental Health Crisis:* 706-542-2200 (UGA Police—ask to speak to the CAPS on-call clinician)
- **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention** – 706-542-SAFE (The advocates at RSVP can provide student confidentiality).

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1

#### August 18 *Welcome! Course Introduction*

#### August 20 **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

#### August 23 **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.
- # USAID Center for Democracy and Governance, [Role of Media in Democracy](#), June 1999.

#### August 25 **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.

#### August 27 **Discussion: Media, Media Systems, and Regime Types**

## The Digital Era

### Week 3

#### August 30 **History of Social Media and Politics in the Digital Era—Overview**

- \* Williams and Carpini, *After Broadcast News*, Chapter 5.
- \* Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison, “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13:1 (2007), 210–230.
- Suggested:* Jose van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity* (Oxford U Press, 2013).

#### September 1 **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.
- \* Mitchell Kapor and John Perry Barlow, “[Across the Electronic Frontier](#),” EFF, July 10, 1990.

#### September 3 **Discussion—How Internet situates in and affects existing power relations?**

### Week 4

#### September 6 **Labor Day-No Class**

#### September 8 **Governability of the Internet?**

- # Lawrence Lessig, *Code 2.0* (Basic Books, 2006), Chapters 1-2.
- \* John Perry Barlow, “[A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace](#),” EFF, Feb. 8, 1996.
- \* Justin Fox, “No One Actually Knows How to Regulate the Internet,” *Harvard Business Review* (Nov. 18, 2014).

#### September 10 **Discussion: Do you think the Internet can be regulated or not?**

## **Week 5 Governing the Internet**

### **September 13 Governing the Internet-Global Governance**

- \* Nanette S. Levinson and Meryem Marzouki, "International Organizations and Global Internet Governance: Interorganizational Architecture," in Francesca Musiani et al (eds) *The Turn to Infrastructure in Internet Governance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 47-71.
- \* Gautham Hagesh, "[ICANN 101: Who Will Oversee the Internet?](#)" Wall Street Journal, March 17, 2014.
- \* Recommended: EU & General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), <https://gdpr-info.eu/>

### **September 15 Governing the Internet—Cyber-Sovereignty**

- \* Tim Wu, "Cyberspace Sovereignty?—The Internet and International System," *Harvard Journal of Law & Technology* 10:3 (1997), 648-666.
- \* John Perry Barlow, "[Decrypting the Puzzle Palace](#)," *EFF*, July 1992.
- \* Merrit Kennedy, "New Russian Law Gives Government Sweeping Power Over Internet," *NPR*, November 1, 2019.
- \* Jessica Baron, "Cyber-Sovereignty and China's Great Firewall: An Interview with James Griffiths," *Forbes*, April 8, 2019.

### **September 17 Discussion: Is internet governance moving closer to a truly global governance framework or cyber-sovereignty? What is the position of the U.S.?**

## **Week 6**

### **September 20 Platforms and Big Internet Corporations**

- # Rebecca MacKinnon, *Consent of the Networked* (Basics Books), Ch. 8, 9 and 10.

### **September 22 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.

### **September 24 Discussion: The governance in internet governance and the most decisive actor(s)/mechanism(s) in governing the Internet?**

## **Week 7**

### **September 27 Network Neutrality**

- \* Tim Berners-Lee, "Long Live the Web: A Call for Continued Open Standards and Neutrality," *Scientific American Magazine* (Dec. 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.

### **September 29 Digital Divide**

- \* 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.
- \* Anjana Susarla, "[The new digital divide is between people who opt out of algorithms and people who don't](#)," *The Conversation*, April 17, 2019.

\* Najeh Aissaoui, “The digital divide: a literature review and some directions for future research in light of COVID-19,” *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication* (2021), 1-23. DOI 10.1108/GKMC-06-2020-0075.

**October 1 Watch video and participate in discussion (Instructor out of town for APSA)**

Youngmoo Kim, “[Getting Woke to the Digital Divide](#),” TEDxPhiladelphia.

**Week 8**

**October 4 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), 29-31.

**October 6 Deep Web, Hacking, and Hacker Practice**

\* E. Gabriella Coleman and Alex Golub, “Hacker Practice: Moral Genres and the Cultural Articulation of Liberalism,” *Anthropological Theory* 8: 3 (2008), 255–77.

\* Roshni Chakraborty, “The Deep Web: For the Nefarious or the Democratic?” *Harvard International Review* 39:4 (2018), 18-21.

**October 8 Movie: Deep Web (2015)**

**Virtual discussion: Your experiences and reflections on personal data security?**

**Week 9**

**October 11 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).

**October 13 A Free Irresponsible Press? 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)]

**October 15 Movie: Snowden (2016)**

**Week 10**

**October 18 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.

\* Kathleen Hartford, “Dear Mayor: Online Communications with Local Governments in Hangzhou and Nanjing,” *China Information* 19: 2 (2005), 217–60.

**October 20 Digital Media and Social Activism**

\* Clay Shirky, “The Political Power of Social Media,” *Foreign Affairs* (Jan. 2011), 28-41.

- \* Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, “The Logic of Connective Action,” *Information, Communication and Society* 15:5(2012), 739-768.

**October 22 Discussion: How digital media may have empowered citizens both in terms of improving governance and popular mobilization?**

### **Week 11 Digital Media and Democracy**

#### **October 25**

- \* Daniel Kreiss, “Book Review: ‘Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field, Prospects for Reform,’” *International Journal of Press/Politics* 26: 2 (2021), 505–12.
- \* Michael L. Miller and Cristian Vaccari, “Digital Threats to Democracy: Comparative Lessons and Possible Remedies,” *International Journal of Press/Politics* 25: 3 (2020), 333–56.

#### **October 27**

- \* 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 & Grant Blank, “The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media,” *Information, Communication, and Society* 21:5(2018), 729-745.
- \* Alex Hern, “[Cambridge Analytica: How Did It Turn Clicks into Votes](#),” *Guardian* (May 6, 2018).
- \* Issie Lapowsky, "[How Bots Broke the FCC's Public Comment System](#)," *Wired* (Nov. 28, 2017).

**October 29 Fall Break, No Class**

### **Week 12 Misinformation, Disinformation, and Democracy**

#### **November 1**

- \* Deen Freelon and Chris Wells. “Disinformation as Political Communication,” *Political Communication* 37:2 (2020), 145–56.
- \* Caroline Jack, [Lexicon of Lies: terms for Problematic Information](#), Data & Society (2017).

#### **November 3**

- \* 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.

**November 5 Discussion: What is the gravest threat to democracy in the digital age?**

### **Week 13**

#### **November 8 Digital Media and Authoritarian Politics: Cyber Activism**

- \* 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).
- \* William Lafi Youmans, and Jillian C. York, “Social Media and the Activist Toolkit,” *Journal of Communication* 62:2(2012), 315–29.
- \* Ashley Esarey and Xiao Qiang, “Political Expression in the Chinese Blogosphere: Below the Radar,” *Asian Survey* 48:5(2008), 752-772.

## **November 10 Digital Media and Authoritarian Politics: 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).

## **November 12 Discussion: How digital media affects and is shaped by authoritarianism?**

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

### **November 15 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,” *Chinascopes* 67 (2014), 24-25.
- \* Michael Schmidt, “Chinese Hackers Extending Reach to Smaller U.S. Agencies, Officials Say,” *New York Times* (July 16, 2014).

### **November 18 Cyber Terrorism**

# Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace* (Columbia U Press, 2015), Ch. 1 [esp. pp. 15-46].

## **November 20 Discussion: Implications of cyber warfare/terrorism on international relations & domestic politics?**

## **Week 15**

### **November 22 Movie: The Social Dilemma (2020)**

## **Week 16 The Future**

### **November 29 Technological Evolution and Future Implications**

- \* Samantha Cole, “[There is No Tech Solution to Deepfakes](#),” Motherboard (August 14, 2018).
- \* Stanford GSB, [Blockchain for Social Impact: Moving Beyond the Hype](#), Center for Social Innovation at Stanford GSB in collaboration with Rippleworks Foundation. [Pay special attention to the Executive summary & Democracy and Governance sections]  
Suggested: Mark G. et al, [Blockchain and Suitability for Government Applications](#), *DHS 2018 Public-Private Analytic Exchange Program*.

### **December 1 Technology, State, and the Business**

- \* Xiao Qiang, “The Road to Digital Unfreedom,” *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.
- \* Jack Goldsmith & Andrew K. Woods, “[Internet Speech Will Never Go Back to Normal](#),” *The Atlantic*, April 2020.

## **December 3 Discussion: Future of digital politics and humanity?**

## **Week 17**

### **December 6: Share findings of the Digital Media Experiment**

### **December 7: Q&A (Online); Digital Media Experiment Report/Final Reflection Due**

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### **December 15: Movie Review Due**