

Democracy in a Digital Age

COMM594 – Advanced Special Topics

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Course description

This course examines technological developments and communication theories, as they map out an amalgamation of traditional democratic modes and processes and emerging tendencies and tensions. Using old and new theoretical concepts and language, we trace, register and interpret these developments, which are representative of practicing democracy in a digital age. Here, provide overview of schedule

Course Objectives

- To reiterate political communication theory meaningful in the study of digital media.
- To study the connection between democracy, technology, and (political) communication theory.
- To practice and think about democracy in a digital age critically.
- To prepare work that can be presented at a communication conference and subsequently published.
- To create and maintain a UIC affiliated political resource web site.

Reading materials

- *Handbook of Internet Politics* (2008), Andrew Chadwick & Phil Howard (Eds). London: Routledge.
- Various, available online.

Requirements

Research critique

Select a journal article (better to select a study, qualitative or quantitative) on some aspect of digital democracy and critique it. The article should be no more than a couple of years old. Do not waste time summarizing the article in detail – the article summary should be no longer than a paragraph or two. Critique the theoretical soundness of the study, its contribution to the field and significance, the methodology, interpretation of results, writing, and organization. 5 pages, double-spaced. Be prepared to summarize your paper in class on the day this assignment is due. Worth 10% of total grade.

Book Report

Select a book on political communication/technology/democracy/digital media from the list provided electronically or on your own (if you are doing the latter, you need to get the book approved by me). Produce a critique of the book chosen, focusing less on summarizing and more on analyzing the author's approach, the book content, and whether the goals of the author were met. I expect you to address the validity of the author's approach, the significance of the topic, the soundness of organization and the arguments presented, whether the material is interesting, worthy of attention and relevant, quality of writing and style, where this books fits within the relevant

body of literature, and whether it needs to be updated and how. Summarizing the book should constitute about a third of this paper. 7 pages, double-spaced. Be prepared to summarize your paper in class on the day this assignment is due. Worth 15% of your total grade.

Digital Democracy Project

This is our attempt to understand and contribute to the practice of digital democracy. On your own, you will meet and determine the objectives of the web space, and present and discuss with me. We will sketch out a timeline for proceeding, based on interests and expertise of the group. Ideally, we will produce something simple, which will go online and in the first month of the course, and will hopefully track some aspect of the Presidential Election. Worth 15% of your grade.

Research Paper

This is your final paper for the course, for which you can produce either a paper summarizing research you conducted over the semester, or a research prospectus, or a critical analysis. The **research proposal** for this is due. This needs to be written formally, following the research paper guidelines of our discipline. Use APA or MLA, depending on the conference/publication this is directed to. Approximately 20 pages, 40% of grade.

Participation

Your attendance and participation to class discussions is essential and expected. This is a graduate seminar, meant to inform you on this topic but to also teach you to articulate your own opinions with confidence. All readings should be completed before the assigned date, and you should come to class prepared to talk. You will also prepare discussion questions for a specific topic, to be determined later. A sign up sheet will be circulated. Worth 20% of your grade.

Special Needs

It is our desire that all students participate fully in the curriculum of our department. If you have a disability or special condition that compromises your ability to successfully participate in this class, please notify me as soon as possible and make sure you register with the appropriate University office. All efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

Honor Code

All students are expected to read and observe UIC's Honor Code Policy concerning academic integrity.

Plagiarizing

When facts or other material are obtained from an outside source, that source should be cited properly in the text and the bibliography/references section of your work. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of another person and presenting them as one's own without proper credit. Plagiarizing is considered cheating, and a student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course. If you are not certain that you are citing materials properly, feel free to double check your citations with me.

Grading scale:

A = 100-93	A- = 92-90		
B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80	
C+ = 79-77	C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	
D+ = 69-67	D = 66-63	D- = 62-60	59 and below = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments should be completed prior to the date for which they are assigned. You should come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. This schedule is tentative – you will be advised of changes. Readings are on reserve, online.

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
INTRODUCTION			
Aug. 28	Course overview		
OLD LANGUAGE IN A DIGITAL AGE			
Sep. 4	Token theory 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Valenzuela & McCombs-Agenda Setting •Ghanem-Filling in the Tapestry •Neumann - Spiral of Silence •Lippmann-World Outside and Picture in our Heads •Framing Bias-Entman 	
Sep. 11	Token theory 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Meyrowitz-Behavior in Its Place •Habermas- Public Sphere Plenary •Capella- Cynicism and Social Trust Plenary •Fraser-Counterpublics •Schudson-Was There Ever a Public Sphere •Carey-Press, public, public discourse 	
NEW LANGUAGE IN A DIGITAL AGE			
Sep. 18	Newer concepts and adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Putnam – Democracies in Flux/Social Capital, Intro and Conclusion •Mouffe – Politics and the Political (Ch 1 & 2) •Giddens – The Emergence of Life Politics •Inglehart & Welzel – Theory of Human Development •Beck- The politics of politics/Cosmopolitanism 	Report on Digital Democracy Project
A NEW CONTEXT			
Sep. 25	Newer Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Jenkins – Photoshop for Democracy •Benkler – Networked Public Sphere •Baumann- Liquid Life (Intro, Thinking in Dark Times) •Bimber et al - Technological Change and the Shifting Nature of Political Organization (Handbook) 	
Digital Democracy: NEW MODES / PRACTICES / PROCESS			
Oct. 2	Digital Democracy as concept, structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dahlgren - The internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation •Keane – Structural transformations of Public Sphere •Van Dijk – Models of Democracy •Hagen – Digital Democracy and Political Systems •Hacker & Van Dijk – What is Digital Democracy 	Article Review due

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Digital Democracy: NEW MODES / PRACTICES / PROCESS - CITIZENSHIP IN A DIGITAL AGE			
Oct. 9	Modes of Citizenship and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mossberger Toward Digital Citizenship: Addressing Inequality in the Information Age Karen (Handbook) • Schudson – Monitorial citizen (from the Good citizen) • Coleman – Directly Represented citizen • Scammel- Citizen Consumer • Noam- Why Internet Bad for Democracy 	
Digital Democracy: NEW MODES / PRACTICES / PROCESS - SOCIAL BEHAVIORS AND CIVILITY ONLINE			
Oct. 16	Civic society, civility and representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bennett & Toft - Identity, Technology and Narratives: Transnational Activism and Social Networks (Handbook) • Van Doorn & Van Zoonen Theorizing Gender and the Internet: Past, Present, and Future (Handbook) • Kim & Ball-Rokeach -New Immigrants, the Internet, and Civic Society (Handbook) • Van Dijk - One Europe, Digitally Divided (Handbook) • Wheeler - Working Around the State: Internet Use and Political Identity in the Arab World (Handbook) 	Book Report due
POLITICS AND POLICY			
Oct. 22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountain - Bureaucratic Reform and E-Government in the United States: An Institutional Perspective (Handbook) • Margetts - Public Management Change and E-Government: The Emergence of Digital Era Governance(Handbook) • Ward & Gibson - European Political Organizations and the Internet: Mobilization, Participation and Change (Handbook) • Foot et al- Electoral Web Production Practices in Cross-National Perspective: The Relative Influence of National Development, Political Culture, and Web Genre (Handbook) • Dutton & Peltu - The New Politics of the Internet: Multistakeholder Policy Making and the Internet Technocracy (Handbook) • Cogburn - Enabling Effective Multistakeholder Participation in Global Internet Governance Through Accessible Cyberinfrastructure 	
WEB PROJECT – NO CLASS			
Oct. 30		•	Research Proposal due (topic)
DATES	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS

A NEW PRESS?	
Nov. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuze - What is Journalism? (Deuze) • Deuze/Baumann - Liquid Journalism • Tewksbury & Rittenberg - Online News Creation and Consumption: Implications for Modern Democracies (Handbook) • Stanyer - Web 2.0 and the Transformation of News and Journalism (Handbook) • Anstead & Chadwick - Parties, Election Campaigning and the Internet: Toward a Comparative Institutional Approach (Handbook)
DIGITAL DEMOCRACY AND INEQUALITY	
Nov. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brundidge & Rice -Political Engagement Online: Do the Information Rich Get Richer and the Like-Minded More Similar? (Handbook) • DiMaggio, Hargittai et al – Digital divide & digital inequality • Gandy & Farrall - Metaphoric Reinforcement of the Virtual Fence: Factors Shaping the Political Economy of Property in Cyberspace (Handbook) • Rogerson & Milton - Internet Diffusion and the Digital Divide: The Role of Policymaking and Political Institutions (Handbook) • Reedy & Wells - Information, the Internet and Direct Democracy (Handbook)
THE END OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE	
Nov. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall of public Man- Sennett • Dielbert - The Geopolitics of Internet Control: Censorship, Sovereignty and Cyberspace (Handbook) • Phillips - Locational Surveillance: Embracing the Patterns of Our Lives (Handbook) • May - Globalizing the Logic of Openness: Open Source Software and the Global Governance of Intellectual Property (Handbook) • Elmer - Exclusionary Rules? The Politics of Protocols (Handbook)
WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?	
Dec. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflections and Presentations •Reading (inspirational only) TBA
Final Research Paper and Presentations due Dec 4	

Handbook of internet politics

1. Introduction Andrew Chadwick and Philip N. Howard Part 1: Institutions 2. The Internet in US Election Campaigns Richard Davis, Jody C. Baumgartner, Peter L. Francia and Jonathan S. Morris 7. Making Parliamentary Democracy Visible: Speaking to, With and For the Public in the Age of Interactive Technology Stephen Coleman Part 2: Behavior 10. Wired to Fact: The Role of the Internet in Identifying Deception During the 2004 US Presidential Campaign Bruce W. Hardy, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Kenneth Winneg Part 3: Identities 16. The Internet and the Changing Global Media Environment Brian McNair 17. Part 4: Law and 31. Conclusion Philip N. Howard and Andrew Chadwick

References

Booklist for Book Review

- Bennet, W. L. (1983). *News: The politics of illusion*. New York: Longman.
- Carter, S. L. (1998). *Civility: Manners, morals, and the etiquette of democracy*. New York: Basic.
- Capella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford.
- Dahlgren, P. (1995). *Television and the public sphere*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Dionne, E. J. (1992). *Why Americans hate politics*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Entman, R. (1989). *Democracy without citizens*. New York : Oxford.
- Fallows, J. (1996). *Breaking the news*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gillespie, T. (2007). *Wired Shut: Copyright and the Shape of Digital Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hacker, K. & van Dijk, J. (2000). *Digital democracy: Issues of theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hague, B. & Loader, B. (1999). *Digital democracy: Discourse and decision making in the information age*. New York: Routledge.
- Hart, R. (1994). *Seducing America: How television charms the modern voter*. New York: Oxford.
- Lasch, C. (1995). *The revolt of the elites and the betrayal of democracy*. New York: Norton.
- Lippman, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Patterson, T. E. (1994). *Out of order*. New York: Vintage.
- Reese, S. D., Gandy, O. H., Grant, A. E. (2001). *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Schudson, M. (1998). *The good citizen: A history of American civic life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schudson, M. (2008). *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*. Oxford: Polity.
- Viroli, M. (1995). *For love of country*. New York: Oxford.