Politics and Media (POLS 341)

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About the Course

From the role of media in Trump's presidential campaign and his upset victory to the Arab Spring digital, technology is challenging and changing established institutions on several levels. This course focuses on the role of media in politics. A wide range of issues related to media's positive and negative impacts will be assessed during this class. We will use readings, videos, and online discussions to understand issues like: if the internet can promote democracy; surveillance and control online; the 2016 Presidential campaign; destruction of paper journalism; online consumerism; online harassment and trolling; the internet as a platform elites can use to erase histories of their mal-influence to maintain power; and digital religions [E1]

This course carries Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) and Writing Intensive Focus (WI) designations.

Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, students will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues; responsibly deliberating on ethical issues; and making ethically determined judgments."

Course Objectives:
- Developing writing skills
- Learning key concepts in the field with a view to develop a critical eye for the news
- Developing familiarity with the new media environment, including search skills and a clearer sense of privacy concerns
- Achieve a broad understanding of ethical issues facing us online
- The class is designed to give students an essential understanding of and familiarity with the full spectrum of digital communications. After the class, the student should have a basic technical literacy, appropriate for any professional in communications, political, or policy work, and broad knowledge of current and emerging trends. This will include putting together a digital toolkit that will enable students to use and apply their digital knowledge in their professional and personal lives.

Class Assignments [E4 & E5]

Digital Tool Kit (10%):
Students will create:
1. Create a LinkedIn account (in order to help you network with other professionals, academics, and researchers)
2. Create a Twitter account. If you already have a twitter account, it is up to you if you want to link your existing account to the class thread or make a new one.
3. Set up your own blog, which you will consistently update in accordance with our class discussion.
4. Set up a google group to participate in class simulation

Class Participation (55% in total) [W3] [E5]
There are two components of class participation:
•Twitter (20%): You will be expected to Tweet two articles or blog posts a week on a digital topic of interest to you or the class. You can also post blogs or articles relevant to your research paper towards the end of the class. Your Tweets should be tagged using the class hashtag (#pols341digital), to ensure you receive credit. [W1 & W4]
Interesting and relevant Tweets on the #pols341digital feed will be discussed at the beginning of each class. [W2]

Blog Posts (35% in total) [W1 & W3]
You will be required to write six blog posts throughout the class. Six blog posts (20%) will review the readings of a week you will choose depending on your interest. One blog post will be an outline of your research paper (15%) [W3]. As bloggers you will need to make sure that your posts cover these three major points:
• Summarize (highlight the main arguments of) the readings for the week.

- Analyze/evaluate (find problems or contradictions with, or explain why you agree or disagree with) the readings.
- Synthesize (place in relation to, bring together themes with, say what one author would say to another) that week's readings with the previous week's.

Each blog post must be a minimum of 400 words and a maximum of 500 words. An important part of your blog posts is referencing other blogs that you are reading or blogs that are referenced in the assigned readings. The blog posts will be checked each week and feedback will be provided individually. The blogs must be submitted on Friday by 6.00 pm (HAST) [W2 & W4]. **Students are expected to be familiar with each other's blogs.** We will start each new week with a discussion of student blogs.

Major Final Deliverable (45%) [W1 & W3]
You are to complete a research paper. Conduct research on an online trend or digital media in which you have some interest. Collect articles and books written about the topic and read them. Analyze them, and synthesize their meaning. If there is a shortage of written material about your topic, conduct original research. Draw a conclusion about the direction of the trend or technology. The paper should summarize and synthesize the state of the trend or technology and make an argument. It should be 6 to 7 pages long, double-spaced and be cited using the APA format [W4].

Grading: For all your assignments big or small, you will be evaluated on the comprehensiveness of your analysis and review, clarity of the argument (where applicable), format and written composition. Additional guidance and details will be provided in class and on the class page.

Grading Scale:
A – 92 - 100 B- – 80 – 81 D+ – 67 - 69
A- – 90 – 91 C+ – 77 – 79 D – 62 - 66
B+ – 87 - 89 C – 72 – 76 D- – 60 - 61
B – 82 – 86 C- – 70 – 71 E – 59 and below

Policy on Misconduct
There will be a strict no-acceptance policy on PLAGIARISM. Any instance of Plagiarism will earn you an 'F'. Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment. To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement of the source (either by inadequate citation or failure to indicate verbatim

quotations), is plagiarism; to paraphrase without acknowledgement is likewise plagiarism. Where such copying or paraphrase has occurred the mere mention of the source in the bibliography shall not be deemed sufficient acknowledgement; each such instance must be referred specifically to its source. Verbatim quotations must be either in inverted commas, or indented, and directly acknowledged."

Students should familiarize themselves with this information, so that what is and is not acceptable is clearly understood.

Readings [E1, E3 & E4]:

Week 1

Ch1. Zittrain, Jonathan. 2008. The Future of the Internet – And How to Stop It. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press [can be downloaded for free online at http://futureoftheinternet.org/download

Week 2

Ch. 3. Zittrain, Jonathan. 2008. The Future of the Internet – And How to Stop It. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press [can be downloaded for free online at http://futureoftheinternet.org/download

Week 3 and 4

Excerpts to be decided. W. Lance Bennett. 2012. News: The Politics of Illusion, 8th edition. New York: Longman Publishing.

Video:

How Facebook Changed the World: Arab Spring Part - 1, BBC Documentary. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WNd-Zm0K9A

Week 5

Ch. 3, Shirky, C. (2008). Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations, Penguin Books: New York.

Week 6

Ch. 4. Shirky, C. (2008). Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations, Penguin Books: New York.

Video:
Journalism: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO), Published August 07th, 2016, Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq2_wSsDwkQ

Week 7

Ch. 3, Sunstein, Cass. 2007. Republic.com 2.0. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 8

Ch. 5. Sunstein, Cass. 2007. Republic.com 2.0. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 9

Ch. 2. Phillips, Whitney. 2015. This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture. MIT Press: Cambridge.

Week 10

Ch. 2. Taylor, Astra. 2014. The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age.

Week 11

Ch. 5. Taylor, Astra. 2014. The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age.

Class simulation: collectively envisioning a future with an alternative business model. How will they think of internet users as citizens and not as paid or unpaid digital laborers?

Week 12

Ch. 1, Mossberger, Karen. Tolbert, Caroline. And McNeal, Ramona. 2007. Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society, and Participation. MIT Press: Cambridge.

Week 13

Ch. 4 and Ch. 5. Mossberger, Karen. Tolbert, Caroline. And McNeal, Ramona. 2007. Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society, and Participation. MIT Press: Cambridge.

Week 14

Ch.1 and Ch. 6. Han, Sam., and Mohamed Nasir, Kamaludeen. 2016. *Digital Culture and Religion in Asia.* Routledge: New York.

Week 15

Roth, Lorna., Ch. 16. 'Reflections on the Colour of the Internet', and Sottas, Eric. And Schonveld, Ben. Ch. 8 'Information Overload: How increased flows affect the work of the Human rights movement' in 2000. Hick, Steven. Halpin, Edward. and Hoskins, Eric. (Eds). *Human Rights and the Internet.* Macmillan Press Ltd: London.