



Course program and reading list

Semester 2 Year 2020

School: Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy B.A

Social Networks and Political Change

Lecturer:

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Teaching Assistant:

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Course No.:	Course Type :	Weekly Hours :	Credit:
4669	Lecture	2	2

Course Requirements :	Group Code :	Language:
Final Paper	201466901	English



Course Description

Information technologies, data, and algorithms increasingly impact multiple aspects of democracy and society. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, this course focuses on the power and social dynamics in (and of) cyberspaces, and their effects democratic regimes. Such dynamics challenge traditional political and societal structures of institutions and are core of social change, changing practices, behavior and awareness of individuals, collectives, business and societies.

Here are some questions we will discuss in class:

How do fake news and other (social) media manipulations affect voters? What steps can democracies take to minimize foreign intervention in elections?

What role do various types of social media play in mobilizing collective action?

How do information flows impact democratic institutions and processes? Who controls them?

What kind of societal and ethical challenges does artificial intelligence present and how

can we address them?

What are the power relations between the leading stakeholders in the information era – tech giants, governments, users?

How does platform moderation affect freedom of speech?



Course Goals

The course attempts to take a socio-technical perspective to political change. As such, one of the main goals of the course is to provide students with theoretical and practical frameworks that can serve later as a tool-kit, and lay the groundwork for the student's development as leaders. Second, another goal is to bring to students the broader context for understanding societal and political changes that occur in a networks context.



Grading

1. Class Participation - 0%

The topics of this course require a high level of involvement from the students. So how you participate? First, show up for the lessons. Second, make sure you do your readings for each week. Readings are an important and essential component. Third, be cognitively present in class, ask questions, provide examples, discuss etc...

2. Mid-term paper (Group Assignment) - 30%

Groups consist of 3 students per group.

More instructions will be given during the semester.

Due date: 4.6.2020

3. Final paper (Individual/Group Assignment) - 70%

Groups consist of up to 3 students per group (No - 4 are not allowed!).

More instructions will be given during the semester.

Due date: 1.8.2020

Course Grading:

The course grading will be structured as follows:

1. Participation	0 %
2. Mid-term paper	30 %
3. Final Paper	70 %

Total	100 %
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 Reading List**Lessons and Readings:****PART 1: How Information Flows change the Democratic Process?**

1. Introduction: changes in power dynamics

No readings assigned for this week.

[Recommended only] Lukes Steven, 2005, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition, Palgrave Macmillan, Ch. 1, pp. 14-59.

2. Participation I

[Topics] Polarization, Homophily and Power Law

[Read] Dahlgren Peter, 2005, "The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation", *Political Communication*, Vol. 22, pp. 147-162.

[Read] Nahon Karine, 2016, "[Where there is social media, there is politics](#)", in: *Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, (Eds.) Bruns A., Skogerbo E., Christensen C., Larsson O.A., and Enli G.S., NYC, NY: Routledge. [Read] Flaxman, Seth, Sharad Goel, and Justin Rao. 2016. "Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Online News Consumption." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (3): 209-27.

3. Participation II

[Topics] Disinformation

[Read] Tucker Joshua, Guess A., Barbera P., Vaccari C., Siegel A., Sanovich S., Stukal D. and Nyhan B., 2018, "Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature", A Report prepared for the Hewlett Foundation.

[Read] Marwick Alice, 2018, "Why do People Share Fake News? A Sociotechnical Model of Media Effects", *Georgetown Law Technology Review* Vol 2(2), pp. 474-510.

4. Representation

[Topics] Personal politics, Populism, Institutional Changes, Disinformation

[Read] Bennett Lance and Livingston Steven, 2018, "The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 33(2), pp. 122-139.

[Read] Owen Diana, 2019, "Populist Attitudes and Political Media Use", Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C.

5. Disruptive Information Flows

[Topics]: Definitions - information flows, virality of information, memes

[Read] Nahon Karine and Hemsley, Jeff, 2013, *Going Viral*, Polity, Cambridge: UK. Chapter 2

and Chapter 6.

[Read] Shifman Limor, 2013, "Memes in a Digital World: Reconciling with a Conceptual Troublemaker", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* Vol 18(3), pp. 362-377.

PART 2: Intermediaries and Democracy

6. Intermediaries I: Platforms

[Topics] Platforms vs. States, Moderation

[Read] Gillespie Tarleton, 2017, "Governance of and by Platforms", (eds.) Burgess Jean, Poell Thomas and Marwick Alice, *SAGE Handbook of Social Media*. [See] Mark Zuckerberg's speech, Oct. 17, 2019, On Freedom of Expression - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E419_V2Gk_g

[See] Sacha Baron Cohen's speech, Nov. 21, 2019, at the ADL International Leadership Award. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMaWq5yZIYM>

7. Intermediaries II: Algorithms

[Topics] Artificial Intelligence, Bias, Fairness, Quantification

[Read] Diakopoulos Nicholas, 2014, *Algorithmic Accountability Reporting: On the Investigation of Black Boxes*. Tow Center for Digital Journalism

[Read] Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York: NYU Press. pp. 1-14.

[See] Crawford Kate, 2018, *AI Now: Social and Political Questions for Artificial Intelligence*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2IT7gWBfaE&t=516s>

PART 3: Challenging Institutions of Power in Democracies

8. From Collective action to Connective Action

[Read] Bennett, L. W. and Segerberg, A., 2012, "The Logic of Connective Action", *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), pp. 793-768.

[Read] Marcea Dan, 2016, *Civic Participation in Contentious Politics*, Palgrave: MacMillan, chapter 1

9. Privacy and Surveillance: Before and after the Coronavirus

[Read] Solove Daniel, 2011, *Why Privacy Matters Even if You Have 'Nothing to Hide'*, *The Chronical Review*.

[Read] Lin Liza and Martin Timothy, 2020, "How Coronavirus is Eroding Privacy", *The Wall Street Journal*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-paves-way-for-new-age-of-digital-surveillance-11586963028>

10. Elections: What have changed?

[Read] Margets Helen, 2017, 'Why Social Media have Won the 2017 General Elections', *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 88(3), pp. 385-390.

[Read] Report of the US National Intelligence, 2017, "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution