

politics of the internet

This course is about how the Internet changes politics and how politics shape the Internet. The Internet will be our main focus, but other new media will also be considered. 'Politics' will be broadly defined to include identity, organization, and power. We will take a close look at how the Internet changes the distribution of information and social organization and how governments and other interests seek to regulate the Internet. We start with theoretical and historical introductions. Subsequent topics include: the impact of the Internet on the economy, society, and politics and the problems of international property, privacy, censorship, the global digital divide, and security and crime. Many topics will entail careful examination of one or more well-known websites. This will be a seminar-style course requiring students' active participation in classroom discussions. Students are also required to undertake and present original research. The learning objectives for this class are: 1) Gain an understanding of how media in general and the Internet in particular have shaped politics; 2) Gain an understanding of the major issues involved in regulating the Internet; 3) Become more effective at finding and evaluating information and ideas found the Internet; 4) Become more effective at using Internet and new media tools; and 5) Improve liberal arts skills of critical thinking, research, and communication.

Assignments and Assessment

1. Present an effective and/or an ineffective web page to the class (10%). Each student will be assigned to a two person group and each group will be allowed 10 minutes for their presentation. The main criteria for evaluating presentations will be the extent to which you engage the class in a persuasive analysis of what makes the chosen website(s) effective or ineffective and the general lessons that we can learn.
2. Group Project Proposal (15%). Each student will write a 2-3 page proposal for a group project and present it to the class. Projects may involve research, community service or organization for other purposes, but must involve the Internet or new media as a key component. Proposals should include a description of the project, an explanation of why it is interesting and important (preferably with reference to readings and lectures), and a description of what will be required to make it happen including but not limited to the number of people required, what sorts of skills will be needed, expenses and a time line. Whether or not your project is approved by the instructor and attracts the needed participants will be considered in its evaluation. Due at midterm.
3. Group project (25%). All students will join a group to implement one of the proposed projects. Each group will write a five page paper explaining what they did and what they learned and present it to the class during the last week of class.
4. Write a term web page or paper (no more than 10 pages) on a topic relevant to the politics of the Internet. (20%). A paper proposal will be due April 15. This paper may not be on the same topic as the student's group research project. Grading criteria are the same as for the group research project.
5. Short essays and quizzes on topics covered in readings and lectures (20%). Students will write four short essays (no more than 3 pages). Due dates appear below. Questions will be distributed approximately a week before they are due. Topics will be taken from lectures and readings. Essays will be assessed based on 1) mastery of information presented in lectures and readings; and 2) persuasive answers to the question. Quizzes will cover weekly reading assignments, but will not be given if students show good knowledge of assigned readings.
6. Class Participation (10%). As this is a seminar-style class, students' critical engagement in class discussion is important. This requires regular attendance, completing readings in a

timely manner and, on occasion, some additional exercises.

notes

Students should pay attention to the email account listed under their name on D2L as updates on assignments and requirements may be sent to that account. Students who miss deadlines will only be allowed to make-up the work if the circumstances are truly exceptional, tragic and/or beyond their control. Some leniency may be shown if problems are discussed in advance. Regular attendance is expected as specified by university policy and failure to attend regularly may be sanctioned as specified by university policy. Academic dishonesty may receive the harshest sanctions allowed by university policy. Students who would like to improve their grade may do extra assignments or revise their papers, but must first consult with the instructor. Students seeking honors credit and graduate students will be required to complete additional assignments and should consult with the instructor.

Tentative schedule of topics and readings:

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are recommended. All others are required. Students should note that from time to time there may be additional assignments involving on-line or in-person research.

1. January 19 & 21 Technology and Politics
 - Lewis Mumford, "Authoritarian and Democratic Technics" *Technology and Culture*, 5:1 (Winter, 1964) 1-8.
 - Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" from *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 19-39.
 - *Lawrence Lessig, "Code is Law" in *Code: Version 2.0* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 2006) 1-8.
 - John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 2008) 1-16.
2. January 26 & 28 Thinking and Communicating in a Digital Age
 - *Patrick Lynch and Sarah Horton, *Web Style Guide*, <http://webstyleguide.com/> (read chapters 2 & 4).
 - *Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
 - Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad Is Good For You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter* (NY: Riverhead Books, 2005) 17-62.
 - Mark Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future* (NY: Penguin Books, 2008) *39-70, 71-113.
 - Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital* op. cit. 155-84.
3. February 2 & 4 History of Media
 - Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 2004) 23-46, *47-152, 153-90, 327-47.
 - *Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1978).
4. February 9 & 11 History of the Internet First Short Essay due Feb. 11
 - Atsushi Akera and Frederik Nebeker, *From 0 to 1: An Authoritative History of Modern Computing* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002) 41-50, 63-109, 122-47.

- *Brian Winston, *Media, Technology, and Society: A History: From the Telegraph to the Internet* (NY: Routledge, 1998).
5. February 16 & 18 From Open Source to Wikipedia
 John Perry Barlow, "A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace." (1996)
[\[http://homes.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html\]](http://homes.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html)
 *David G. Post, *In Search of Jefferson's Moose: Notes on the State of Cyberspace* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).
 Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Nations: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) *1-34, 35-58, *59-127.
[\[http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/wealth_of_networks/Main_Page#Read_the_book\]](http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/wealth_of_networks/Main_Page#Read_the_book)
 David Bollier, *Viral Spiral: How the Commoners Built a Digital Republic of Their Own* (NY: New Press, 2008) 23-41. [\[www.viralspiral.cc/\]](http://www.viralspiral.cc/)
 *Andrew Lih, *The Wikipedia Revolution* (NY: Hyperion, 2009).
 Jim Giles, "Internet Encyclopedias Go Head to Head" *Nature* 438 (15 December 2005) 900-901.
 *Christopher Kelty, *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). [\[http://twobits.net/read/\]](http://twobits.net/read/)
 Lee Siegel, *Against The Machine: Being Human in the Age of the Electronic Mob* (NY: Random House, 2008) 125-79.
6. February 23 & 25 New Economics? -- Google
 Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 64-115.
 Ken Auletta, *Googled: The End of the World as We Know It* (NY: Penguin Press, 2009) 3-65.
 *David Bollier, *Viral Spiral op. cit.* 229-52.
 *Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More* (NY: Hyperion, 2006).
7. March 2 & 4 Intellectual Property and the Music Industry
 James Boyle, *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind* (New Haven: Yale, 2008) 17-41, 83-121 [\[http://www.thepublicdomain.org/download/\]](http://www.thepublicdomain.org/download/)
 Steve Knopper, *Appetite for Self-Destruction: The Spectacular Crash of the Record Industry in the Digital Age* (NY: Free Press, 2009), 113-57.
 *Lawrence Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (NY: Penguin Books, 2008).
8. March 9 & 11 Project Proposals Second Short Essay due Mar. 11
 Spring Break
9. March 23 & 25 Organization and Power: Politics Online
 Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (NY: Penguin Press, 2008) 1-54, 143-60.
 Cass R. Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 1-45.
 *Zephyr Teachout, Thomas Streeter, "The Legacies of Dean's Internet Campaign" in *Mousepads, Shoeleather and Hope* ed. by Zephyr Teachout, Thomas Streeter, et. al., (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008) 233-43.
 *Matthew Hindman, *The Myth of Digital Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009) 129-42.
 *R. Sophie Statzel, "Cybersupremacy: The New Face and Form of White

Supremacist Activism," in Megan Boler (ed.), *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) 405-28.

10. March 30 TBD
11. April 6 & 8 Internet, Newspapers & Democracy
 Bob Garfield, *The Chaos Scenario: Amid the Ruins of Mass Media, The Choice for Business is Stark: Listen or Parish* (Nashville: Stielstra Publishing, 2009) 9-36.
 Alex S. Jones, *Losing the News: The Future of the News That Feeds Democracy* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009) 1-27.
 Aaron Barlow, *The Rise of the Blogosphere* (Westport, Cn: Praeger, 2008) 165-84.
 Scott Rosenberg, *Say Everything: How Blogging Began, What It's Becoming and Why It Matters* (NY: Crown Business, 2009) 131-64.
 *Eun-Gyoo Kim and James W. Hamilton, "Capitulation to capital? OhmyNews as Alternative Media," *New Media and Society* 28:4 (2006) 541-560.
12. April 13 & 15 Privacy & Facebook 3rd Essay & Proposal due April 15
 *Daniel J. Solove, *Understanding Privacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
 Daniel J. Solove, *The Digital Person: Technology and Privacy in the Information Age* (NY: New York University Press, 2004) 13-55.
 *Michael Zimmer, "Privacy on Planet Google: Using the Theory of 'Contextual Integrity' to Clarify the Privacy Threats of Google's Quest for the Perfect Search Engine" *Journal of Business & Technology Law* 109 (2008) 109-126.
 Brett A. Bumgarner, "You Have Been Poked: Exploring the Uses and Gratifications of Facebook Among Emerging Adults," *First Monday* 12:11 (5 November 2007) [<http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2026/1897>].
 Kate Raynes-Goldie, "Aliases, Creeping, and Wall Cleaning: Understanding Privacy in the Age of Facebook," *First Monday* 15:1 (4 January 2010) [<http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2775/2432>].
 *Jesse Rice, *The Church of Facebook: How the Hyperconnected Are Redefining Community* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009).
13. April 20 & 22 Security: Crime, Espionage and Sabotage
 Jeffrey Carr, *Cyber Warfare: Mapping the Cyber Underworld* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, 2010) 1-44, 103-40, 191-202.
 *Franklin D. Kramer, Stuard H. Starr and Larry K. Wentz (eds.), *Cyberpower and National Security* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2009).
14. April 27 & 29 Censorship: the Great Firewall?
 Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, *Who Controls the Internet: Illusions of a Borderless World* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006) 1-46.
 Robert Faris and Nart Villeneuve, "Measuring Global Internet Filtering" in *Access Denied: The Practice and Policy of Global Internet Filtering* ed. by R. Deibert, J. Palfrey, R. Rohozinski and J. Zittrain, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) 5-28.
 Country Summaries, *ibid.* 263-71, 360-3, 364-8.
15. May 4 & 6 Project Reports & Conclusion
 Jonathan Zittrain, *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 1-61.

Final Papers and Last Short Essay Due 5:00 pm Friday, May 14.