

COMM 4853.01 – New Media and Democracy Spring 2013, TWRF 12:40-1:35, Denney 0253

Professor

Dr. Ray Pingree
pingree.2@osu.edu
Office: 3026 Derby Hall
Office Hours: TBA during exam weeks or by appointment

Course Overview

This class explores relationships between new media and the health of our democracy. There are many forms of online political communication, each with a variety of possible effects on the quality, equality, open-endedness, and efficiency of the democratic decision-making process as a whole.

This class aims 1.) to give you a more nuanced and critical view of the potential effects of new media, 2.) to raise your standards about what counts as a healthy democracy, and 3.) to make you a more informed consumer (or producer!) of online political communication.

Grading

25% In-class activities
20% Midterm 1
25% Midterm 2
30% Final

In-class activities

Most class periods will include some kind of in-class activity. One purpose of these activities is to check attendance. Activities can't be made up if you were not present. Activities are not graded for correctness; instead, you will receive full credit for each one you turn in as long as you put in a reasonable effort, and half credit if you do not put in a reasonable effort.

Sick days policy

Your lowest 5 activity grades will be dropped. Think of these as your sick days. In other words, don't waste them early on, or you won't have them in case you need them later. Because these drops are automatic, you don't need to tell me when you have a good reason to miss class. The only way you can get more drops is if you have documented reasons to miss 6 or more classes.

If you have any unused "sick days" left over at the end of the semester, each one will count as ½ percent of extra credit.

Homework

There will be a few small homework assignments. They may be announced in the class session before they are due, so if you miss class, make sure to check the class schedule on Carmen to see if anything is due for the following class session. Although other forms of

homework are possible, my main intent here is to assign reading questions for particularly important readings, to make sure everyone gets certain points from those readings before class discussion about them.

Exams

There will be three exams, two midterms and a final. They will consist of about 60% multiple choice and 40% short answer questions.

Extra credit for concept example videos

Email me a funny video to use as an example of a concept covered in class, and if I use it in class I will give you ½ to 1 point of extra credit, up to a maximum of 5 points of total extra credit in the class. To have a good chance of your video being used, you need to look ahead at the upcoming topics in the syllabus and email me at least a day in advance of the topic your video clip is relevant to.

Course Policies

1. Academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be penalized through the procedures set up by the university.
2. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to me and seeking assistance in a timely manner. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please also contact the Office for Disability Services at (614) 292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Tentative Class Schedule

All readings will be posted on Carmen, and should be completed prior to the corresponding class session. Refer to the latest copy of the syllabus on Carmen instead of a saved or printed copy, or you may miss changes.

Feb 27 (Wed): **Introduction.**

No readings.

Feb 28 (Thurs): **Three views of democracy**

Dahlberg, L. (2001). The Internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere.

Feb 29 (Fri): **Social capital**

Bargh, J. A., & McKenna, K. Y. A. (2004). The internet and social life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 573-90.

Mar 5 (Tues): **Social media and social capital**

Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Kee, K. F. (2009) Is there social capital in a social network site? Facebook use and college students' life satisfaction, trust, and participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14, 875-901.

Mar 6 (Wed): **Media and trust in strangers**

Smith, J. A. (2010). Learning to trust each other, online and off.
<http://www.shareable.net/blog/learning-to-trust-online>

Mutz, D. (200). Effects of internet commerce on social trust. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73(3), 439-461.

Mar 7 (Thurs): **Movie**

Mar 8 (Fri): **Movie continued**

SPRING BREAK

Mar 19 (Tues): **New media and political knowledge**
Readings TBA

Mar 20 (Wed): **New media and selective exposure**
Sunnstein, C. (2001). The daily me.
Baum, M. A. & Groeling, T. (2008). New media and the polarization of American political discourse.

Mar 21 (Thurs): **Exam review**

Mar 22 (Fri): **Exam 1**

Mar 26 (Tues): **Deliberation**
Fearson, J. (1998). Deliberation as discussion.

Mar 27 (Wed): **Online deliberation**
Coleman, S. & Gotze, J. Bowling together: Online public engagement in policy deliberation
Intro through chapter 3 required, chapters 4 and 5 optional

Mar 28 (Thurs): **Expression and citizenship**
Bennett, W. L., Wells, C., & Freelon, D. (2011). Communicating civic engagement: Contrasting models of citizenship in the youth web sphere. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 835-856.

Mar 29 (Fri): **Expression effects**
Pingree, R. J. (in press). Implications of Expression Effects for New Media. To appear in Gil de Zúñiga, H. (Ed.), *New Agendas in Communication: New Technologies & Civic Engagement*. Routledge.

Apr 2 (Tues): **New forms of everyday political participation**
Harris, A., Wyn, J., & Younes, S. (2010). Beyond apathetic or activist youth: 'Ordinary' young people and contemporary forms of participation. *Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 18(1), 9-32.

Apr 3 (Wed): **Political power of social media**
Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media.

Apr 4 (Thurs): **Exam review**

Apr 5 (Fri): **Exam 2**

Apr 9 (Tues): **Citizen journalism**
Jönsson, A. M., & Örnebring, H. (2011). User generated content and the news: Empowerment of citizens or interactive illusion? *Journalism Practice*, 5(2), 127-144.

Apr 10 (Wed): **Wikinews**

Bruns, A. (2006). Wikinews: the next generation of alternative online news?

Apr 11 (Thurs): **OhMyNews**

Joyce, M. (2007). The citizen journalism web site “OhmyNews” and the 2002 South Korean presidential election.

Apr 12 (Fri): **Online campaigning innovations**

Exley, Z. (2008). The new organizers: What’s really behind Obama’s ground game.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html

Apr 16 (Tues): **Topic TBA**

Apr 17 (Wed): **Topic TBA**

Apr 18 (Thurs): **Topic TBA**

Apr 19 (Fri): **Exam review**

Apr 30 (Tues): **Final exam 2:00pm-3:45pm**