

PPAI 1700C - The Internet and Public Policy
Brown University
Taubman Center for Public Policy
3PM-5:20PM Mondays, Jay Walter Wilson, Room 301

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Course Objective:

The Internet and its various platforms (email, world wide web, social networking sites, blogging, etc) represents a wholesale change in information regimes. This junior/senior level seminar will investigate the internet's impact on politics and public policy, including the fate of newspapers, the rise of alternative forms of publishing, the role and potential of e-government, and new structures for collective action. The seminar is focused both on recent/current events and on participant interaction. As such, students will be expected to actively engage with one another in exploring key questions regarding what elements of politics and public policy are being revolutionized by the internet, what elements are left unchanged, and what role(s) citizens and government agencies can and should play in the process.

The course has three sections. The first section will deal with fundamentals: "What Just Happened?" This will focus on the internet's reduction in transaction costs and attendant condition of information abundance. It will also discuss new forms of participation and knowledge aggregation, such as open source software and Wikipedia. Section two discusses the political impacts of this information revolution. Included under this heading are political campaigns, political organizations, the political blogosphere, and the "digital divide." Section three will then turn to a few of the major emerging policy challenges presented by the internet, including net neutrality, privacy concerns, and issues of copyright.

Course Requirements and Grading:

-Response essays (20%). This course relies on a combination of lecture and Socratic Method-based discussion. To aid this discussion, a list of questions will be passed out at the end of every class period and also posted to MyCourses. These are guiding questions to think about while doing the following week's reading. You will be expected to produce a response essay, one page in length, every week this semester. The response essay should explore your thoughts on one of the questions provided. *These essays are due one hour **before** the class period starts.* Essays will be graded on a 10-point scale and handed back the

following week. You may fail to turn in essay once over the duration of the semester.

-*Class Participation (20%)*. This includes not only attendance but also active engagement in class discussion.

-*Midterm Assignment (25%)*. Your midterm assignment will be an expanded version of the response essay format. With newspapers across the country declaring or nearing bankruptcy, major policy debates are currently under way regarding the future of the news industry. The midterm assignment will be a 12-15 page paper asking you to analyze and expand upon some element of this ongoing debate.

-*Final Exam (35%)*. The final exam will be an open-book, take-home exam inviting you to summarize and expand upon several themes touched upon through the course of the semester.

Required Readings:

The following readings are available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore

Benkler, Yochai. 2007. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

[can be downloaded for free online at

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/wealth_of_networks/Download_PDFs_of_the_book]

Hindman, Matthew. 2008. *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Lessig, Lawrence. 2004. *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*. New York: Penguin Books.

[can be downloaded for free online at <http://free-culture.cc/freecontent/>]

Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York: Penguin Press

Sunstein, Cass. 2006. *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Weinberger, David. 2007. *Everything is Miscellaneous*. New York: Holt Books.

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>]

Course Schedule:

Part I: “What Just Happened?”

Class 1 (September 14th) Course Introduction

Course Overview, Major Topics, Syllabus, Expectations and Requirements

Class 2 (September 21st) Dramatic Reduction in Transaction Costs, rise of the “Networked Society”

-Shirky *Here Comes Everybody* chapters 1-2 (pps 1-54)

-Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks* chapter 1

-Dawn of the Stupid Networks (David Isenberg)

<http://www.isen.com/papers/Dawnstupid.html>

Class 3 (September 28th) Online Information Abundance

-David Weinberger. 2007. *Everything is Miscellaneous*. New York: Holt. Chapters 1-7

- Jon Stokes, “Understanding Moore’s Law”

<http://arstechnica.com/hardware/news/2008/09/moore.ars>

-Jonathan Zittrain. 2008. *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It*. Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 4. (pps 1-18, 63-100)

-_Chris Anderson. 2004, October. The Long Tail. *Wired*. Issue 12.10. Available online at: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html>

Class 4 (October 5th) Open Source, Wikis, and Knowledge Aggregation Communities

-Zittrain, chapter 6 (pps 127-152)

-Sunstein, *Infotopia*. Chapters 1-3, 5 (pps 1-102,147-196)

-“The Interest Horizon and the Limits of Software Love” by Shirky

<http://www.shirky.com/writings/interest.html>

Midterm Assignments Distributed

October 12th Fall Weekend – No Class Scheduled

Class 5 (October 19th) Media Disruption. Decline or Transformation in the Newspaper Industry

-Clayton Christensen. 1997. *The Innovator’s Dilemma*. Chapter 1 (in course packet)

-Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*, Chapters 3 and 4 (pps 55-108)

-“Printing the New York Times Costs Twice as Much as Sending Every Subscriber a Free Kindle” by Nicholas Carlson

<http://www.businessinsider.com/2009/1/printing-the-nyt-costs-twice-as-much-as-sending-every-subscriber-a-free-kindle>

- Newspaper Economic Action Plan (American Press Institute)
<http://www.niemanlab.org/pdfs/apireportmay09.pdf>
- “The Newspaper Suicide Pact” xark.typepad.com
http://xark.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/06/the-newspaper-suicide-pact.html
- “Build the Wall” by David Simon, Columbia Journalism Review.
http://www.cjr.org/feature/build_the_wall_1.php?page=1
- “Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable” by Shirky
<http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/>
- “Build That Pay Wall High” by Paul Farhi, *American Journalism Review*
http://ajr.org/article_printable.asp?id=4800
- Pew Internet and American Life Project: “Online Classifieds”
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/7--Online-Classifieds.aspx>
- “How TalkingPointsMemo Beat the Big Boys on the US Attorney Story,” by Paul McLeary, Columbia Journalism Review.
http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/how_talkingpointsmemo_beat_the.php
- Paul Starr, “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers, Hello to a new era of public corruption” *The New Republic*
<http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=a4e2aafc-cc92-4e79-90d1-db3946a6d119>
- Video: Alyssa Miller shares the news about the news:
http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html
- Stephen Johnson <http://www.stevenberlinjohnson.com/2009/03/the-following-is-a-speech-i-gave-yesterday-at-the-south-by-southwest-interactive-festival-in-austiniif-you-happened-to-being.html>

Midterm Assignments Due

Part 2: Political Impacts

Class 6 (October 26th) Political Campaigns

- Adam Nagourney. 2008, November 4. The '08 campaign: Sea change for politics as we know it. *The New York Times*. Available online at:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/04/us/politics/04memo.html>
- Bruce Bimber and Richard Davis. 2003. *Campaigning Online*. Pps 3-42 (course packet)
- Zack Exley. 2008. The new organizers, what’s really behind Obama’s ground game. *The Huffington Post*. Available online at:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html
- Matthew Hindman. 2008. *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Chapter 1-2
- Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody* chapter 6 (pps 143-160)
- Aaron Smith. 2008. “the Internet’s Role in Campaign 2008.” *Pew Internet & American Life Project Report*. (course packet)
http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/The_Internets_Role_in_Campaign_2008.pdf

-Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2009. "The Labors of Internet-Assisted Activism." *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*. 6:2 267-280. (course packet)

Class 7 (November 2nd) Political Organizations

-Dave Karpf. 2008. "Understanding Blogspace." *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*. 5:4. pps 369-384. (course packet)

-Beth Noveck, "A Democracy of Groups"

<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1289/1209>

-Andrew Chadwick. 2007. "Digital Network Repertoires and Organizational Hybridity" *Political Communication* 24:3, pps 283-301 (course packet)

-Matt Bai. 2004. "Wiring the Vast Left-Wing Conspiracy" *New York Times Magazine*. (course packet)

-Bruce Bimber. 2003. *Information and American Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 4 (pps 1-34, 110-196) (course packet)

Class 8 (November 9th) Political Participation and the Digital Divide

-Jan van Dijk and Kenneth Hacker. 2003. "The Digital Divide as a Complex and Dynamic Phenomenon" *The Information Society*. 19:4 pps 315-326 (course packet) http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/489650_751308825_713857007.pdf

-Hindman chapters 6 and 7

-Susanna Fox. 2005. "Digital Divisions. *Pew Internet & American Life Project Report*. (course packet)

http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2005/PIP_Digital_Divisions_Oct_5_2005.pdf.pdf

-Jones and Fox. 2009. "Generations Online 2009" *Pew Internet & American Life Project Report*. (course packet)

http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/PIP_Generations_2009.pdf

-Markus Prior. 2005. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 49, No. 3. pp. 577-592

Part 3: Emerging Policy Challenges

Class 9 (November 16th) Copyright

-Benkler, chapters 2-4, 11 (pps 35-132, 383-460)

-Lessig, *Free Culture* chapters 1-5 (pps 1-84)

Class 10 (November 23rd) Privacy

-Philip N. Howard. 2005. Deep democracy, thin citizenship: The impact of digital media in political campaign strategy. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 597.

Christopher Hunter. 2002. Political privacy and online politics: How e-campaigning threatens voter privacy. *First Monday* 7(2). Available online at: http://outreach.lib.uic.edu/www/issues/issue7_2/hunter/index.html

-Zittrain, chapter 9. (pps 200-235)

-Matthew Honan. February 2009. "I Am Here." *Wired Magazine*. (course packet)

Class 11 (November 30th) Net Neutrality.

-Daniel Roth. January 2009. "The Dark Lord of Broadband Tries to Fix Comcast's Image." *Wired Magazine* http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-02/mf_brianroberts

-"Keeping the Internet Neutral?: Tim Wu and Christopher Yoo debate." *Federal Communications Law Journal*. Volume 59 Pps 575-592 (course packet)
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=953989

-Allison Powell. 2009. "Lessons from the Net Neutrality Lobby: Balancing Openness and Control in a Networked Society." *Proceedings of the WebSci'09 Conference*. http://journal.webscience.org/130/1/websci09_submission_32.pdf (course packet)

-Zittrain, chapters 7 and 8 (pps. 149-200)

Class 12 (December 7th) E-government and Closing Observations

-Darrell West. 2004. "E-government and the Transformation of Service Delivery and Citizen Attitudes." *Public Administration Review*. 64:1 Pps 15-27 (course packet)

-Caroline Tolbert and Karen Mossberger. 2006. "The Effects of E-Government on Trust and Confidence in Government." *Public Administration Review*. 66:3 Pps 554-369) (course packet)

Final Exams Distributed