

COMM690: New Media and Democracy

Spring 2014
Professor Emily Vraga

Class time: Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10

Classroom: West 1001

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.

Course Description:

The media environment is rapidly changing how Americans understand the issues and topics central to democratic functioning. This course *briefly* covers some of the main themes and concerns driven by the changing media structure and landscape, including the proliferation of news options including cable and satirical news shows, the blending of hard and soft news content, the ability of “normal citizens” to become content producers, and the role that social media play in encouraging or hindering exposure to information. Further, the course pays special attention the role of the audience in this changing media landscape: how people select and process different types of media content, the norms of political and policy discussion that develop in these spheres, and the opportunities for social movements and mobilizations, as well as the ethical questions and forces that might limit the potential for equal engagement for all groups. Finally, we consider how this interaction between the media and the public affects democratic functioning: where and how people learn about, discuss, and engage with issues of public importance, such as questions of political policy about science, health, technology, and society.

Required Readings

This class is theory-intensive, and there are many required readings for the course. The majority of the readings for this class are scholarly journal articles and book chapters, which may be supplemented with news articles and blogs as the course continues. You are required to download and read each week’s before class begins. You should feel comfortable discussing the main arguments and findings of each article in class, as well as make connections to earlier topics covered.

Course Requirements

- 1) *Discussion Leadership* (100 points X 2): During the first week of class, each person will sign up to serve as discussion leader for two weeks of the semester. Given the number of students enrolled, most weeks will have 3 discussion leaders. As discussion leader, you should closely read through that week's readings and come to class prepared to guide the class discussion. To lead discussion effectively, it is helpful to come up with questions designed to ensure that the class understands the main arguments, critically evaluates the limitations of the study and its conclusions, and, most importantly, considers the implications of the articles for democratic practices.

Further, the discussion leader is also responsible for finding, reading, and briefly reviewing in class one additional scholarly article or news media report that relates to that week's theme. This may include a handout outlining the key points or tables. You should be able to explain how this additional reading relates to the class topics, although it does not have to be precisely on the exact same topic as the week's theme. You should use this outside article to broaden our understanding of the points raised in the class readings. I also encourage you to use these readings to apply the week's topic to your own research or professional interests.

You must post the outside article and any additional handouts, etc. to Blackboard by **Sunday** at 9:00 p.m. for the week that you are discussion leader. I will print any handouts you request and bring them to class on Tuesday. No discussion leadership readings, handouts, etc. will be accepted after the start of class on Tuesday.

You are encouraged to work with the other assigned discussion leader to facilitate interaction. You must each come up with your own unique outside reading, but are welcome to decide together how the class period should be arranged and come up with stimulating questions.

- 2) *Response Papers* (50 points X 4): Four weeks of the semester, you are required to write a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced) response paper regarding that week's readings. Your response paper can briefly synthesize the main findings of the articles, but should go beyond to draw connections between the articles (and often to previous week's readings) to demonstrate a richer understanding of core concepts. How do the readings together present a picture of scholarly thinking and its practical implications about the role of new media in democratic functioning?

Ultimately, this response paper should be your own argument and analysis, using the readings for support. You should make sure to cite any

ideas taken from the readings (as well as any direct quotations) appropriately, using APA style in-text references. Any outside readings that you may choose to incorporate should also include a full reference at the end of the paper.

All response papers are due **Monday** by 4:30 p.m. to Blackboard for the week they have been assigned. No response papers turned in after the beginning of class on Tuesday will be accepted.

NOTE: You may – and are encouraged to – write response papers for the weeks that you are discussion leader!

NOTE: A response paper that purely summarizes the readings without adding additional insight, evaluations, and argumentation will not receive higher than 70 points.

- 3) *Participation* (200 points): Because this is a seminar-style class, much of its success will depend on the active participation of each student every week in the class discussion. You should do your best to understand the main ideas of each week's readings, but if you are confused about an argument, finding, etc., please bring it up in class! While I have tried to find seminal readings for each topic, no study will be without limitations and flaws. Criticism of the readings' assumptions, arguments, and findings is encouraged when backed up by concrete evidence.

Further, as there is no correct "answer" to many of these debates about the impact of new media technologies on democratic society, you should be prepared for disagreement with your peers in the class. This disagreement is a healthy part of the scholarly tradition. However, all disagreement (and agreement) should be handled in a professional, civil, and respectful manner. We are all scholars attempting to find meaning in these works together – and learning from diverse perspectives is not only central to democratic functioning but also for this class.

To supplement in-class participation, students are strongly encouraged to use or create their Twitter account to continue discussion outside of class. Students should check into the class hashtag (#COMM690) at least once per day. You may also want to follow me (@ekvruga) and your classmates, although this is not required. I will be using the Twitter hashtag to share news stories, scholarly articles, and experiences that I think relevant to the class. I encourage everyone to do the same! Twitter provides an opportunity to continue our discussions outside of regular class hours, as well as an additional way to build participation points.

- 4) *Final paper* (300 points): The main product for this course is a final paper, due at the start of the final exam period for this course. This paper should be 15-20 pages (double-spaced) of text, plus any references, tables, figures, and appendices, and prepared in accordance with the APA 6th edition requirements. All tables, figures, etc. should be presented in sequential order at the end of the text (not within the paper itself).

Your final paper may be either:

- a. A set of practical recommendations
- b. A research proposal
- c. A research project

For any of the above options, your final paper must begin with by introducing your topic, including how it builds on and existing knowledge and its theoretical or practical importance. This introduction should be followed by a review of the relevant literature. While the readings for this course may provide the basic foundation for this literature, you will be required to go beyond the assigned class readings to build depth of knowledge in the specific area that you are testing. This literature review should not simply summarize what has been done in previous work, but should build towards the specific (a) practical recommendations (b) proposed research project, or (c) hypotheses you are testing in this final paper. In general, you should assume you will need at least 15-20 relevant citations as part of your paper.

A) *Practical recommendations*: As part of your literature review, you should provide practical suggestions on how to implement the arguments and theories being reviewed in a practical setting. For example, this might include creating a set of guidelines for using new media effectively to achieve specific goals (e.g., promote a particular policy, build knowledge of an issue, mobilize citizens to action, etc.). Your review of the literature should then explain why these recommendations are theoretically valid and how they will improve communication in your specific area of interest. You should also consider how these recommendations might be tested for effectiveness. While you do not have to precisely design a research study surrounding these recommendations, you should at least indicate how you could determine whether these suggestions are successful.

B) *Research proposal*: You should use the literature review to identify existing gaps in theoretical or practical knowledge, and propose a specific research design and methodology to fill these gaps. This could include testing whether a specific recommendation emergent from the literature is effective, identifying relationships between key concepts, identifying

audiences for new media strategies, etc. Your proposal should be realistic: even though you will not be performing the data collection yourself, it should be something you are able to perform with additional time. You should include the methodology used to collect data (e.g., survey, experiment, content analysis, textual analysis, qualitative interviews, etc.), as well as conceptualization and operationalization of key concepts to be studied. You should conclude by identifying the limitations of your proposed design, and the potential implications of any findings that you have. I strongly encourage students to consider how this proposal might fit their COMM798 final requirements, or their dissertation studies to make this project valuable.

C) *Research project*: A research project will have the same basic structure as a research proposal, but will include analysis of actual data, either through collecting your own data or analyzing existing data sources. Your literature review should again clearly identify the gap in theory or practice that your study is designed to fill, support specific testable expectations, and analyze your results with reference to their limitations and implications for our understanding of democratic society.

All papers should include a discussion, which critically evaluates the limitations of the paper, including how they may affect any conclusions you are able to draw. Most importantly, you should also discuss the implications and contributions of your paper to our understanding of new media and democracy. Your paper as a whole should be directed towards answering the question: How does your paper contribute to our understanding of the role that new media play in democratic functioning? Remember to answer the “so what” question both in your introduction and in your conclusion to the paper.

5) *Final presentation* (100 points): During the final week of class, you will present a brief report on your final paper. In roughly 5-7 minutes, you will present the overall argument for your final paper. Given the short length of the presentation, you are not required to cover all of the components of your paper, but should focus on the overarching argument, highlighting a few specific examples to support your claim. After your presentation, you should be prepared to answer questions from your peers about your project. This presentation has three goals: (1) to learn about your peers’ interests and projects, (2) to practice presenting your ideas and research in front of others, as is required at academic conferences and in many professional settings, and (3) to garner feedback to improve your final paper.

Grading in Brief

Assignment	Points
Discussion leadership (2)	200
Response papers (4)	200
Participation	200
Final presentation	100
Final paper	300
Total	1000

Grading

A	93-100%	= 930-1000 Points
A-	90-92%	= 900-929 Points
B+	87-89%	= 870-899 Points
B	83-86%	= 830-869 Points
B-	80-82%	= 800-829 Points
C+	77-79%	= 770-779 Points
C	70-76%	= 700-769 Points
F	LT 70%	<=699 Points

Course Schedule in Brief

Week	Date	Topic	Discussion Leaders
		<i>Introduction</i>	
1	1/21	Uses and Gratifications in New Media Environments	
		<i>Section 1: Diverse Sources of Information</i>	
2	1/28	Soft news and comedy	
3	2/4	Cable and 24-hour news	
4	2/11	Social media	
		Mobile technology	
5	2/18	<i>Section 2: Increased opportunities for audience agency</i>	
6	2/25	Selective exposure and likeminded content	
7	3/4	Citizen journalism and content creation	
8	3/11	SPRING BREAK	
9	3/18	Opinion leaders and information flows	
10	3/25	Social movements and protest	
		<i>Section 3: Democratic Implications</i>	
11	4/1	Incivility and public discourse	
12	4/8	Privacy and censorship	
13	4/15	Digital Divides	
14	4/22	Knowledge and participation	
15	4/29	FINAL PRESENTATIONS	

Course Readings

Introduction to the Course

Week 1: Uses and gratifications in a digital media environment: Choosing what to consume

Diddi, A., & LaRose, R. (2006). Getting hooked on news: Uses and gratifications and the formation of news habits among college students in an Internet environment. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 50*, 193-210.

Raacke, J., & Bonds-Raacke, J. (2008). MySpace and Facebook: Applying the uses and gratifications theory to exploring friend-networking sites. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior, 11*, 169-174.

Yuan, E. (2011). News consumption across multiple media platforms: A repertoire approach. *Information, Communication, & Society, 14*, 998-1016.

Supplemental Readings

Chen, G. M. (2011). Tweet this: A uses and gratifications approach on how active Twitter use gratifies a need to connect with others. *Computers in Human Behavior, 27*, 755-762.

Ellithorpe, M. E., Holbert, R. L., & Palmer-Wackerly, A. L. (2013). Procrastination in the shifting political media environment: An experimental study of media choice affecting a democratic outcome. *Communication Studies, 64*, 561-578.

Lee, A. (2013). News audiences revisited: Theorizing the link between audience motivations and news consumption. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 57*, 300-317.

Prior, M. (2009). The immensely inflated news audience: Assessing bias in self-reported news exposure. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 73*, 130-143.

Prior, M. (2007). *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schroder, K. C., & Larsen, B. S. (2010). The shifting cross-media news landscape: Challenges for news producers. *Journalism Studies, 11*, 524-534.

Section 1: New Media Choices

Week 2: Soft news and comedy

Baum, M. A. (2005). Talking the vote: What happens when presidential candidates hit the talk show circuit? *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 213-234.

Baym, G. (2005). The Daily Show: Discursive integration and the reinvention of political journalism. *Political Communication*, 22, 259-276.

Becker, A. B., & Waisman, D. J. (2013). From funny features to entertaining effects: Connecting approaches to communication research on political comedy. *Review of Communication*, online first.

Brewer, P. R. (2013). Science: What's it up to? The Daily Show and the social construction of science. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 452-470.

Prior, M. (2003). Any good news in soft news? The impact of soft news preferences on political knowledge. *Political Communication*, 20, 149-171.

Supplemental Readings

Baum & Jamison (2006): The *Oprah* Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive citizens vote correctly

Feldman, L., & Young, D. G. (2008). Late-Night Comedy as a Gateway to Traditional News: An Analysis of Time Trends in News Attention Among Late-Night Comedy Viewers During the 2004 Presidential Primaries. *Political Communication*, 25(4), 401-422.

Fox, J. R., Koloen, G., & Sahin, V. (2007). No Joke: A comparison of substance in *the Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and broadcast network television coverage of the 2004 presidential election. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 51, 213-227.

Young, D. G., & Tisinger, R. M. (2006). News consumption among late-night comedy viewers and predictors of exposure to various late-night shows. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 11, 113-134.

Week 3: Cable and 24-hour news

Chadwick, A. (2011). The political information cycle in a hybrid news system: The British Prime Minister and the "Bullyinggate" affair. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16, 3-29.

Coe, K., Tewksbury, D., Bond, B. J., Drogos, K. L., Porter, R. W., Yahn, A., & Zhang, Y. (2008). Hostile news: Partisan use and perceptions of cable news programming. *Journal of Communication*, 58, 201-219.

Lo, V. Neilan, E., & King, P. (1998). Television coverage of the 1995 legislative election in Taiwan: Rise of cable news television as a force for balance in media coverage. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 42, 340-355.

Peters, C. (2010). No-spin zones: The rise of the American cable news magazine and Bill O'Reilly. *Journalism Studies*, 11, 832-851.

Sobieraj, S. & Berry, J. M. (2011). From incivility to outrage: Political discourse in blogs, talk radio, and cable news. *Political Communication*, 28, 19-41.

Supplemental:

Baym, G. (2010). *From Cronkite to Colbert: The evolution of broadcast news*.

Feldman, L., Maibach, E. W., Roser-Renouf, C., & Leiserowitz, A. (2011). Climate on cable: The nature and impact of global warming coverage on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17, 3-31.

Forgette, R., & Morris, J. S. (2006). High-conflict television news and public opinion. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59, 447-456.

Morris, J. S., & Francia, P. L. (2010). Cable news, public opinion, and the 2004 party conventions. *Political Research Quarterly*, 63, 834-849.

Weaver, D. A., & Scacco, J. M. (2012). Revising the protest paradigm: The Tea Party as filtered through prime-time cable news. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18, 61-84.

Week 4: Social media

Baumgartner, J. C., & Morris, J. S. (2010). MyFaceTube politics: Social networking, web sites, and political engagement of young adults. *Social Science Computer Review*, 28, 24-44.

Bode, L. (2012). Facebooking it to the polls: A study in online social networking and political behavior. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 9, 352-369.

Chou, W. S., Hunt, Y. M., Beckjord, E. B., Moser, R. P., & Hesse, B. W. (2009). Social media use in the United States: Implications for health campaigns. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 11, e48.

Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59-68.

Newman, N., Dutton, W. H., & Blank, G. (2012). Social media in the changing ecology of news: The fourth and fifth estates in Britain. *International Journal of Internet Science*, 7, 6-22.

Supplemental Readings

Glynn, C. J., Huge, M. E., & Hoffman, L. H. (2012). All the news that's fit to post: A profile of news use on social networking sites. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 113-119.

Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H., & Moon, S. (2010). What is Twitter, a social network or a news media? *WWW '10: Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on World Wide Web*, 591-600.

Lee, C. S., & Ma, L. (2012). News sharing in social media: The effects of gratifications and prior experience. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 331-339.

Loader, B., & Mercea, D. (2011). Networking democracy? Social media innovations and participatory politics. *Information, Communication, & Society*, 14, 757-769.

Xenos, M., Vromen, A., & Loader, B. D. (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. *Information, Communication, & Society*, online first.

Week 5: Mobile Technology

Campbell, S. W., & Kwak, N. (2012). Mobile communication and strong network ties: Shrinking or expanding spheres of public discourse. *New Media and Society, 14*, 262-280.

Chan-Olmsted, S., Rim, H., & Zerba, A. (2013). Mobile news adoption among young adults: Examining the roles of perceptions, news consumption, and media usage. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 90*, 126-147.

Hampton, K. N., Sessions, L. F., & Her, E. J. (2011). Core networks, social isolation, and new media: How Internet and mobile phone use is related to network size and diversity. *Information, Communication, and Society, 14*, 130-155.

Wei, R., Lo, V., Xu, X., & Chen, Y. K. (2013). Predicting mobile news use among college students: The role of press freedom in four Asian cities. *New Media & Society*, online first.

Westlund, O. (2013). Mobile news: A review and model of journalism in an age of mobile media. *Digital Journalism, 1*, 6-26.

Supplemental Readings

Campbell, S. W., & Kwak, N. (2010). Mobile communication and civic life: linking patterns of civic and political engagement. *Journal of Communication, 60*, 536-555.

Campbell, S. W., & Kwak, N. (2010). Mobile communication and social capital: An analysis of geographically differentiated usage patterns. *New Media & Society, 12*, 435-451.

Chyi, H. I., & Chadha, M. (2013). News on new devices: Is multi-platform news consumption a reality? *Journalism Practice, 6*, 431-449.

Wei, J., Hollin, I., & Kachnowski, S. (2011). A review of the use of mobile phone text messaging in clinical and healthy behavior interventions. *Journal of Telemedicine & Telecare, 17*, 41-48.

Westlund, O. (2010). New(s) functions for the mobile: A cross-cultural study. *New Media & Society, 12*, 91-108.

Section 2: New Opportunities for Audiences

Week 6: Selective exposure and likeminded content

Baum, M. A., & Groeling, T. (2008). New media and the polarization of American political discourse. *Political Communication, 25*, 345-365.

Garrett, R. K. (2009). Politically motivated reinforcement seeking: Reframing the selective exposure debate. *Journal of Communication, 59*, 676-699.

Knobloch-Westerwick, S., Johnson, B. K., & Westerwick, A. (2013). To your health: Self-regulation of health behavior through selective exposure to online health messages. *Journal of Communication, 63*, 807-829.

Messing, S., & Westwood, S. J. (2012). Selective exposure in the age of social media: Endorsements trump partisan source affiliation when selecting news online. *Communication Research*, online first.

Webster, J. G., & Ksiazek, T. B. (2012). The dynamics of audience fragmentation: Public attention in an age of digital media. *Journal of Communication, 62*, 39-56.

Supplemental Readings

Garrett, R. K. (2009). Echo chambers online: Politically motivated selective exposure among Internet users. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 14*, 265-285.

Garrett, R. K., Carnahan, D., & Lynch, E. K. (2013). A turn toward avoidance? Selective exposure to online political information, 2004-2008. *Political Behavior, 35*, 113-134.

Hart, W., Albarracin, D., Eagly, A. H., Brechan, I., Lindberg, M. J., & Merrill, L. (2009). Feeling validated versus being correct: A meta-analysis of selective exposure to information. *Psychological Bulletin, 135*, 555-588.

Stroud, N. J. (2011). *Niche news: The politics of news choice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wojcieszak, M. E., & Mutz, D. C. (2009). Online groups and political discourse: Do online discussion spaces facilitate exposure to political disagreement. *Journal of Communication, 59*, 40-56.

Week 7: Citizen journalism and content creation

Brabham, D. C. (2008). Crowdsourcing as a model for problem solving: An introduction and cases. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 14, 75-90.

Carpenter, S. (2010). A study of content diversity in online citizen journalism and online newspaper articles. *New Media & Society*, 12, 1064-1084.

Domingo, D., Quandt, T., Heinonen, A., Paulussen, S., Singer, J. B., & Vujnovic, M. (2008). Participatory journalism practices in the media and beyond: An international comparative study of initiatives in online newspapers. *Journalism Practice*, 2, 326-342.

Leung, L. (2009). User-generated content on the Internet: An examination of the gratifications, civic engagement, and psychological empowerment. *New Media & Society*, 11, 1327-1347.

Ostman, J. (2012). Information, expression, participation: How involvement in user-generated content relates to democratic engagement among young people. *New Media and Society*, 14, 1004-1021.

Supplemental Readings

Lewis, S. C., Kaufhold, K., & Lasorsa, D. L. (2010). Thinking about citizen journalism: The philosophical and practical challenges of user-generated content for community newspapers. *Journalism Practice*, 4, 163-179.

Kaufhold, K., Valenzuela, S., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2010). Citizen journalism and democracy: How user-generated news use relates to political knowledge and participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87, 515-529.

Singer, J. B., & Ashman, I. (2009). "Comment is free but facts are sacred": User-generated content and ethical constructs at the Guardian. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 24, 3-21.

Thurman, N. (2008). Forums for citizen journalists? Adoption of user-generated content initiatives by online news media. *New Media & Society*, 10, 139-157.

Vaataja, H., Sirkkunen, E., & Salo, K. (2011). Crowdsourced news reporting: Supporting news content creation with mobile phones. *MobileHCI 2011*, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 2011, Stockholm, Sweden.

Week 8: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Opinion leaders and information flows

Baym, G., & Shah, C. (2011). Circulating struggle: The online flow of environmental advocacy clips from The Daily Show and The Colbert Report. *Information, Communication, & Society, 14*, 1017-1038.

Karpf, D. (2010). Macaca moments reconsidered: Electoral panopticon or netroots mobilization? *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 7*, 143-162.

Sayre, B., Bode, L., Shah, D., Wilcox, D., & Shah, C. (2010). Agenda-setting in a digital age: tracking attention to California's Proposition 8 in social media, online news, and conventional news. *Policy & Internet, 2*.

Sun, T., Youn, S., Wu, G., & Kuntaraporn, M. (2006). Online word-of-mouth (or mouse): An exploration of its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 11*, 1104-1127.

Wu, S., Hofman, J. M., Mason, W. A., & Watts, D. J. (2011). Who says what to whom on Twitter? *WWW2011*, March 28-April 1, 2011, Hyderabad, India.

Supplemental Readings

Messner, M., & Distaso, M. W. (2006). The source cycle: How traditional media and weblogs use each other as sources. *Journalism Studies, 9*, 447-463.

Vaccari, C. & Valeriani, A. (2013). Follow the leader! Direct and indirect flows of political communication during the 2013 general election campaign. *New Media & Society*, online first.

Wallensten, K. (2010). "Yes we can": How online viewership, blog discussion, campaign statements, and mainstream media coverage produced a viral video phenomenon. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 7*, 163-181.

Week 10: Social movements and protest

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012): The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication, & Society, 15*, 739-768.

Earl, J., Kimport, K., Prieto, G., Rush, C., & Reynoso, K. (2010). Changing the world one webpage at a time: Conceptualizing and explaining Internet activism. *Mobilization: An International Journal, 15*, 425-446.

Harlow, S., & Harp, D. (2012). Collective action on the web: A cross-cultural study of social networking sites and online and offline activism in the United States and Latin America. *Information, Communication, and Society, 15*, 196-216.

Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., Pearce, I., & boyd, D. (2011). The revolutions were tweeted: Information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *International Journal of Communication, 5*, 1375-1405.

Obar, J. A., Zube, P., & Lampe, C. (2012). Advocacy 2.0: An analysis of how advocacy groups in the United States perceive and use social media as tools for facilitating civic engagement and collective action. *Journal of Information Policy, 2*, 1-25.

Thorson, K., Driscoll, K., Ekdale, B., Edgerly, S., Thompson, L. G., Schrock, A., Swartz, L., Vraga, E. K., & Wells, C. (2013). YouTube, Twitter, and the Occupy Movement: Connecting content and circulation practices. *Information, Communication, & Society*, online first.

Supplemental Readings

Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs, and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004-2011. *Journal of Communication, 62*, 231-248.

Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication, 62*, 363-379.

Vraga, E. K., Bode, L., Wells, C., Driscoll, K., & Thorson, K. (2013). The rules of engagement: Comparing two social protest movements on YouTube. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, online first.

New Democratic Concerns

Week 11: Incivility and public discourse

Anderson, A. A., Brossard, D., Scheufele, D. A., Xenos, M. A., & Ladwig, P. (2013). The "nasty effect": Online incivility and risk perceptions of emerging technologies. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, online first.

Groshek, J., & Al-Rawi, A. (2013). Public sentiment and critical framing in social media content during the 2012 U.S. presidential election. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31, 563-576.

Hlavach, L., & Freivogel, W. H. (2011). Ethical implications of anonymous comments posted to online news stories. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 26, 21-37.

Thorson, K., Vraga, E. K., & Ekdale, B. (2010). Credibility in context: How uncivil online commentary affects news credibility. *Mass Communication & Society*, 13, 289-313.

Zhang, W., Cao, X., & Tran, M. N. (2013). The structural features and the deliberative quality of online discussions. *Telematics and Information*, 30, 74-86.

Supplemental Readings

Borah, P. (2012). Does it matter where you read the news story? Interaction of incivility and news frames in the political blogosphere. *Communication Research*, online first.

Groshek, J., & Al-Rawi, A. (2013). Public sentiment and critical framing in social media content during the 2012 U.S. presidential election. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31, 563-576.

Reader, B. (2012). Free press vs. free speech? The rhetoric of civility in regard to anonymous online comments. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, online first.

Week 12: Privacy and self-censorship

Albrechtslund, A. (2008). Online social networking as participatory surveillance. *First Monday*, 13, <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2142/1949>

Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J. P., Horn, A., & Hughes, B. N. (2009). Facebook and online privacy: Attitudes, behaviors, and unintended consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15, 83-108.

Gearhart, S., & Zhang, W. (2013). Gay bullying and online opinion expression: Testing the spiral of silence in the social media environment. *Social Science Computer Review*, online first.

Park, Y. J. (2013). Digital literacy and privacy behavior online. *Communication Research*, 40, 215-236.

Van der Velden, M., & El Emam, K. (2013). Not all my friends need to know: A qualitative study of teenage patients, privacy, and social media. *Journal of American Medical Informatics Association*, 20, 16-24.

Supplemental Readings

Brandtzaeg, P. B., Luders, M., & Skjetne, J. H. (2010). Too many Facebook "friends"? Content sharing and sociability versus the need for privacy in social networking sites. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 26, 1006-1030.

boyd, D., Hargittai, E., Schultz, J., & Palfrey, J. (2011). Why parents help their children lie to Facebook about age: Unintended consequences of the 'Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.' *First Monday*, 16: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3850>

Wang, Y., Norcie, G., Komanduri, S., Acquisti, A., Leon, P. G., & Cranor, L. R. (2011). I regretted the minute I pressed share: A qualitative study of regrets on Facebook. *Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security*.

Week 13: Digital divides

Hargittai, E. (2002). Second-level digital divide: Differences in people's online skills. *First Monday*, 7:

<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/942/864>

Min, S. (2010). From the digital divide to the democratic divide: Internet skills, political interest, and second-level digital divide in political Internet use. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 7, 22-35.

Wei, L., & Hindman, D. B. (2011). Does the digital divide matter more? Comparing the effects of new media and old media use on the education-based knowledge gap. *Mass Communication & Society*, 14, 216-235.

Yu, L. (2006). Understanding information inequality: Making sense of the literature of the information and digital divides. *Journal of Librarianship & Information Science*, 38, 229-252.

Zhao, S. (2009). Parental education and children's online health information seeking: Beyond the digital divide. *Social Science & Medicine*, 69, 1501-1505.

Supplemental:

Hwang, Y., & Park, N. (2013). Digital divide in social networking sites. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 11, 446-464.

Pearce, K. E., & Rice, R. E. (2013). Digital divides from access to activities: Comparing mobile and personal computer Internet users. *Journal of Communication*, 63, 721-744.

Van Deursen, A. J., & van Dijk, J. A. (2013). The digital divide shifts to differences in usages. *New Media & Society*, online first.

Van Dijk, J., & Hacker, K. (2003). The digital divide as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. *The Information Society: An International Journal*, 19, 315-326.

Week 14: Knowledge and participation

Carlisle, J. E., & Patton, R. C. (2013). Is social media changing how we understand political engagement? An analysis of Facebook and the 2008 presidential election. *Political Research Quarterly*, online first.

De Vreese, C. H., & Boomgaarden, H. (2006). News, political knowledge, and participation: The differential effects of news media exposure on political knowledge and participation. *Acta Politica*, 41, 317-341.

Hoffman, L. H., Jones, P. E., & Young, D. G. (2013). Does my comment count? Perceptions of political participation in an online environment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29, 2248-2256.

Nyhan, B. (2010). Why the "death panel" myth wouldn't die: Misinformation in the health care reform debate. *The Forum*, 8, 1, 1-24.

Prior, M. (2005). News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in knowledge and turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 577-592.

Supplemental

Cogburn, D. L., & Espinoza-Vasquez, F. K. (2011). From networked nominee to networked nation: Examining the impact of Web 2.0 and social media on political participation and civic engagement in the 2008 Obama campaign. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 10, 189-213.

Houston, J. B., McKinney, M. S., Hawthorne, J., & Spialek, M. L. (2013). Frequency of Tweeting during presidential debates: Effects on debate attitudes and knowledge. *Communication Studies*, 64, 548-560.

Ksiazek, T. B., Malthouse, E. C., & Webster, J. G. (2010). News-seekers and avoiders: Exploring patterns of total news consumption across media and the relationship to civic participation. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 54, 551-568.

Valenzuela, S., Kim, Y., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2012). Social networks that matter: Exploring the role of political discussion for online political participation. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 24, 163-184.

Yates, D., & Paquette, S. (2011). Emergency knowledge management and social media technologies: A case study of the 2010 Haitian earthquake. *International Journal of Information Management*, 31, 6-13.

Additional Notes

Possible Changes to the Syllabus

This course schedule is meant to provide you with a sense of the topics that will be covered in the class. Depending on time constraints and on feedback from the students, we may have to adjust the topics, readings, and assignment due dates in the syllabus. You will receive advance notice of any changes to the course plan as soon as possible.

Attendance

As a graduate seminar, attendance at every class period is essential. While the readings will give you a good idea of the scholarly research about each week's topics, their value will be amplified by the class discussion and interaction. Missing class should be avoided if at all possible, and if you must miss class, please let me know in advance.

Doing the readings

This class has a rigorous reading load, to familiarize you with key articles and arguments on a large survey of topics in new media and democratic functioning. Most weeks, you should set aside several hours for a close reading of the assigned articles and chapters, taking time to take notes, pose questions about methodology, find connections between the readings, and consider avenues of future research that are not yet addressed. A few weeks throughout the semester, you may find that the topic is not one of particular interest to you. During these weeks, a more superficial or quick review of the assigned texts may be appropriate. However, every week, you are expected to be familiar with the articles assigned: their main arguments, the theories they are testing or advancing, and how those theories are supported. Please be prepared to share your thoughts and ideas about the readings.

Late Assignments

Because the discussion leadership and response papers are designed to contribute to each week's discussion, no assignments for that week will be accepted after the start of class (Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.) for that week. For the final paper, 10% of the grade will be deducted for each day it is late, with a grade of "0" being assigned after it is 3 days late.

Email and contacting me

Email is the preferred method for contacting me. Please allow at least 24 hours for a return email. You should plan accordingly when asking questions about assignments; I often will not be able to reply if you email me only a few hours before an assignment is due. Questions asked via email should be clear, precise, and specific; please come and see if me if you want more extensive guidance on a question or topic.

I only have access to your Mason email account. If you use another email account, it is your responsibility to check your MasonLIVE email account frequently to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Office hours and appointments

I will be holding office hours on XXXXX, during which no appointment is necessary to meet with me. I am also available to meet more frequently via appointment; please contact me with potential meeting times and we can figure out a time that works better for each of us. Towards the end of the semester, I strongly encourage you to make an appointment, even during office hours, to ensure you have an opportunity to talk to me (office hours often get busier as assignments come due).

Office hours are a more appropriate time to ask in-depth questions about your final project. I will not read any papers in advance of the assignment being due out of fairness for other students, but I am happy to talk through your ideas for a final project, provide guidance on theory or argument, or review a specific (small) portion of a paper for clarity.

Blackboard

All assignments are to be to Blackboard in advance of the due date. No hard copies of assignments are due, unless otherwise noted in class. **DO NOT** email me your assignments.

Academic honesty

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt, please ask for guidance and clarification.

Finally, plagiarism will be treated very seriously in this course. You may not pass off anyone's ideas as your own as part of the course. Plagiarism is not limited to direct quotations (although this is the most egregious violation), but includes any time you reference someone's ideas, arguments, or theoretical contributions. When in doubt, please provide citation! All work should include in-text citation in APA style, as well as a detailed reference list. For more information on APA-style citations, please see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Office of Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Other Useful Campus Resources:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200;
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"
<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;
<http://caps.gmu.edu>

University Policies

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.