

*http://mediapoliticspower.com*

**Media, Politics and Power in the Digital Age  
DPI-659  
Fall 2011 Syllabus**

COURSE WEBSITE: <http://mediapoliticspower.com>

**INSTRUCTOR:**

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COURSE ASSISTANTS: TBD

**Course Description:** Digital technology is challenging and changing established institutions on a number of fronts. From Barack Obama's use of the internet to drive his presidential campaign victory to the challenges faced by the "Arab Spring", a critical understanding of digital technology is essential for today's leaders. This course introduces students to the history of the Internet and the emerging technologies that are defining the Digital Age. The course allows students to understand the political and power structure implications of the Internet as well as the underlying technical concepts and infrastructure of digital media.

**The Goals:** The course is designed to give students an essential understanding of and familiarity with digital communications, from blogs to SMS text messaging. After the course, the student should have a basic technical literacy, appropriate for any professional in communications, political, or policy work, and broad knowledge of emerging trends. Students will be able to purchase and setup a domain name, start and maintain a blog, and build and evaluate online advertising campaigns.

**Teaching Philosophy:** To understand the digital age, you need to live it. In addition to the assigned readings, students will be expected to use the online tools that are discussed. Only by participating in the online digital culture can students begin to understand the changing nature of the media landscape and glimpse the future.

## **Details of Assignments**

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

**BLOG POSTS:** For six weeks, you will be required to write one blog post each week. Your blog posts should review the reading for that week, covering these three major points:

- summarize (highlight the main arguments of) the readings for the week
- analyze/evaluate (tear apart, react to, find problems or contradictions with, give strengths of, explain why you agree or disagree with) the readings
- synthesize (place in relation to, bring together themes with, say what one author would say to another) that week's readings with the previous week's

Each blog post must be a minimum of 500 words. An important part of your blog posts is referencing other blogs that you are reading or blogs that are referenced in the assigned readings. Each blog post should also link to another outside permalink (preferably on another blog) as part of your response.

**DEL.ICIO.US PARTICIPATION:** You will be expected to add two articles or blog posts a week to the Del.icio.us feed on a topic of interest to you or the class – especially topics related to your final paper. Additions to the Del.icio.us feed must be tagged appropriately, including a tag with your first name. Tagging with your first name is critical to receiving credit.

**DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION:** Each week you will be expected to participate in classroom discussion.

**OTHER ASSIGNMENTS:** Six times during the course of the semester you will be assigned an online activity – detailed in the weekly assignments below – that will vary. For example, one week you are expected to evaluate a Wikipedia entry, another week you buy Google Ad Words. Additional instructions will accompany each assignment.

**COMPREHENSION TEST:** In Week 7 there will be a test assessing comprehension of the material being covered. The test will include a mix of multiple choice and short answer and will be aimed primarily at vocabulary and key concepts from the reading.

**MAJOR PAPER:** Conduct original research on an online trend or digital media in which you have some interest. A list of suggested topics will be distributed. Collect all articles and books written about the topic. Read them. Analyze them, and synthesize their meaning. If there is a shortage of written material about your topic, conduct original research; do phone or email interviews with original sources. Analyze and synthesize the meaning of the interviews. Draw a conclusion about the direction of the trend or technology. The paper should summarize and synthesize the state of the trend or technology and make an argument. The final paper should be 12 to 15 pages long. It

should be a publication-quality paper. It should be copiously cited using APA format.

**Grading:** You will be evaluated on the comprehensiveness of the review, clarity of the argument and written composition, use of APA format, and the quality of the main argument.

#### GRADING TOTALS

- Class participation over 14 weeks (includes blog posts, del.icio.us participation, discussion participation, and other assignments: 140 points (47% of total grade)
- Comprehension test: 60 points (20% of total grade)
- Major paper: 100 points (33% of total grade)
- *Class Total (300)*

#### READINGS:

*Each week blog reading will be assigned in a dynamic fashion.*

#### **Full books:**

Levy, S. (2011). *In The Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Lih, A. (2009). *The Wikipedia Revolution: How a Bunch of Nobodies Created the World's Greatest Encyclopedia*. New York: Hyperion.

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York: Penguin.

**Articles and chapters:** (available on class website)

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 8/29/2011	Shopping Changing Media Landscape	Syllabus	Review the Syllabus
8/31/2011		Long Tail (Anderson) Essential blogging (Doctorow) Groundswell (Li & Bernoff) Rushkoff essay	Join class Google Group Setup LinkedIn account Use <a href="http://instantdomainsearch.com">http://instantdomainsearch.com</a> Be prepared with a credit card
Week 2 9/5/2011 9/7/2011	Labor Day (no class) Digital Literacy	Here Comes Everybody (Shirky)	Add articles to delicious feed Buy domain, setup blog Write 1st Blog Post
Week 3 9/12/2011 9/14/2011	Blogging User Generated Media	In the Plex (Levy) (Levy, con.)	Add articles to delicious feed Write 2nd Blog Post
Week 4 9/19/2011 9/21/2011	Search Search	(Levy, con.) Cathedral & Bazaar (Rayn	Add articles to delicious feed Setup your Google Adwords campaign per class instruction
Week 5 9/26/2011 9/28/2011	Open Source Web 2.0	Wikipedia (Lih) (Lih, con.)	Add articles to delicious feed Write 3rd Blog Post
Week 6 10/3/2011 10/5/2011	Wikipedia Wikipedia	(Lih, con.)	Wikipedia Exercise Study!
Week 7 10/10/2011 10/12/2011	Columbus Day (no class) <b>Mid-Term</b>	<i>Assigned articles (See class website)</i>	Study! Review your Google Adwords results
Week 8 10/17/2011 10/19/2011	Privacy, Security Social Networking, Twitter, YouTube	<i>Assigned articles (See class website)</i>	Setup your Twitter account per class instruction Write your paper topic summary (minimum 500 words)
Week 9 10/24/2011 10/26/2011	<i>Internet &amp; the Press</i> Publishing and Journalism Emerging models	<i>Assigned articles (See class website)</i>	Add articles to delicious feed Write 4th Blog Post
Week 10 10/31/2011	<i>Internet &amp; Political campaigns</i> Online Fundraising	<i>Assigned articles</i>	Add articles to delicious feed

11/2/2011	Online Organizing	<i>(See class website)</i>	Write 5th Blog Post
Week 11 11/7/2011 11/9/2011	<i>International Case Studies</i> Online Media in campaigns Foreign Policy	<i>Assigned articles</i> <i>(See class website)</i>	Add articles to delicious feed Write 6th Blog Post
Week 12 11/14/2011 11/16/2011	<i>Gov 2.0</i> Government as platform Case studies	<i>Assigned articles</i> <i>(See class website)</i>	Add articles to delicious feed Work on your final paper
Week 13 11/21/2011 11/23/2011	Email Video Games	<i>Assigned articles</i> <i>(See class website)</i>	Add articles to delicious feed Work on your final paper
Week 14 11/28/2011 11/30/2011	<i>Fun Stuff</i> Mobile Technical Project Management	<i>Assigned articles</i> <i>(See class website)</i>	Add articles to delicious feed Work on your final paper
12/12/2011 12/22/2011	Final Papers Due Grades Due		