

Cyberspace, new generations, and new forms of political engagement

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Admin. Cod: POLA

Credits: 10 (10 EC)

Year: 20010-2011

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Objectives

The aim of the course is for students to acquire analytical knowledge and an understanding of the actual and potential impact of new technologies on politics.

Students will:

- ✓ Develop familiarity with the theoretical literature on the political dimension of new technologies
- ✓ Prove an understanding of 'real world' phenomena to which the internet is becoming a fundamental dimension (electoral campaigns, voting choices, political competition and participation)
- ✓ Expand their capacity to conduct empirical research on the topic, by oral presentations and research essays
- ✓ Participate in online discussion fora, create wikis and user created content (UCC)

Contents

From the mid Nineties on there has been a widespread diffusion of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), primarily characterized by personal computer-based communication and their network connection: the internet has deeply changed modern societies in the past twenty years. Even though the vast majority of activities performed online do not have to do with either participation or political information, the political implications of the internet are widely recognized not only by intellectuals, professional politicians and academics but also by citizens

who perform a number of political activities online. Especially with the extensive use of Web 2.0 platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Youtube etc) during the 2008 US Presidential campaign, the political relevance of internet based technologies has emerged as a crucial phenomenon to understand current politics.

The course will combine the normative discussion on whether new technologies can truly bring about a change in the political world, with the empirical analysis of actual applications of such technologies for political purposes. On the theoretical level, the debate between web pessimists, skeptics and enthusiastic will be explored. The course will cover the debate between normalizers and optimists, by looking at a number of dimensions of online participation. We will investigate, combining normative and empirical elements, the extent to which the internet offers new (and possibly better) arenas for political engagement. In so doing we will investigate to which extent young people are actually more prone to participate via new technologies.

We will look at a number of political actors as social movements, policy advocacy groups and protest groups in order to explore the extent to which traditional actors and new mobilizing agent populate the web. The course will then turn to electoral politics, looking at both citizens and elites. We will explore elections from both the voters and the candidates' perspective. With regard to the former, we will look at campaigns interactivity, political parties online and with regard to the latter we will investigate the use of Voting Advice Applications.

Mode

Discussion-based lectures (attendance compulsory), presentation sessions, and regular online component consisting of wiki-development and discussion fora.

Assessment

Class attendance, presentations (30%), term paper (70%). There is one grade for the whole course. **Term paper** is based on individual choice, to be discussed in class and with the lecturer. The other 30% is given on the basis on attendance (you will be downgraded if you miss more than two classes) participation in discussion of the readings, and assignments. The assignments are discussed in a separate document.

General Readings

Chadwick Andrew. (2009). Routledge handbook of Internet politics, Routledge.

Margolis, M. and D. Resnick (2000). Politics as Usual: The Cyberspace" revolution", Sage Pubns.

Norris, P. (2001). Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty, and the Internet worldwide, Cambridge University Press. Online at <http://pippanorris.com/>

Chadwick, A. (2006). Internet politics: States, citizens, and new communication technologies, Oxford University Press, USA.

Weekly Readings

There may be some changes, which will be communicated in class in due course.

W1. Introduction Tuesday February 1st

There are no readings to be done prior to our first meeting, but you are encouraged to browse the following websites (see list below) and to search online for websites/weblogs relevant to our discussions on cyberspace and political engagement.

ECPR Standing Group on Internet and Politics: <http://internet-politics.cies.iscte.pt/>

Oxford Internet Institute: <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/>

Pew Internet Research Centre: <http://www.pewinternet.org/>

Andrew Chadwick's website: <http://www.andrewchadwick.com/>

New Political Communication Unit: <http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/>

W2. Theory. Tuesday February 8th

Norris, P. (2001). Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty, and the Internet worldwide, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5

Noam, E. M. (2005). "Why the Internet is bad for democracy." Communications of the ACM 48(10): 57-58.

Seong-Jae Min, (2010) From the Digital Divide to the Democratic Divide: Internet Skills, Political Interest, and the Second-Level Digital Divide in Political Internet Use, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, Volume 7, Issue 1 January 2010 , pages 22 – 35

Recommended:

Lusoli, W. (2006). Of Windows, Triangles and Circles: the Political Economy in the Discourse of Electronic Democracy. Comunicazione Politica, 7(1) Free download at: <http://lusoli.info/>

W3. Empirical study of the internet. Tuesday February 15th

Chadwick Andrew. (2009). Routledge Handbook of Internet politics, Routledge. Ch1 Introduction.

Gibson, R. and S. Ward (2000a). "A proposed methodology for studying the function and effectiveness of party and candidate web sites." *Social Science Computer Review* 18(3): 301-319.

Loader B. (2007). *Young citizens in the digital age: political engagement, young people and new media*, Routledge. Chapter 8

Recommended:

Ackland, Robert. (2005). *Mapping the U.S. Political Blogosphere: Are Conservative Bloggers More Prominent?* Available at:
<http://dspace-prod1.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/45827/1/polblogs.pdf>

W4. Parties online a brief history. Tuesday March 1st

Gibson, R. K., P. Nixon, et al. (2003). *Political parties and the Internet: net gain?*, Routledge. Introduction and Conclusions

Norris P. (2003) *Preaching to the converted, Pluralism, Participation and Party Websites*, *Party Politics*, V. 9, N. 1, pp 21-45.

Rommele, A. (2003), *Political parties, party communication and new information and communication technologies*. *Party Politics*, *January 2003 vol. 9 no. 1* 7-20.

W5. Parties and representatives online. Tuesday March 8th

Small, T. 2008, *Equal Access, Unequal Success Major and Minor Canadian Parties On the Net Party politics* [1354-0688] vol:14 iss:1 pg:51.

Gibson, R. and S. Ward (2009). "Parties in the Digital Age—A Review Article." *Representation* 45(1): 87-100.

W6. Parties vs other actors. Tuesday March 15th

Wim van de Donk, Brian D. Loader, Paul G. Nixon, Dieter Rucht, *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens and Social Movements*, (2004). Chapter 1 and 5

Lusoli, W., S. Ward, et al. (2002). "Political organisations and online mobilisation: different media-same outcomes?" *New Review of Information Networking* 8: 89-108.

Oates, S., D. M. Owen, et al. (2006). *The internet and politics: citizens, voters and activists*, Routledge CH1

W7. Online Citizenship. Tuesday March 22nd

Brundidge J. and Rice R.E. (2009). Political engagement online: do the information rich get richer and the like-minded more similar? In A. Chadwick & P. Howard (Eds.), *Handbook of Internet Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp 144-156.

Dijk va, A.G. (2009). One Europe digitally divided, A. Chadwick & P. Howard (Eds.), *Handbook of Internet Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 288-304.

Anduiza E., Gallego A. and Cantijoch, M. (2010). Online Political Participation in Spain: The Impact of Traditional and Internet Resources, *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Volume 7, Issue 4 October 2010 , pages 356-368.

Gibson, R.K. and McAllister I., (2009). Revitalising Participatory Politics?: The Internet, Social Capital and Political Action, paper presented at APSA 2009, Toronto, Canada.

W8. Voting Advice Applications. Tuesday April 5th

Fivaz J., The Impact of “smart-voting” on Political Participation, *Paper presented at the Civic Education and Political Participation Workshop at the University of Montreal*, June 2008.

Wall M. et al. (2009). Picking your party online – An investigation of Ireland’s first online voting advice application, *Information Polity*, Vol. 14, N. 3, 203-218.

Ladner A.G. Felder and J. Fivaz, Are Voting Advice Applications (VAAs) more than Toys? First findings on Impact and Accountability of VAAs, *Paper presented at the conference ‘Voting Advice Applications (VAAs): between charlatanism and political science’*, University of Antwerp, May 2008.

Walgrave S., P. Van Aelst and M. Nuytemans, ‘Do the Vote Test’: the Electoral Effects of a Popular Vote Advice Application at the 2004 Belgian Elections, *Acta Politica* **43**(1) (2008), 50–70.

W9. Electoral campaigns I. Tuesday April 12th

Vaccari C. (2010) A Europe Wide Web? Political Parties' Websites in the 2009 European Parliament Elections, manuscript.

Vaccari C. (2010) “Technology Is a Commodity”: The Internet in the 2008 United States Presidential Election, *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Volume 7, Issue 4 October 2010 , pages 318 – 339.

Anstead, N & Chadwick, A (2008) ‘Parties, Election Campaigning and the Internet: Toward A Comparative Institutional Approach’ in A. Chadwick & P. Howard (Eds.), *Handbook of Internet Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp.56-71.

W10. Electoral campaigns II. Tuesday April 19th

Gibson, R. K. and I. McAllister (2006). "Does Cyber-Campaigning Win Votes? Online Communication in the 2004 Australian Election." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties* 16(3): 243-263.

Sudulich M.L. and Wall M., (2010). "Every little helps". Cyber campaigning in the 2007 Irish General Election, *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, Volume 7 Issue 4.

Williams, C. a. G. G. (2008c). What is a Social Network Worth? Facebook and Vote Share in the 2008 Presidential Primaries. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, August 28- 31, 2008.

W11. Electoral campaigns III. Tuesday April 26th

Gulati and Williams, (2010). Congressional Candidates' Use of YouTube in 2008: Its Frequency and Rationale, *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Volume 7, Issue 2 & 3 April 2010 , pages 93 - 109

Lilleker D. and Jackson N. (2010). Towards a more participatory style of election campaigning? The impact of Web 2.0 on the UK 2010 General Election, paper presented at IPP, 2010.

Wallsten, 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: 2, 163 — 181.

W12. Web 2.0 SNS Blogs. Tuesday May 3rd

Francoli, M. and S. Ward (2008). "21st century soapboxes? MPs and their blogs." *Information Polity* 13(1): 21-39.

Vergeer, M. (2009) Tweeting Your Way into Parliament? Micro blogging during the 2009 European Parliament elections campaign in the Netherlands, Paper presented at the Korean Communication Association Conference, Seoul, October 17.

Tumasjan A., Sprenger T., Sandner P. and Welpel I. (2010). Predicting Elections with Twitter: What 140 Characters Reveal about Political Sentiment.

W13. Web 2.0 SNS Blogs. Tuesday May 10th

Lilleker and Jackson (2010), Political Parties and Web 2.0: The Liberal Democrat Perspective, Volume 30, Issue 2, pages 105–112, June 2010.

Kalnes Ø. (2009) *Norwegian Parties and Web 2.0*, *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Volume 6, Issue 3 & 4 July 2009, pages 251 – 266.

Anstead, N & O'Loughlin, B (2009). 'The Emerging Viewertariat: Explaining Twitter Responses to Nick Griffin's Appearance on BBC Question Time'

W14.Young people. Tuesday May 17th

Loader B. (2007). *Young citizens in the digital age: political engagement, young people and new media*, Routledge. Ch1 Introduction and Chapter 4.

*Xenos M and Kyoung K. (2008). Rocking the Vote and More: An Experimental Study of the Impact of Youth Political Portals, in the *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 1933-169X, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2008, Pages 175 – 189.*

Calendar:

February		
1	W1	Introduction
8	W2	Theory
15	W3	Empirical study of the internet
22	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
March		
1	W4	Parties online a brief history I
8	W5	Parties online
15	W6	Parties and other actors
22	W7	Online citizenship
29	TENTAMEN	NO CLASS
April		
5	W8	VAA
12	W9	Electoral campaigns I
19	W10	Electoral campaigns I
26	W11	Electoral campaigns II
May		
3	W12	Web 2.0
10	W13	Web 2.0
17	W14	Young people
24	TENTAMEN	NO CLASS