

# **Political Science 118-2**

## **Information, Technology, and Political Power**

Fall 2017

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00-4:15 PM

Paige Hall, Crane Room

**Professor Eitan D. Hersh**

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:45-4:15  
Office: Packard Hall 108  
Telephone: 7-2043  
Email: eitan.hersh@tufts.edu

### **Overview**

This course examines the role of information in the political process. We will study information and information technologies both as outputs that result from political decisions and as inputs that affect political decisions. We will ask: How does the information generated through new technologies affect politics? Conversely, how does politics affect information technologies? We will study information in the decision-making process of elite political actors, such as campaign operatives, criminal investigators, and Members of Congress. We will also study information in the decision-making process of citizens, such as voters, mass mobilizers, and government reformers. Finally, we will grapple with political and moral issues related to information flows, such as privacy, innovation, and collective action.

### **Readings**

All books from which we will read more than two full chapters or are not available for free online are available at the bookstore. They are:

1. Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 2006.
2. Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 2007.
3. Markus Prior *Post-Broadcast Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2007.
4. Eitan Hersh, *Hacking the Electorate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2015.
5. Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here* (New York: Public Affairs), 2013.
6. Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2017.
7. Franklin Foer, *World Without Mind* (New York: Penguin), 2017. Release 09/12/17.

## Assignments

1. **Weekly response.** By midnight each Sunday night, each student must post a brief (5-10 sentences) response to the readings on the course website. The response can be a thoughtful question or observation. It can respond to a single reading or synthesize multiple readings. A student may also contribute by responding to another student's post. Evaluations of these responses will count toward the participation grade.
2. **Oral presentation.** Each student will make a formal 8-10 minute presentation on a news item related to information, technology, and politics.
3. **In-class midterm exam.** A brief midterm exam will be administered
4. **One-pager.** Each student will be assigned a US state. They will write a one page, single-spaced brief about the state's open record law.
5. **Final Paper.** A 10-page paper will be due at the end of the term.

## Grading

Participation	20%
Oral Presentation	20%
Midterm	15%
One-Pager	10%
Final Paper	35%

## Course Policies

1. No electronic devices, including laptop computers, are permitted. If you have a special reason why an electronic device is necessary, please see me.
2. On-time attendance is mandatory. If you are to be late or miss a class, you should let me know ahead of time. Important announcements will be made in class that will not necessarily also be made in writing. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.
3. Eating in class is not permitted. Beverages are permitted.
4. Late papers will be substantially down-graded unless you have discussed with me ahead of time or in the event of an emergency.

## Academic Integrity

Students must familiarize themselves with the university's policies on academic integrity. Your objective should be to stay so far away from the line of cheating that your work could never possibly be attributed to someone else and no one would ever possibly accuse you of offering someone else's work as your own.

## SYLLABUS

### September 6: Introductory Meeting

### September 11, 13: Politics Facilitates Information Technology

#### Readings

- 1.) Langdon Winner (1986): "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"
- 2.) Larry Lessig (2006): *Code 2.0*, Ch. 1-8.

### September 18, 20: Creating and Distributing Information

#### Readings

- 1.) Yochai Benkler (2006): *The Wealth of Networks*, Ch. 2-7
- 2.) Cass Sunstein (2007): *Republic.com 2.0*

### September 25, 27: Unsanctioned Oversight, Cyber Warfare

#### Readings

- 1.) Mary-Rose Papandrea, "Leaker Traitor Whistleblower Spy: National Security Leaks and the First Amendment," *Boston University Law Review* 94 (2014).
- 2.) Shaina Jones and Jay Ward Brown, "'The Assange Effect': Wikileaks, The Espionage Act, and the Fourth Estate," *Media Law Resource Center Bulletin* (2011).
- 3.) David Pozen, "The Leaky Leviathan: Why the Government Condemns and Condone Unlawful Disclosures of Information," 127 (2) 2013. *Harvard Law Review*
- 4.) Garrett M. Graff, "American's Top Spy Talks Snowden Leaks and our Ominous Future," *Wired*, November 17, 2016.
- 5.) Read current news on Russian interference in 2016 US election.

### October 2, 4: Sanctioned Oversight

#### Readings

- 1.) Mathew D. McCubbins, et al. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3 (1987): pp.243-277.
- 2.) Bruce Cain, *Democracy More or Less*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2015. Chapter 2-3.
- 3.) Yale Law Journal Forum, November 21, 2016

- a. David E. McGraw, "The 'Freedom From Information' Act: A Look Back at Nader, FOIA, and What Went Wrong?"
  - b. Melanie A. Pustay, "Memorandums to Messages: The Evolution of FOIA in the Age of the Internet"
  - c. Beth Simone Noveck, "Is Open Data the Death of FOIA?"
- 4.) Browse foia.gov website

**ASSIGNMENT: OCTOBER 3: ONE-PAGER DUE**

**October 9: No Class, Columbus Day**

**October 11: Accessibility Bias and Voter Decision Making**

Readings

- 1.) "Fake News and How to Stop it" Radio Berkman 238 with Zeynep Tufekci and Jonathan Zittrain, December 15, 2016.
- 2.) Shanto Iyengar, "The Accessibility Bias in Politics," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 2 (1990): 1-15.
- 3.) Samuel Popkin, "Information Shortcuts" in *Information Participation and Choice*, Ed. Bernard Grofman, 1995.

**October 16, 18: Free Speech, Surveillance, Privacy, and Boundaries**

Readings

- 1.) *United States v. Jones* (2011)
- 2.) Jack Balkin, "The Constitution in the National Surveillance State," *Minnesota Law Review*, 93 (2008).
- 3.) Simon Garfinkel, "Welcome to Sealand. Now Bugger Off." *Wired*, July 2000.
- 4.) Gain basic familiarity with *Dow Jones v. Gutnick* (2002 Australian Court case) and the U.S. Securing the Protection of our Enduring and Established Constitutional Heritage (SPEECH) Act of 2010.

**OCTOBER 18: BRIEF MIDTERM EXAM**

**October 23, 25: Collective Action**

Readings

- 1.) Bruce Bimber et al, "Reconceptualizing Collective Action in the Contemporary Media Environment", *Communication Theory*, 15 (2005): 365-388.
- 2.) David Siegel, "Social Networks and Collective Action," *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (2009): 122-138.

- 3.) Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* (Yale UP), 2017.

### **October 30, November 1: Hobbyism, Solutionism, and Upsides of Inefficiency**

#### Readings

- 1.) Markus Prior, *Post-Broadcast Democracy*, Ch. 2-4.
- 2.) John Geer, *From Tea Leaves to Opinion Polls*, Ch. 1-2
- 3.) Michael Schudson, "Click Here for Democracy: A History of an Information-Based Model of Citizenship", in *Democracy and New Media*, Eds. Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn, pp. 49-60.
- 4.) Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*, Ch 3-4.
- 5.) Eitan Hersh, "Political Hobbyism: A Theory of Mass Behavior" Working Paper, 2017.
- 6.) Eitan Hersh, "The Problem with Participatory Democracy is the Participants," *New York Times*, July 2, 2017.

### **November 6, 8: Competition and Anti-Trust**

#### Readings

- 1.) Franklin Foer, *World Without Mind* (New York: Penguin), 2017.
- 2.) Read summaries of Sherman Act of 1890, Clayton Act of 1914, and Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914.
- 3.) Read Wikipedia summary of *United States v. Microsoft Corp (2001)*.
- 4.) Paul Krugman, "Reckonings; Microsoft: What's Next?" *New York Times*, April 26, 2000.
- 5.) Albert Foer, "The Goals of Anti-Trust: Thoughts on Consumer Welfare in the US" *Handbook of Research in Trans-Atlantic Antitrust*, 2006.
- 6.) David Segal, "The Dirty Little Secret of Search," *New York Times*, February 12, 2011.
- 7.) Adam Thierer, "The Rule of Three: The Nature of Competition in the Digital Economy," *Forbes*, June 29, 2012.
- 8.) *United States v Apple Inc* (2012), Opinion of Judge Cote.

### **November 13, 15: Campaign Data and Targeting**

#### Readings

- 1.) Eitan D. Hersh, *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*, New York: Cambridge UP, 2015 .
- 2.) Eitan Hersh and Brian Schaffner, "Targeted Campaign Appeals and the Value of Ambiguity," *Journal of Politics* 75 (2013), pp.520-534.

**November 20: Hold for catch up.**

**November 22: No class, Thanksgiving Break**

**November 27, 29: Election Administration and Urban Mechanics**

Readings

- 1.) Abby Wood and Douglas Spencer “In the Shadow of Sunlight: The Effects of Transparency on State Political Campaigns.” *Election Law Journal* 15(4) 2016.
- 2.) Stephen Ansolabehere and Eitan Hersh, “ADGN: An Algorithm for Record Linkage Using Address, Date of Birth, Gender, and Name” Under Review, 2017.
- 3.) Jowei Chen and Jonathan Rodden, “Unintentional Gerrymandering: Political Geography and Electoral Bias in Legislatures,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8 (2013): 239-269.
- 4.) Read carefully through projects on <https://www.boston.gov/departments/new-urban-mechanics>

**December 4, 6: Uber and Autonomous Vehicles**

Readings

- 1.) Jonathan Hall and Alan Krueger “An Analysis of the Labor Market for Uber’s Driver-Partners in the United States” Working Paper, January 2015.
- 2.) Uber, “Chicago: An Uber Case Study” 2015.
- 3.) Mike Isaac, “How Uber Deceives the Authorities Worldwide,” *New York Times*, March 3, 2017.
- 4.) Darrell Etherington, “Uber Debuts Movement, A New Website Offering Access to its Traffic Data,” *TechCrunch*, January 8, 2017.
- 5.) Rob Solomon, “When it comes to driving with Uber, all cities are not created equal,” Medium, June 20, 2016.
- 6.) Jared Meyer, “Uber-Positive: The Ride-Share Firm Expands Transportation for Low-Income New York.” Manhattan Institute, 2015.
- 7.) Scott Wallsten, “Has Uber Forced Taxi Drivers to Step Up Their Game?” *The Atlantic*, July 9, 2015.

**December 11: Information, Technology, and Political Science**

Readings

- 1.) Gary King, et al. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression" *American Political Science Review* 107 (2013): 326-343.
- 2.) Eitan Hersh and Matthew Goldenberg, "Democratic and Republican Physicians Provide Different Care on Politicized Health Issues." 2016. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 113(42): 11811-11816.

**FINAL PAPER DUE**