

Digital Politics

Titulaire

Pietro Castelli Gattinara (Coordonnateur)

Mnémonique du cours

POLI-D505

Crédits ECTS

5 crédits

Langue(s) d'enseignement

Anglais

Période du cours

Deuxième quadrimestre

Campus

Solbosch

Contenu du cours

Course scope

In the age of the internet, political representation is increasingly mediated and shaped by information and communication technologies (ICTs). Are new technologies radically transforming democracy, or are they simply reinforcing existing patterns in the way citizens interact with their representatives? Some scholars claim that digital networks and internet-based mediation foster political participation and trigger substantial policy innovation. Others, instead, fear the emergence of technologically strengthened governments and a 'database state'. This course examines the impact of ICTs on democratic politics, and considers whether the developing of these technologies serves to reinforce, undermine or otherwise alter traditional models of political representation and communication.

Course Topics

- > Democracy and the internet
- > Government and digital governance
- > Cybersecurity and cyber threats in IR (Guest speaker Hugo Meijer, CNRS/Sciences Po CERI)
- > Party organization, party membership and the internet
- > Politicians and party leaders on social media
- > Electoral campaigning and ICTs
- > Polarization and digital populism
- > Digital media and collective action
- > Mobilizing for democracy in the digital age
- > Digital media, radicalization and disinformation
- > Can internet save democracy?

Objectifs (et/ou acquis d'apprentissages spécifiques)

Specific Course Aim

The goal of this course is to understand whether ICTs are serving or breaking democratic politics. For this, the course combines classic conceptual frameworks in political science and communication, as well as emerging techniques in data science to shed light on how the internet relates to: 1) government; 2) political competition; 3) civil society.

Méthodes d'enseignement et activités d'apprentissages

Face-to-face/hybrid teaching, lectures, collective work sessions based on the readings, class discussions about ongoing/real-world cases.

Contribution au profil d'enseignement

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course should be able to:

- > Critically assess the impact of the internet on contemporary politics
- > Understand how ICTs transform the political landscape through their use by political actors
- > Apply theories of political science and communication to understand real-world events, comparing across countries and political actors

Références, bibliographie et lectures recommandées

The mandatory and suggested readings will be made available on the virtual campus.

Other relevant references:

- > Chadwick, A. (2006) *Internet Politics: States, Citizens and New Communication Technologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- > Jungherr, A., Rivero, G. and Gayo-Avello, D.(2020): *Retooling Politics: How Digital Media Are Shaping Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- > Phil Howard (2015) *Pax Technica: How the Internet of Things May Set Us Free or Lock Us Up*. New York: Yale University Press.
- > Vaccari, C. and Valeriani, A. (2021) *Outside the Bubble Social Media and Political Participation in Western Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- > Chris Bail (2020) *Breaking the Social Media Prism: How to Make Our Platforms Less Polarizing*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- > Chadwick, A. (2017) *The Hybrid Media System Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- > Anduiza, E. Jensen, M.J. and Jorba, L.(2012). *Digital media and political engagement worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- > Napoli, P.M. (2019). Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age. New York: Columbia University Press.

Autres renseignements

Lieu(x) d'enseignement

Solbosch

Contact(s)

pietro.castelli@ulb.be

Méthode(s) d'évaluation

Examen écrit et Travail de groupe

Méthode(s) d'évaluation (complément)

Course evaluation and assignments

The course evaluation rests on 3 grades:

- Participation (10%):** students are expected to actively participate to the debate of each class, by asking questions and by commenting on the presentation and readings.
- Midterm exam (30%):** Multiple choice questionnaire.
- Final take-home essay (60%):** each student is expected to write a final essay on a topic selected from the Discussion Points or the compulsory readings (maximum **1000** words, references excluded). The paper must be submitted on the UV before **19/05/2023** at midnight (electronic format). Late submission will not be graded.

Construction de la note (en ce compris, la pondération des notes partielles)

Participation : 10%

Midterm exam: 30%

Final take-home essay : 60%

Retake sessions: Students can decide at their own risk to retake the final take-home exam. The grades for class participation and continuous evaluation remain the same for the retake sessions.

Plagiarism – or the direct copying without citation of others' thoughts (written or not) – is a very serious issue and will not be tolerated: plagiarizing means failing the course. Note that a specialized software will be used systematically to detect eventual cases of plagiarism in students' assignments.

Langue(s) d'évaluation principale(s)

Anglais

Programmes

Programmes proposant ce cours à la faculté de Philosophie et Sciences sociales

MA-ETEU | **Master en études européennes** | finalité Politique européenne/bloc 1, finalité Politique européenne/bloc 2 et finalité EU and Asia/bloc 1, MA-PINT | **Master en sciences politiques, orientation relations internationales** | finalité Sécurité, paix, conflits/bloc 2, MA-POLI | **Master en sciences politiques, orientation générale** | finalité Political Communication/bloc 1 et MA-SOCO | **Master en sociologie** | finalité Spécialisée/bloc 1 et finalité Spécialisée/bloc 2