

**Media, Politics and Power in the Digital Age
DPI-659
Fall 2009 Syllabus**

Mondays & Wednesdays 11:40 am - 1:00 pm in L230

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

DEL.ICIO.US: <http://del.icio.us/mppdigital>

INSTRUCTOR:

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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 traditional news media institutions, 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. Unless otherwise specified, the blog post is a response to the readings for the 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: Eight 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 edit Wikipedia, another week you buy Google Ad Words. Additional instructions will accompany each assignment.

COMPREHENSION TEST: In Week 11 there will be a test assessing comprehension of the material being covered. The test will include a mix of multiple-choice and short answer questions and will be aimed primarily at vocabulary and key concepts from the reading.

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 13 weeks (includes blog posts, del.icio.us participation, discussion participation, and other assignments): 130 points (43% of total grade)
- Comprehension test: 60 points (20% of total grade)
- Major paper: 110 points (37% of total grade)
- *Class Total (300)*

READING:

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

Full books:

Battelle, John. (2005). *The Search*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Li, C. and Bernoff, J. (2008). *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press.

Rosenberg, Scott. (2009). *Say Everything: How Blogging Began, What It's Becoming, and Why It Matters*. New York, NY: Crown.

Tapscott, D. & Williams, A. (2006). *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Articles and chapters: (available on class website)

Doctorow, Cory, et al. (2002). Introduction to Blogging. In *Essential Blogging*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Raymond, Eric. (1999). The Cathedral and the Bazaar (pp. 21-63). In *The Cathedral & The Bazaar*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Week 1: The Changing Media Landscape

Before class on Wed, Sept. 2

- Review syllabus

Week 2: Digital Literacy

Before class on Wed, Sept. 9:

- Join class Google Group
- Setup LinkedIn account and connect to me, nicco [at] echoditto.com
- Read “*Essential Blogging*” (Doctorow et al) - Chapter 1 (available online)
- Use <http://instantdomainsearch.com> to start investigating domain names
- **Be prepared with a credit card in order to purchase your own website domain – approximately \$15.00.**
- Read these blogs:
 - <http://publishing2.com/>
 - <http://buzzmachine.com/>
 - <http://scripting.com/>

Week 3: Search & Google

Before class on Mon, Sept. 14:

- Read “*The Search*” (Battelle) - Chapters 1 to 3
- Buy your domain per class instructions
- Setup your blog per class instructions
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Sept. 16:

- Read “*The Search*” (Battelle) - Chapters 4 to 6
- **Blog Post 1:** Post one blog post per class instructions – a reading response to *The Search*
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed
- **Remember to check the class website for required blog reading.**

Week 4: Search & Twitter

Before class on Mon, Sept. 21:

- Read “*The Search*” (Battelle) - Chapters 7 to 9
- Setup your Google Adwords campaign per class instruction
- **Be prepared with a credit card in order to purchase some Google Adwords – approximately \$5.00.**
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Sept. 23:

- Read the Twitter case readings posted to the class website
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 5: User Generated Media

Before class on Mon, Sept. 28:

- **During Class: Guest Speaker: Garrett Graff, Editor, Washingtonian**
- Read “*Say Everything*” (Rosenberg) – Introduction through Chapter 3
- Setup your Twitter account per class instruction
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Sept. 30:

- Read “*Say Everything*” (Rosenberg) - Chapters 4 to 8
- **Blog Post 2:** Post one blog post per class instructions – a reading response
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 6: Online Advertising & New Media Models

Before class on Mon, Oct. 5:

- Read “*Say Everything*” (Rosenberg) - Chapters 9 to 11
- Review your Google Adwords results
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Oct. 7:

- Read the Guardian case readings posted to the class website
- **Blog Post 3:** Post one blog post – a reading response
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 7: Open Source

Mon, Oct. 12: No Class

Before class on Wed, Oct. 11:

- Read “*The Cathedral and the Bazaar*” (Raymond) – pp. 21-63
- Read *What Is Web 2.0?* (O’Reilly)
- **Blog Post 4:** Post one blog post – a reading response
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 8: Social Media

Before class on Mon, Oct. 19:

- Re-read *What Is Web 2.0?* (O’Reilly)
- Read “*Groundswell*” (Li and Bernoff) – Chapters 1 to 3
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Oct. 21:

- Read “*Groundswell*” (Li and Bernoff) – Chapters 3 to 6
- **Blog Post 5:** Post one blog post – a reading response
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 9: The Long Tail / Political Campaigns

Before class on Mon, Oct. 26:

- Read “Groundswell” (Li and Bernoff) – Chapters 7 to 9
- Read “The Long Tail” article by Chris Anderson
- **Remember to check the class website for required blog reading.**
- Prepare a summary of your paper topic (minimum 500 words)
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Oct. 28:

- Read the Obama Fundraising case readings posted to the website
- **Blog Post 6:** Post one blog post – a reading response
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Week 10: Political Campaigns & the Internet

Before class on Mon, Nov. 2:

- Read the Obama Organizing case readings posted to the website
- **Remember to check the class website for required blog reading.**
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Nov. 4:

- Read the Iranian Elections & Twitter case readings posted to the website
- **Study for the test!**

Week 11: Test!

Before class on Mon, Nov. 9:

- Comprehension Test during class
- **Study for the test!**

Wed, Nov. 11: No class

Week 12: Government 2.0

Before class on Mon, Nov. 16:

- Read “Wikinomics” (Tapscott & Williams) – Introduction to Chapter 4
- **Remember to check the class website for required blog reading.**
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Nov. 18:

- Read Gov 2.0 case readings posted to the website
- Work on your paper

Week 13: Final Paper

Before class on Mon, Nov. 23:

- Read “*Wikinomics*” (Tapscott & Williams) – Chapter 5 to 9
- **Remember to check the class website for required blog reading.**
- Add one article or blog post to the class del.icio.us feed

Before class on Wed, Nov. 25:

- Read “*Wikinomics*” (Tapscott & Williams) – Chapter 10 to 11
- Work on your paper

Week 14: Wrap-up

Before class on Mon, Nov. 30:

- Read Mobile case readings posted to the website
- Work on your paper

Before class on Wed, Dec. 2:

- Read Julian Dibbell on Video Games
- Submit your final paper

Grades will be delivered within 10 days of receipt of final paper.