

Politics Online, 495B
Autumn 2002
MW 1:30-3:20, CMU 104
Department of Communication
University of Washington

Dr. Philip N. Howard
Room #227, Communications Building
Enrollment: 40 Maximum

Office Hours: MW 3:30-5:00 or by appointment

Class Website: <http://faculty.washington.edu/pnhoward/politicsonline/politicsonline.html>

COURSE CONTENT

How is technology put to us in modern democratic politics? Pundits and presidential candidates have declared the advent of 'politics online.' From Bob Dole's clumsy announcement of a campaign website address in 1996, to the coordination of protests by e-mail, and the data-mining efforts of elite lobbyists, new media technologies have become crucial components of modern campaigning. We will use some of the core concepts of deliberative democracy theory to examine the emerging role of new media technologies such as online voting, activist discussion groups, personal web-campaigns, and electronic government. More important, we will review these theories while observing the role of new media technology in the 2002 election season. This course will be run as a workshop in which students are encouraged to share their critical insights on political communication so as to help all of us understand specific theoretical problems in the production and consumption of political culture. This class has several specific goals:

- to understand the role of new media in local, state, national and international political communication;
- to draw lessons from specific Internet communication strategies during the 2002 election season in the United States;
- to apply these lessons in a personal project, either by designing a political website, by collecting and critiquing digital political media, or by writing a research paper assessing the candidate or issue campaign websites of their choice.

Although this course has no formal prerequisites, students with at least one other course in the social sciences will be best prepared for the pace and expectations of this course.

TEACHING METHOD

This class will be a workshop in which the instructor, students, and guest lecturers can present ideas about the conduct of politics online. We will often talk about current events in class, so you should start listening for news items related to course topics. Each class will probably start off with people sharing relevant clippings or news stories read (New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Economist Magazine recommended) or heard (NPR or BBC recommended) during the week. Students will be responsible for leading discussion during the second meeting each week, and will finish the course with a good reference packet of notes, reviews, and other handouts. E-mail will be used to conduct

class business and carry on debates outside of class time. Since irregular attendance will disrupt our learning community, unexplained absences will affect your grade.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated by their degree of participation in class discussions (10%), short assignments such as position papers on the readings, website critiques, a short take-home test, and the preparation of questions for discussion (30%), and a personal research project which may take the form of a research paper, a political website, or an online collection and analysis project (60%).

I will not mark for grammar but if it impedes my ability to understand your arguments your grade will suffer, so it is a good idea to have at least one other person proofread your writing. Use William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (New York: Macmillan, 1979) for writing style questions. The University of Washington has a number of resources to help with writing style, and they are described online at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwrite/>. Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Sciences* also has advice on developing good writing habits. Citations should be formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please refer to the University of Washington's "Principles Regarding Academic Integrity" for the definitions and consequences of plagiarism.

REQUIRED READING

The following texts are required for the course. Additional readings may be assigned for particular classes.

Kevin A. Hill and John E. Hughes, *Cyberpolitics* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1998). Photocopy package available first week of term at Ram's on the Ave.

September 30 & October 2

Good Governance & Good Citizens

Hill & Hughes, Introduction and Chapter 1, *Cyberpolitics*; [Bruce Sterling, "Short History of the Internet," from *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, February 1993 \(Class Website\)](#).

October 7 & 9

Smart Voters

[Online Campaigning 2002: A Primer, The Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet \(Class Website\)](#). [Benjamin R. Barber, Three Scenarios for the Future of Technology and Strong Democracy, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 113, No. 4 \(1999\), 573-589 \(Class Website\)](#). [Jennifer Stromer-Galley, Online Interaction and Why Candidates Avoid It, *Journal of Communication*, 2000](#).

October 14 & 16

Building Political Websites

Hill and Hughes, Chapter 6, *Cyberpolitics*. Training Sessions on Dreamweaver on the 14th OR Portfolio on the 16th. You only need to attend one of these sessions.

Dreamweaver is ideal if you want to build a political website of your own. Portfolio is ideal if you want to collect and analyze digital content.

October 21 & 23

Candidates & Political Parties

Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chapter 8 (Coursepack); Steven Schier, *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), Chapters 1 and 3 (Coursepack). We will have a coder training session these classes. There will one short in-class assignment on the 21st, one online take-home test due at midnight on October 22nd, and another in-class assignment on the 23rd of October. Together these will count for 10% of the grade, and all three must be completed in sequence during this period to earn the 10%.

October 28 and 30

Lobbyists & Corporations

Schier, *By Invitation Only*, Chapters 4 and 5 (Coursepack); Hill & Hughes, *Cyberpolitics*, Chapter 6.

November 4 and 6

Mid-Term Election Politics

Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapters 6 and 7 (Coursepack); New York Times, Washington Post, Economist, and other Newspaper coverage of the election. Guest speaker on the 6th.

November 11

Veterans Day, NO CLASS

November 13 and 18

Citizens & Activists

Hill and Hughes, Chapters 2 and 3, *Cyberpolitics*; Jon Katz, *The Digital Citizen* (<http://hotwired.lycos.com/special/citizen/>); Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), Introduction, (Class Website).

November 20 and 25

International Politics Online

[Garrido, M. and A. Halavais \(2003\). Mapping Networks of Support for the Zapatista Movement: Applying Social Networks Analysis to Study Contemporary Social Movements. *Cyberactivism: Critical Practices and Theories of Online Activism*. M. McCaughey and M. Ayers. London, Routledge \(Class Website\)](#); Hill and Hughes, Chapter 4. Guest speaker in class.

November 27 – Workshop Presentations

December 2 – Workshop Presentations

December 4 – Workshop Presentations
December 9 – Workshop Presentations
December 11 – Workshop Presentations