
SPEAKING OUT & LOGGING IN: DIGITAL PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC in Fall 2019 (CM1091FB9)

Course Code	CM1091FB9	Professor(s)	Jessica Feldman
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	305 Grenelle
Class Schedule	WR: 16:55-18:15 in Q-509	Office Hours	Thursday 1:15-3:15 or by appointment (subject to change during class trips and travel)
Credits	4	Email	jfeldman@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

Life online increasingly effects our political world: bots are “stealing” elections, hackers who leak government secrets are alternately hailed as heroes or traitors, protests are organized as facebook events and twitter threads turn into impassioned debates that span remote locations. How has the growth of networked communication changed politics? What are the perils and promises of online participation for democracy? This course studies emerging technology and current events, but asks old questions about what it means to participate in a public. It addresses problems of access, safety, literacy, and inequality that reemerge in new forms. This course brings together key concepts in media studies and democracy theory to think about our roles as citizens in the digital age: as we come of age in a networked society, what new opportunities and responsibilities do we have as globally connected citizens and political actors?

This course is part of the *FirstBridge Opting In: Democracy, Participation and Digital Life* (FB9). The other course connected to this FirstBridge is *Democracy: From Athens to Zuccotti Park*, taught by Prof. Julian Culp. The Reflective Seminar of this FirstBridge meets every Thursday, 15h20-16h40, and is co-taught by Prof. Jessica Feldman and Prof. Julian Culp

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

Integrated Inquiry Learning Outcomes for this Course

- **Local and Global Perspectives:** Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- **Exploring and Engaging Difference:** Students will think critically about cultural and social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class.
- **Civic and Ethical Engagement:** Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values, or practices (historical or contemporary; global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become engaged actors at various levels in our interconnected world.

FirstBridge Learning Outcomes

- Students will enhance their information literacy, acquiring an understanding of how information is produced, and discovering how to evaluate, create and use it effectively and ethically. Students will develop an awareness of the conversational nature of scholarship and be able to identify appropriate secondary sources to conduct effective research.
- Students will develop public speaking and presentation skills in order to participate effectively and appropriately in academic discussion and as community leaders, in a professional and engaging manner that can convey complex information.
- Students will be able to appreciate place as a site of knowledge, to interrogate the multiple meanings of place and develop a more informed and sensitive understanding of interactions between people and their physical environment.
- Students will learn to formulate questions that can lead to greater learning and productive individual and group research projects.
- Students will strengthen the concrete skills and aptitudes to be successful at AUP and beyond, such as study skills and time management, the mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, and desired classroom behaviors and interpersonal skills.

Course Outline

Course Schedule

Readings will be chosen from the course bibliography and will be announced and uploaded to blackboard the week before they are due.

Our schedule may be adjusted to accommodate opportunities such as guest speakers, relevant

events in Paris, new publications, trips, etc. and to give ample time for discussions and workshopping.

Assignments schedule:

Reading Responses are due when the readings are due. (Usually every class!)

Reflection Notes are due *the class after* a visit/trip/lecture

Final Project Proposal is due Nov 13

Final Project Bibliography and Outline is due Nov 27

Final Project is due Dec 16

Week 1: Introduction to the Course, Participation & Democracy

Wed Sept 4: Introductions of people and topics. Who are we? What are Media & Communications Studies? What do they have to do with Democracy?

Thurs Sept 5: Reflective Seminar: What is a Reflective Seminar? Visit from Study Trips Office, Visit to Library

Thurs Sept 5: Basic Frameworks (Theoretical and Technical)

Fri Sept 6: **Class welcome meal and visit to *relearn* at La Générale**

Week 2: Direct Democracy / Digital Tools / Open Source & P2P

Wed Sept 11: Participatory Tools

Thurs Sept 12 : Reflective Seminar : **Testing tools for direct democracy**

[bring your laptop & smartphone]

Thurs Sept 13 : Participation in Tools: P2P, FOSS

Week 3 : Institutions, Laws, Representation, Constitutions, Elections

Wed Sept 18: Digitally Distributed & Crowdsourced Constitutions and Laws, Place-Based Municipalism

Thurs Sept 19: Reflective Seminar: **rescheduled due to Assemblée Nationale visit**

Thurs Sept 19: Representatives and Elections: Digital Facilitation and Networked Disasters

Fri Sept 20: **visit to Assemblée Nationale**

Week 4 : Public Sphere and Civil Society

Wed Sept 25: Digital Public Sphere

Thurs Sept 26 : Reflective Seminar

Thurs Sept 26: Digital Civil Society

Week 5: Globalization/Transnationalism of the demos

Wed Oct 2: Digital “Global Citizens”?

Thurs Oct 3: Reflective Seminar: **Talk by Marcus Häggrot on the political rights of expatriates**

Thurs Oct 3: Postcolonial Computing & Transnational Storytelling

Week 6: Distorted Discourse: Free Speech, Hate Speech, Regulation, Censorship

Wed Oct 9: Free Speech, Hate Speech, Homophily and Diversity

In class viewing of video of DDC conversation between Kate Crawford and Safia Umoja Noble

Thurs Oct 10 Reflective Seminar: **Library Workshop**

Thurs Oct 10: Content Moderation, Regulation

Week 7: Education & Digital Literacy

Wed Oct 16: Digital Literacy and its Discontents

Thurs Oct 17: **DAY TRIP to the National Education Museum in Rouen**

Week 8: Scientific Knowledge, Truth & Post Truth

Wed Oct 23: Post-Truth, Fake News, methods of verification (blockchain, reddit, fact checking), who is an authority?!

Thurs Oct 24: Reflective Seminar

Thurs Oct 24: Guest visit from Professor Jayson Harsin or Dr. Primavera di Filippi (TBC)

Week 9: FALL BREAK

Wed Oct 30: No class!

Thurs Oct 31: Reflective Seminar: No class!

Thurs Oct 31: No class!

Week 10: Elites and Authority

Wed Nov 6: Media Elites & Tech Elites

Thurs Nov 7: Reflective Seminar: **Visit to Station F**

Thurs Nov 7: Digital *Participation* Divide (Guest visit from Jen Schradie, TBC)

Week 11: Workshopping/Brainstorming Final Project & Catch Up Week

Wed Nov 13: Catch up on burning questions, etc. In-class workshopping of final project proposal, individual meetings

Final project Proposal due

Thurs Nov 14: Reflective Seminar: **Visit to Pantheon (TBC)**

Thurs Nov 14: Class rescheduled due to conference travel [class made up Sept 6]

Week 12: Populism and Failing Democracies

Wed Nov 20: "Can Democracy Survive The Internet?"

Thurs Nov 21: Reflective Seminar: **Library Workshop**

Thurs Nov 21: Technopopulism

Week 13: Civil Disobedience, Protest, and Revolution

Wed Nov 27: Digital Social Movements, Online Protest

Final Project Bibliography and Detailed Outline due

Thurs Nov 28: Reflective Seminar

Thurs Nov 28: Report-backs from Protest/Demo/Civil Society event; workshopping of final projects

Week 14: What is the Human? Who is a political actor and must we be? (AI, algorithmic governance etc.) Do we have to participate?

Wed Dec 4: AI & Algorithms in Decision Making (moral, legal, governance)

Thurs Dec 5: Reflective Seminar: **Film Screening of *Hannah Arendt***

Thurs Dec 5: "On Being Political and the Politics of Being"

FINAL EXAMS & PAPER

Final Period 1: Thurs Dec 12: Practice for Final Debate

Final Period 2: Fri Dec 13: Final Debate

Mon 16 Dec: Final Paper Due

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Course requirements and grading

- Students will give one short (about 5-10 mins) presentation on a reading of their choosing: 10%

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- Assignments: Reading Responses & Report-Backs of Assigned Visits/Talks: 20%
 - Assignments: Draft bibliography, research question, etc.: 10%
 - In-class workshopping of your own project, including in-class presentations: 10%
 - In-class workshopping of others' projects. You will be evaluated based on your constructively critical engagement with other students' projects, ability to connect their work to texts and concepts from class as appropriate, engagement with conceptual questions: 10%
 - Attendance and daily participation: 10%
 - Final Paper: 20%
 - Final Debate: 10%

Assignments

Reading Responses: Most weeks you will write a reflection on the readings **due at 9 am on Wednesdays, 1 pm on Thursdays**. These should take you about 30-45 minutes to complete each. Summarize in 1-2 sentences what you think the thesis/primary argument of each reading is ("key takeaways") and one or two critical question(s) you have for discussion. What are aspects of the readings you found interesting and would like to discuss? What parts of the readings were confusing that you would like to spend more time on? You are also encouraged to share related articles, videos or applications you'd encourage the rest of the class to know about.

Reflections on Visits/Trips/Talks etc.: You will be expected to take notes (by hand) at all field trips/visits/lectures we attend. Afterwards, please synthesize your notes into one page, with some key questions and take-aways. What stood out for you? What shocked you? What bothered you? What are some new ideas you have, or new things you learned? What are some lingering questions? This assignment can be in "notes" format. **This is due the class after the event, at the same time as the Reading Response.** It should take you 10-20 minutes, maximum, as long as you took notes at the event!

In-Class Presentations: You will be asked to deliver a brief (5 minute) individual presentation once during our course. Think of this presentation as a "show-and-tell" inspired by the week's readings. Your goal is to:

a) Summarize the THESIS of your chosen reading. In other words, what is the most important thing this reading can teach us? Write it out in no more than three sentences in your own words. You do not need to summarize the whole reading. Assume everyone has read it and is ready to talk about it!

b) Bring in one MEDIA EXAMPLE that exemplifies, illustrates, problematizes, or otherwise speaks to the article's thesis. For example, you could bring in a current news article, a clip from a documentary, an object from an archive, a photograph, a YouTube video, a work of art, an exhibition, an advertisement, a book, a website, an audio clip, etc. Use your media object to help unpack the reading and to spark an interesting discussion with your peers.

c) Bring at least TWO QUESTIONS about your reading/object, and use these to ignite our

discussion. Your job is not to lecture. Instead, your job is to start a compelling discussion, and help guide it throughout the class. Questions might address concepts you found confusing, provocative passages in the readings, or problems you have with the author's arguments. You could ask how a particular reading relates or compares with another reading from the class syllabus.

Final Research Paper: This paper should use our course readings, talks, visits, and topics as a background for the analysis of an object of study related to the class topics. Class and outside readings will serve as grounds for analysing/critiquing/appreciating primary research material. The paper should be organized in a scholarly format: introduction to topic/research question, literature review on topic, method of analysis, presentation of data, analysis of data, conclusion that discusses contribution to existing literature on the topic, and bibliography. Your argument must incorporate ideas and citations from this course and Professor Culp's course, as well as at least 5 outside sources taken from library research. This paper should be roughly 2000 words.

Other

Conduct/classroom policy

- Please be courteous and respectful at all times. You may disagree with someone, but please do so politely (a good way to start is by saying "I can see your point.") Make sure you attempt to understand each other before you contribute to the discussion.
- You must check your AUP email once per day for important announcements.
- NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED DURING CLASS.
- All readings will be available on blackboard.