

Fachbereich 9 - Medienstudiengänge

Department 9 - Media Courses

Short description of seminars/ lectures in Summer semester 2020

Lecturer: Yannis Theocharis

Title: Political Communication, Social Media and Democracy

Description:

Social media have transformed the way we communicate, interact, and consume many kinds of information, including political information. Social media technology is still young, but it has already played a part in numerous turbulent protests and a highly polarized U.S. election. Most importantly, this technology has often been at the forefront of the conflict between “good” democratic forces who use social media to make their voices heard and “bad” autocratic and repressive forces who aim to censor this channel to silence these liberal elements. This course will explore the importance of social media for democracy and examine in detail their role in: enriching individual political participation, changing collective action organisation in social movements, transforming political campaigns across the world, and reshaping journalistic practices and political communication in general. At the same time, the course will pay particular attention to challenges to democracy posed by the emergence of social media. This includes the popularisation of trolling and uncivil communication, the proliferation of misinformation and fake news, the rise of filter bubbles and echo chambers and their contribution to political polarisation. Finally, we will consider the role of social media in authoritarian regimes, as well as in conditions of civil war and generally engage with, and evaluate, the role of new digital technologies in societies and politics more broadly. This course is predominantly theory-based and evidence-driven, and the majority of the readings are scholarly journal articles and book chapters.

Indicative literature:

- Tucker, J., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M.E. & Barberá, P. (2017). From Liberation to Turmoil? Social Media and Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4): 46-59.
- Bennett, L. & Segerberg, A. (2013) *The Logic of Connective Action. Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Stromer Galley, J. (2014) *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Pariser, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble*. London: Penguin.