Social Media and Politics
Communication Studies 422
Josh Pasek, Ph.D.
Fall, 2013

Course Meetings: Office Hours:
MW – 1:00PM-2:30PM   Wednesday 2:45-3:45
1105 North Quad   5413 North Quad
Class Website: and by appointment
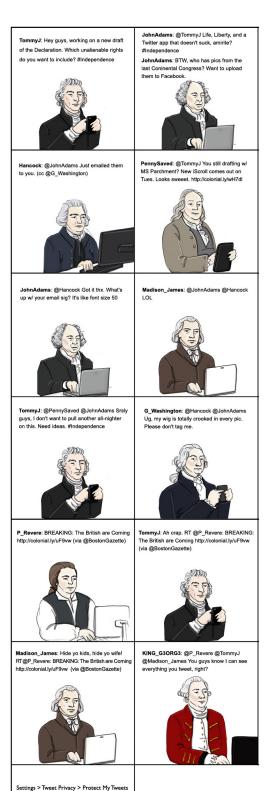http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com   jpasek@umich.edu

Facebook has yet to reach its 10th birthday. Since 2004, the online community has ballooned from its first member to a global website with extraordinary reach. Indeed, the pool of active users is large enough that declaring independence would make it the 3rd most populous country in the world with 1.1 billion monthly users (behind only India and China). One in ten individuals in the world longs onto a Facebook account each day.

Along with its Web 2.0 cousins – Twitter and YouTube – Facebook has been lauded for some rather impressive accomplishments. New social media websites have been implicated in Democratic movements from Moldova to Egypt. Similarly, the social Internet was noted as a critical factor in the campaigns of Barack Obama and David Cameron (UK Prime Minister), among others. For many, these sites are being hailed as a democratic panacea, making it easier for citizens to engage in politics and make their voices heard.

But, with all this hype, it is somewhat hard to figure out what social media are actually doing. For instance, is a "poke" likely to get someone to go vote? (As an aside, do people even still use the poke feature?) Might there even be risks in the use of social networking sites that could undermine political and civic involvement? Is the government watching your tweets? And does it matter?

In this course we will take a first step toward answering these questions.

The literature on new social media still very young. Political candidates, leaders of social movements, governments, and academic researchers are all struggling to grasp the significance of new technologies, to understand how they are changing the social and political environment, and to determine whether these technologies really are different from the media environments of our parents and grandparents. As with many things in academe and in life, this course will do more to flesh out the parameters of our questions than offer concrete answers to them.

TommyJ: Hey guys, working on a new draft of the Declaration. Which unalienable rights do you want to include? #Independence

JohnAdams: @TommyJ Life, Liberty, and a Twitter app that doesn't suck, amirite? #Independence

JohnAdams: BTW, who has pics from the last Coninental Congress? Want to upload them to Facebook.

Hancock: @JohnAdams Just emailed them to you. (cc @G_Washington)

PennySaved: @TommyJ You still drafting w/ MS Parchment? New iScroll comes out on Tues. Looks sweeet. http://colonial.ly/wH7dl

JohnAdams: @Hancock Got it thx. What's up w/ your email sig? It's like font size 50

Madison_James: @JohnAdams @Hancock LOL

TommyJ: @PennySaved @JohnAdams Srsly guys, I don't want to pull another all-nighter on this. Need ideas. #Independence

G_Washington: @Hancock @JohnAdams Ug, my wig is totally crooked in every pic. Please don't tag me.

P_Revere: BREAKING: The British are Coming http://colonial.ly/uF9vw (via @BostonGazette)

TommyJ: Ah crap. RT @P_Revere: BREAKING: The British are Coming http://colonial.ly/uF9vw (via @BostonGazette)

Madison_James: Hide yo kids, hide yo wife! RT @P_Revere: BREAKING: The British are Coming http://colonial.ly/uF9vw (via @BostonGazette)

KING_G3ORG3: @P_Revere @TommyJ @Madison_James You guys know I can see everything you tweet, right?

Settings > Tweet Privacy > Protect My Tweets

Written by @Matt_Silverman
Illustrated by Kiersten Essenpreis
for Mashable

Because the relevant technologies are still new and rapidly changing, little has been done to seriously test theories of social media's effects. Much of what we will read, therefore, is a series of hopes, fears, and first-cut assessments of dynamic media in dynamic political settings. What these readings offer, then, is a series of ways of thinking about the interchange between communications technology and politics. Of course, the final story remains largely to be written.

Throughout the course, we are going to look at the political implications of new media through three different lenses. The first six weeks of class, we will focus on perspectives on the potential influences of new social media. What possibilities are out there and what can we expect? In weeks seven through ten, we will assess how social media has entered the American political environment, with specific attention toward the use of social media in political campaigns. In the final weeks of the semester, we will take a look at social movements in the Middle East, questioning whether these were indeed facilitated by social media and whether social media may play an important role in the future of democratization.

As with any new social phenomenon, the influence of Web 2.0 technologies is itself far from set in stone. Hence as we continue to examine these technologies, both as users of the social Internet and as researchers studying it, we may find that the influence changes to reflect differing theories of the implications of the medium or may fall outside the scope of what we even thought possible in the past. Rather than adjudicate between early conceptions of social technologies, the theories that dominate may provide perspective on how our social environments will react to the next great communicative innovations. Perhaps the real revolution is yet to come.

Requirements:

Class Meetings:

The class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00PM to 2:30PM in 1105 North Quad. Students are expected to attend all classes and to have the reading assignments and paper assignments completed in advance of the assigned class.

Blog Posts:

Every other week (**posted by Noon on Monday**) of weeks 3 through 13, students will be expected to post a short response paper online using the class WordPress blog (http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com; note, there will be no blog posts for weeks 7 or 11). Response papers should be at least 150 words (no more than 400) and should at a bare minimum 1) provide a brief summary of some aspect of at least one of the week's readings, 2) compare and/or contrast at least one aspect across two readings (one of which must be for the current week), and 3) raise a question for class discussion based on that comparison. Students should be prepared to discuss the questions they pose in each week's paper during class.

The response papers will be graded. Papers that demonstrate some critical thinking about the readings and that meet weekly requirements will receive a check (and full credit). Papers that state and provide evidence for a compelling thesis that ties together the readings and that raises deep questions may receive a check plus (these will be rare). Papers that fail to fulfill the assignment but that demonstrate that at least some of the reading was completed will receive a check-minus (as will all late papers). All papers not meeting these standards or not turned in will receive a zero. The lowest paper grade will be dropped.

Note that I will mark these grades as a 1 (check-minus), 2 (check), or 3 (check-plus) out of three on CTools. All checks will equate to an 88 (formula: 44 + (CTools mean*22)). I will provide extensive feedback on the first two entries from each person. After that, the posts will just receive grades unless there is a particularly notable issue.

Responses to Classmate Posts:

Using the class WordPress blog (http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com), students are expected to post substantive comments (of one full paragraph) in response to at least one other student's weekly response papers. Comments should be **posted no later than Tuesday at 11:59PM** each week. Please make sure that you are logged in when you post comments or I will not be able to evaluate them. Responses will be graded as a percentage of weeks for which substantive comments were written (one week will be dropped). Students are expected to post responses **every single week**, not just those for which they are responsible for a blog post (no responses are due for weeks without any blog posts). Grades for all response papers will be posted at the end of the term and will be the proportion of weeks for which a response was produced.

Midterm and Final Papers:

In addition to the weekly response papers, students will also be expected to write two longer papers (5-6 pages each, double-spaced, 12 pt standard font, 1 inch margins) the first of which will be **due in the CTools dropbox by noon on Friday, October 18th** and the second of which will be **due in the CTools dropbox by the start of class on Monday, December 9th**. Late papers will be penalized ½ grade point per 24 hours.

In the midterm paper, you will be expected to map out how your views on and personal use of social media relate to the various theories (marked with [T]) that are in the literature. Do these theories capture your patterns of use? Do they match your experience? Who is right about what is happening? Who is wrong or misguided? Why do you think some authors are so wrong about the influence of the medium? Note that, as an opinion piece, it is particularly important that you have a well-defined overall thesis, match your claims and experiences to specific passages in the readings (though you should avoid long quotes unless absolutely necessary – paraphrasing is generally better), and stick to a clear organizational structure with regard to your claims and assessments.

In the final paper, you will be expected to do the same type of comparison, but comparing either what's happened in American elections or in the Middle East to the theories proposed in the first half of class (marked with [T]). Do the theories capture what actually happened? Is there anything else that theorists need to incorporate to fully explain the role of social media in one of those two contexts? Again, you should make a claim about the aggregate relationship and evaluate it in the context of what has happened and the evidence provided in the later half of the course.

Both papers will be graded on the structure of the writing, the use of evidence, the extent to which evidence is leveraged into a coherent argument, the link between the argument made and the theories from the beginning of the course, and the quality of the writing.

Structurally, students who have done the best in the past have proposed a clear overarching thesis, have laid out two or three primary claims in *labeled* subsections, with their own sub-theses, and have used evidence to support these claims both from the readings and (in the case of the first paper) from experience. Specific grading criteria for the papers can be found in the document "Writing Evaluation Sheet.docx" on CTools.

Midterm Paper Grading and Revisions:

The midterm paper will be completed in two stages. Students will sign up to individually meet with the professor for 10 minutes during an extended office hours session after turning in their first paper. Together, the professor and each student will talk over the quality of the writing, writing structure, and evidence with a focus on where each could be improved. Students then have one week from this meeting to submit a revised paper; this will be averaged with the initial submission to produce a final grade for the assignment.

Discussion leadership:

After concluding the first third of the course, in which we discuss the overarching theoretical perspectives for understanding social media, the format of the class will change considerably. For our two case studies – exploring the role of social media in American elections and in the Muslim world – the readings will switch from organized by class day to organized by week. For most Monday classes of weeks 7 through 14 (except where noted below), we will be working through the arguments made in the readings to better understand what each author is presenting. Wednesday classes for these weeks will be student-led discussions.

On the first week of classes, students will choose a day on which to lead the class discussion. 3-5 students will be collectively leading the discussion on a given day. Each week's discussion should focus on two general questions – (1) what do the week's readings suggest about the role of social media? and (2) which of the theories from the beginning of the course are best reflected in the week's readings? – as well as any specific questions raised by the readings. Discussion leaders should, as a group, send me an outline of the issues they are planning to discuss by email **no later than 6PM the prior evening**.

Grading:

> 20% - Blog Posts (every other week)
> 10% - Weekly Response Commentaries (every single week)
> 20% - Midterm Paper
> 25% - Final Paper
> 15% - Leading Class Discussion
> 10% - Participation

Required Texts:

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York.

Pariser, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding From You*. Penguin Press: New York.

Optional Texts:

We have multiple readings from each of these books and they are all interesting texts, so you may be interested in purchasing them. The readings from these books have been posted on CTools in their entirety.

Rheingold, H. (2002) *Smart Mobs*. Persius Publishing: Cambridge, MA.

Morozov, E. (2011) *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. Public Affairs: New York.

Standage, T. (1998) *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers*. Berkeley Books: New York.

Howard, P. N. (2011) *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Because of the focus on writing quality in this class, I also recommend that students obtain a copy of:

Strunk Jr., W., & White, E. B. (2000). *The Elements of Style (4th Ed.)*. Longman: New York.

<div align="center">**Course Policies**</div>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let the professor know as soon as is feasible. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/sswd) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential. Please note that we will not make any retroactive accommodations.

Absences

Sickness. If you are sick, please send me an email as soon as you are aware that you may miss class. If you are sick for an extended period of time, your absences will only be excused if you provide a doctor's note in addition to emailing me.

Religious holidays. Within the first two weeks of the semester, please notify your GSIs of any religious holidays for which you will be absent. If a holiday is sufficiently important that you will miss class, you should know the dates in advance.

Athletic and other university-related absences. If you are travelling to represent the University of Michigan, someone on your team will provide you with the appropriate paperwork to distribute to your instructors.

Other excusable absences. For family emergencies, funerals, and other such absences, please send me an email as soon as you are aware of the potential for missing class.

Academic Honesty

A good student-teacher relationship operates on the basis of trust. From that basis, I trust that you will do your utmost to complete coursework and to be honest with me if for any reason you are unable to fully meet a commitment to the class. I also trust your judgment that any advice you solicit from or offer to your peers will stay well outside the bounds of the University of Michigan's policies on plagiarism and cheating (see examples at http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/). That said, I encounter evidence that you have in any way, shape, or form copied material without attribution or collaborated to the point that the work you present is not entirely your own, I will immediately refer the incident to Esrold Nurse, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education. Because plagiarism and academic dishonestly hurt *everyone* in the class, I have no compunction about failing students who are found to have been dishonest; an F for cheating will be for the entire course, not just the assignment in question. Put simply, this class has a zero-tolerance policy. There will be no second chances for cheating.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – Introduction

Today we will discuss the organization of the class, the requirements for the class, and outline the framework for the semester.

September 2nd – NO CLASS

September 4th – Introduction

Part I – Theorizing Social Media

Week 2 – The New Social Media Environment

Today, online social networks seem so ubiquitous that it is easy to forget how recently these services entered our lives. This week, we explore the context within which new social media emerged and work to understand the parameters of online social networking, in particular, as a phenomenon. What is social media? How is it used? And how does it fit into the larger history of Internet use in general? Turner discusses the history of the Internet and the cultural context within which new media technologies emerged. Their histories shed insight into the mindset driving the pioneers of the Internet, as we see in Barlow. Shirky brings us more explicitly into the creation of social networking websites, helping us define and understand the phenomenon.

September 9th – A Brief History of the Internet: From ARPANET to the Social Web

Turner, F. (2006) From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. [T]
[Read Chapter 4]

Barlow, J. P. A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace. *[Unpublished Document].* Available from: https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html [T]

September 11th – The New Tools of Social Media

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York. [T]
[Read Chapters 1, 3-4, 7]

Week 3 – Toward A Digital Utopia

The collective action dilemma is one of the preeminent problems encountered by those advocating political change. Put simply, the collective action dilemma is the challenge of getting a whole bunch of people to behave in a consistent manner toward some kind of larger goal. This week, we explore the parameters of the collective action dilemma, focusing specifically on what potential online social media might play in encouraging civic and political engagement and in reducing the challenges inherent in organizing politically. For many – and particularly for Shirky and Rheingold, the great promise of social media lies in their ability to simplify collective action.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with A-K

September 16th – The Collective Action Dilemma

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York. [T]
[Read Chapter 8]

Rheingold, H. (2002) *Smart Mobs*. Persius Publishing: Cambridge, MA. [T]
[Read Chapter 2]

September 18th – Enabling the Collective Action Dilemma
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York. [T]
[Read Chapters 11, & Epilogue]

Rheingold, H. (2002) *Smart Mobs*. Persius Publishing: Cambridge, MA. [T]
[Read Chapter 7]

Week 4 – Social to What Ends?

Just because new media *can* be used to engage people and encourage political action does not mean that everyone who uses these tools will become a model citizen. In fact, there are reasons to believe that new media can hinder political activism either because governments might be interested in using media as tools of repression and control or because the media fail to facilitate the deliberation and communication necessary for engagement. To this end, we explore two powerful critiques of the current social media environment. Morozov suggests that new media induces apathy and does more to facilitate government control than political engagement. Pariser contends that the information received by individuals' social networks is often filtered in ways that can undermine the capacity for collective action. Are these threats relevant? Are they indeed happening? And should they be considered inevitable as the use of social networking sites becomes mainstream?

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with L-Z

September 23rd – Filtering Out the Important?
[**Special Guest: Eytan Bakshy from Facebook**]

Pariser, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding From You*. Penguin Press: New York. [T]
[Introduction, Chapters 2, 4, & 5]

Morozov, E. (2009) The Brave New World of Slacktivism. *Foreign Policy*. Available from:
http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/05/19/the_brave_new_world_of_slacktivism

September 25th – New Forms of Social Control
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Pariser, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding From You*. Penguin Press: New York. [T]
[Chapter 1]

Morozov, E. (2011) *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. Public Affairs: New York. [T]
[Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4]

Week 5 – Toward an Intellectual Middle Ground

In contrast to the utopia portrayed by Rheingold and Shirky or the impending catastrophe envisioned by Morozov and Pariser, a handful of authors have suggested that the influence of new media technology may depend on some combination of the affordances of that technology and the social environment within which the technology is used. But if we decide that technology and environment are both in play, how can we understand which technologies will foster engagement and which ones might undermine it? Papers by Pasek and colleagues, by Karpf, and by Glaisyer take aim at this question by attempting to demarcate the conditions under which social media might lead to democratic benefits rather than disengagement.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with A-K

September 30th – The Social Web and the Anti-Social Web

Pasek, J., More, E., & Romer, D. (2009) Realizing the Social Internet? Online Social Networking Meets Offline Civic Engagement. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 6*(3/4), pp. 197-215. [T]

Karpf, D. (2010) Measuring the Success of Digital Campaigns. In (Joyce, M. ed.) *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change.* International Debate and Education Association: New York. pp. 151-179. [T]

October 2nd – An Institutional Framework
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Glaisyer, T. (2010) Political Factors: Digital Activism in Open and Closed Societies. In (Joyce, M. ed.) *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change.* International Debate and Education Association: New York. pp. 85-98. [T]

Karpf, D. (2010) Macaca Moments Reconsidered: Electoral Panopticon or Netroots Mobilization? *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 7*(2) pp. 153-162. [T]

Week 6 – The Old Social Media Environment

In all the optimism and pessimism engendered with the development of new social media, there is value in gaining some perspective on how the current media environment truly differs from the communication and information dissemination technologies that existed prior to the 21st Century. Do Facebook and Twitter really represent a new paradigm or are they more accurately regarded as a small tweak on systems that have existed for a century or more? This week, we explore the social technologies of the 19th and 20th centuries, the roles they played in campaigns and social movements, and the means by which messages and information travelled. To what extent is the current environment a sea change and to what extent is it simply more of the same?

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with L-Z

October 7th – The Telegraph: Allegory, Mirror, or Substantively Different?

Standage, T. (1998) *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers.* Berkeley Books: New York. [T] [Chapters 5, 6, & 9]

October 9th – Social Politics Before the Social Web
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Jamieson, K. H. (1984) *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising.* Oxford University Press: New York. [T] [Chapter 1]

Katz, E. (1957) The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 21*(1), pp. 61-78. [T]

Part 2 –Social Media in Political Campaigns

Week 7 – Politics Meets the World Wide Web

Less than two decades ago, a campaign website was something of an obscure novelty. Few candidates had websites and, to the extent they existed, they were seen as irrelevant to the general strategy of a campaign. That is far from the case today. State and national level campaigns often have multiple individuals who deal with digital strategy and candidate websites are now widely regarded as a critical tool for voters to learn candidate policy positions. This week's authors discuss the evolution of the candidate website and of online campaigning in general.

NO BLOG POSTS DUE THIS WEEK

October 14th – NO CLASS – FALL STUDY BREAK
October 16th – Class discussion on politics of the early Internet

Bimber, B. & Davis, R. (2003) *Campaigning Online: The Internet in U. S. Elections*. Oxford University Press: New York.
[Chapter 2]

Druckman, J. N., Kifer, M. J., & Parkin, M. (2009) The Development of Candidate Wed Sites: How and Why Candidates Use Web Innovations. In (Panagopoulos, C. ed.) *Politicking Online.* Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. pp. 21-47.

[MIDTERM PAPER DUE IN DROPBOX BY NOON ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18TH]

Week 8 – The Dean Campaign
[STUDENT LED DISCUSSIONS START THIS WEEK]

Howard Dean's 2004 Campaign imploded with a primal scream following the Iowa caucuses (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5FzCeV0ZFc); but in the process, his meteoric rise from the Vermont governor's mansion to Democratic Party presidential frontrunner was built in large part on a vast network of web-based volunteers. Because of this, Dean's campaign is often regarded as the first campaign of the digital era. Indeed, many of the innovations produced by his campaign staff were highly successful even though his overall campaign was not. With new techniques for raising money and engaging volunteers, the campaign revealed the importance of networking volunteers and utilizing social connections. But there is some possibility that the very crowd-sourcing that enabled Dean's rise was the source of his eventual failure. The authors for this week each read slightly different lessons into the Dean candidacy.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with A-K

October 21st – Lecture on Dean as a potential new era for Internet politics
October 23rd – Student-led discussion on the Dean candidacy and Internet politics
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Trippi, J. (2008) *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything*. Harper Collins: New York.
[Read Chapter 8]

Shirky, C. (2007) Exiting Deanspace. In (Lebkowsky, J. & Radcliffe, M. eds.) *Extreme Democracy*. Available from:
http://www.extremedemocracy.com/chapters/Chapter15-Shirky.pdf

Hindman, M. (2005) The Real Lessons of Howard Dean: Reflections on the First Digital Campaign. *Perspectives on Politics 3*(1), pp. 121-128.

Week 9 – MyBarackObama.com

Where Dean's campaign failed on the back of social media, Obama was able to ride social media all the way to the White House. Volunteers were connected to one-another through MyBarackObama.com and given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in campaign operations. A large portion of Obama's capital was also raised online. This week's authors explore the role of social media as a strategy in the Obama campaign and evaluate how well social media facilitated the Obama victory as compared to other factors. Has its role been overstated, understated, or properly assessed?

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with L-Z

October 28th – Lecture on social media as a part of Obama's strategy
October 30th – Student-led discussion on social media and Obama's campaign
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Gueorguieva, V. (2009) Voters, MySpace, and YouTube. In (Panagopoulos, C. ed.) *Politicking Online* Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. pp. 233-248.

Slotnick, A. (2009) "Friend" the President: Facebook and the 2008 Presidential Election. In (Panagopoulos, C. ed.) *Politicking Online.* Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. pp. 249-271.

Lutz, M. (2009) The Social Pulpit: Barack Obama's Social Media Toolkit. *Edelman* [Unpublished Report].

Kreiss, D. (2010) Acting in the networked public sphere: the Obama campaign's strategic use of new media to shape narratives of the 2008 presidential race. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change 33*, pp. 195-223.

Week 10 – When Township Commissioners Use Social Media

As presidential candidates utilize online social networks, so too do Senators, Congressman, state legislators, and sometimes even candidates for Prothonotary (an obscure elected office in Pennsylvania that is not nearly as interesting as it sounds once you look it up). But it's not clear that social media will make the same difference for these lower-level elected officials that it makes on a broader level. Nonetheless, some political consultants make a living by offering social media services for these down-ballot races. What kind of difference might such tools make? The question, while under-studied, is an important one.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with A-K

November 4th – Guest lecture on social media evangelism and local candidates
[**Special Guest: Lauren Miller via Skype**]

November 6th – Class discussion about social media in non-presidential contests
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Herrnson, P. S., Stokes-Brown, A. K., & Hindman, M. (2007) Campaign Politics and the Digital Divide: Constituency Characteristics, Strategic Considerations, and Candidate Internet Use in State Legislative Elections. *Political Research Quarterly, 60*(1), pp. 1-11.

Nielsen, R. K. (2011) Mundane Internet Tools, Mobilizing Practices, and the Coproduction of Citizenship in Political Campaigns. *New Media & Society 13*(5), pp. 755-771.

Steinhauer, J. (2011, Oct 24) Republicans Embrace Twitter Hard for '12. *The New York Times*.

Schola, Nancy (2009, Aug 31) Blue State Digital Takes Over the World. *Tech President*. Available from: http://techpresident.com/blog-entry/blue-state-digital-takes-over-world

blue state digital. (2011) Blue State Digital: Capabilities Overview. [*Unpublished Slide Show].*

Part 3 –Social Media and Social Movements in the Muslim World

Week 11 – A Context for Social Movements

Social movements and revolutions do not occur in a vacuum. Conditions must exist that enable movements to take hold. Martin Luther King's march on Washington wouldn't have happened if nobody else thought civil rights were a problem. And we probably wouldn't remember it if the movement hadn't exposed some opportunity to change the status quo.

Grievances and political opportunities are considered the seminal conditions for understanding when people rise up and when they decide not to do so. This week, we explore these general theories of social movement formation with an eye toward the Muslim world. In addition, we ask what conditions existed and how conducive were places like Iran and Egypt to social movements in the first place?

No Blog Posts Due This Week
No Student-Led Discussion This Week

November 11th – When Do Social Movements Occur?

Kurtzman, C. (1996) Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review, 61*, pp. 153-170. [T]

Snow, D. A., Zurcher Jr., L. A., & Ekland-Olson, S. (1980) Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment. *American Sociological Review, 45*, pp. 787-801. [T]

November 13th – Conditions in the Muslim World
[IN CLASS SIMULATION OF AN AUTOCRATIC CIVIL SOCIETY]

Howard, P. N. (2011) *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam*. Oxford University Press: New York.
[Read Introduction and Conclusion]

Week 12 – Tweeting Mass Protests: The Early Years

The so-called "Twitter Revolution" in Iran may have captured the imagination of the West, but it quickly flamed out and led to few serious changes Iranian society. Why is it that civil unrest in a highly digital population failed to make a lasting difference? Was it over-hyped, not yet ready, underutilized, or not even relevant? Howard, Morozov, and Gladwell grapple with these issues in assessing social media in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Do you think their assessments are correct? Are they missing anything?

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with L-Z

November 18th – Lecture on "Twitter Revolution" in Iran and new Muslim world media landscape
November 20th – Student-led discussion about "Twitter Revolution" in Iran and new Muslim world media landscape
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

 [NOTE – HOWARD READING IN WEEK 11 ALSO COUNTS FOR THIS POST]

Howard, P. N. (2011) *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam.* Oxford University Press: New York.
[Read Prologue]

Morozov, E. (2009) Iran: the Downside to the "Twitter Revolution". *Dissent, 56*(4), pp. 10-14.

Gladwell, M. (2010, October 4) Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted. *New Yorker.*

Burns, A. and Eltham, B. (2009) Twitter Free Iran: An Evaluation of Twitter's Role in Public Diplomacy and Information Operations in Iran's 2009 Election Crisis. *Record of the Communications Policy & Research Forum 2009 (Papandrea, F., & Armstrong, M., eds.).* Sydney, Australia.

Week 13 – The Social Networked Social Movement Comes of Age? The Arab Spring

In early 2011, a wave of change swept the Arab world. Starting with the self-immolation of a disgruntled fruit vendor, Tunisia and Egypt turned over apparently overnight, and – as of the writing of this syllabus – radical change remains possible in Syria. Popular consensus almost immediately converged on the notion that social networks were partially responsible for the uprisings. Was this true? If so, what did it indicate? This week's authors take a first look at the processes at work.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with A-K

November 25th – Lecture about the role of social media in the Arab Spring
November 27th – Class discussion about social media and the Arab Spring
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Anderson, L. (2011) Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. In *The New Arab Revolt*, pp. 320-328. Council on Foreign Relations: New York.

Tufekci, Z., and Wilson, C. (2012) Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication, 62,* pp. 363-379.

Howard, P. N., and Hussain, M. M. (2011) The Role of Digital Media. *Journal of Democracy, 22*(3), pp. 35-48.

Week 14 – Interpreting Social Media Driven Collective Action

In understanding social movements, even hindsight isn't 20/20. Looking to the future is a much more difficult task. Have these tools transformed social action, changed the medium of communication, or done little? Will governments learn to respond to social tools and undermine their engaging effects? And will the future reveal a broader influence of social media, continued use, or will social media simply fade away as another fad in the pursuit of democratization? Interpretations and theories abound.

Blog Posts: Students whose last names begin with L-Z

December 2nd – Guest lecture on how we should understand the Arab Spring
[**Special Guest: Will Youmans from George Washington University**]

December 4th – Class discussion on how we should understand the Arab Spring
(Don't forget to comment on your classmates' blog posts)

Youmans, W. L. and York, J. C. (2012) Social Media and the Activist Toolkit: User Agreements, Corporate Interests, and the Information Infrastructure of Modern Social Movements. *Journal of Communication, 62,* pp. 315-329.

Gladwell, M. (2011, Feb 2) Does Egypt Need Twitter? *New Yorker.*

Springborg, R. (2011) Whither the Arab Spring? 1989 or 1848? *International Spectator, 46*(3), pp. 5-12.

Cohn, Alicia M. (2011, Apr 4) State Department Shifts Digital Resources to Social Media. *The Hill.*

Morozov, E. (2011) *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom.* Public Affairs: New York.
[Chapter 11]

Week 15 – Looking to the Future

The social role of technology changes in conjunction with changes in the technologies themselves. Because this is the case, the future is far from set in stone. Our decisions as innovators and as users of the technology help to determine the influence social media have. Thinking about these potential paths is important. What must we do as actors in a society to ensure that the media have the impact we desire? Or, are we powerless to watch as the influence of technology continues to evolve?

NO BLOG POSTS THIS WEEK
[FINAL PAPER DUE BY START OF CLASS MONDAY, DECEMBER 9]

December 9th – Socio-Technical Evolution . . . What's Next?

Pariser, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding From You*. Penguin Press: New York.
[Chapter 8]

Trippi, J. (2008) *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything*. Harper Collins: New York.
[Read Chapter 12]

Farrell, H. (2012) The Consequences of the Internet for Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science, 15*, pp. 35-52.

December 11th – Party / The Next Big Thing