

Social Media and Politics
Communication Studies 488.001 & 488.002
Josh Pasek, Ph.D.
Fall, 2011

Course Meetings:
MW – 11:30AM-1:00PM
G168 Angell Hall
Class Website:
<http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com>

Office Hours:
MW – 4:30-5:30PM
5413 North Quad
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Facebook has yet to reach its 8th 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 (behind only India and China). More individuals log into their Facebook accounts on any given day than there are people living in the United States.

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 is very much in its infancy. 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.



Because the relevant technologies are so new, 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 11:30AM to 1:00PM in Angell Hall, room G168. Students are expected to attend all classes and to have the reading assignments and paper assignments completed in advance of the assigned class.

Weekly Response Papers:

Before each week (**posted by 6PM on Sunday**) of weeks 2 through 14, students will be expected to post a response paper online using the class WordPress blog (<http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com>). Response papers should be no shorter than 2 paragraphs long (> 250 words) and should at a minimum 1) provide a brief summary of some aspect of at least two of the week's readings, 2) compare and contrast at least two elements of the readings, 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.

Weekly response papers will be graded on the "check system" (check, check plus, check minus). Papers that demonstrate some critical thinking about the readings and that meet weekly requirements will receive a check. Papers that provide a particularly insightful analysis and raise deep questions will receive a check plus. Papers that make a concerted attempt to fulfill the assignment and 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.

Responses to Classmate Papers:

Using the class WordPress blog (<http://socialmediaandpolitics.wordpress.com>), students are expected to post substantive comments (of at least one full paragraph) in response to two other students' weekly response papers. Comments should be **posted no later than Tuesday at 3PM** each week. Please make sure that you are logged in when you post comments or I will not be able to evaluate them.

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 serif font, 1 inch margins, formatted as a PDF) the first of which will be **due in the CTools dropbox by 3PM on Thursday, October 20th** and the second of which will be **due in the CTools dropbox by the start of class on Wednesday, December 7th**. Late papers will be penalized ½ grade point per 6 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 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 outline 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. 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.

Reading Responsibility:

This course includes a fair amount of reading, some of which is fairly dense. I do not expect any of you to perfectly recall the specific evidence that each author uses to make his or her points. Doing so would pose an unreasonable burden. That said, skipping reading assignments hurts the entire class and diminishes our ability to grapple with the material and to understand the issues at hand. For **every** reading that is assigned, it is your responsibility to understand 1) what the author is arguing, and 2) what basic evidence is leveraged in support of the author's claim. In addition, **you will be responsible for closely reading at least one of the texts for each week**, which you will choose the first day of class. I may call on you to provide additional insight into these texts in the course of the week's discussion.

Grading:

- 30% - Weekly Response Papers
- 10% - Weekly Response Commentaries
- 20% - Midterm Paper
- 30% - Final Paper
- 10% - Attendance and 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.

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

Optional Texts:

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.

Joyce, M. ed. (2011) *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change*. International Debate and Education Association: New York.

Introduction

September 5th – NO CLASS

September 7th – Introduction

Part 1 – 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? Scholz and Turner discuss 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. Shirky brings us more explicitly into the creation of social networking websites, helping us define and understand the phenomenon.

September 12th – A Brief History of the Internet: From ARPANET to the Social Web

Scholz, T. (2010) *Infrastructure: It's Transformations, and Effect on Digital Activism*. In (Joyce, M. ed.) *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change*. International Debate and Education Association: New York.

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

September 15th – The New Social Media Environment

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York.
[Read Chapters 3-5]

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. On Monday, we will discuss the notion of the collective action dilemma itself and on Wednesday, we will focus on what role social media could play in encouraging collective action.

September 19th – The Collective Action Dilemma

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York.
[Read Chapters 7-9]

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

September 21st – Collective Action Enabled by a Digital World

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. Penguin Books: New York.
[Read Chapters 1, 11, and Epilogue]

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

September 26th – New Forms of Social Control

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

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

September 28th – Filtering Out the Important?

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

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, by Agre, 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.

October 3rd – 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.

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

October 5th – Pinpointing Effectiveness

Agre, P. E. (2002) Real-Time Politics: The Internet and the Political Process. *The Information Society*, 15(2), pp. 311-331.

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.

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.

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 MySpace 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?

October 10th – 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.
[Introduction, Chapters 5, 6, and 9]

October 12th – Social Politics Before the Social Web

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

[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.

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.

October 17th – NO CLASS (Fall Study Break)

October 19th – Politicking on the Not-Yet-Social Web

[MIDTERM PAPER DUE BY 3PM ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 20TH]

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 Web Sites: How and Why Candidates Use Web Innovations. In (Panagopoulos, C. ed.) *Politicking Online*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ. pp. 21-47.

Week 8 – The Dean Campaign

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.

October 24th – Dean as a New Era

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>

October 26th – Looking Back on Dean

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

Kreiss, D. (in press) Open Source as Practice and Ideology: The 2003-2004 Howard Dean's Campaign's Organizational and Cultural Innovations in Electoral Politics. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*.

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?

October 31st – Social Media as Strategy

Kreiss, D. (in preparation) Acting in the networked public sphere: the Obama campaign's strategic use of new media to shape narratives of the 2008 presidential race.

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.

November 2nd – What Did It Do?

Kreiss, D., & Howard, P. N. (2010) New Challenges to Political Privacy: Lessons from the First U.S. Presidential Race in the Web 2.0 Era. *International Journal of Communication*, 4, pp. 1032-1050.

Hargittai, E., & Shaw, A. D. (2011) The Internet, Young Adults, and Political Engagement around the 2008 Presidential Elections. Luncheon Speaker Series. Berkman Center for Internet & Society. Harvard University. February 22.

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.

November 7th – Evaluating Local Candidate Elections

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. (in press) Mundane Internet Tools, Mobilizing Practices, and the Coproduction of Citizenship in Political Campaigns. *New Media & Society*.

[READING ADDED]

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

November 9th – Evangelizing Social Media

[Special Guest: Lauren Miller from Blue State Digital via Skype]

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

[READING ADDED]

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>

[READING ADDED]

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. What conditions existed and how conducive were places like Iran and Egypt to social movements in the first place?

November 14th – 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.

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.

November 16th – Conditions in the Muslim World

Howard, P. N. (2011) *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam*. Oxford University Press: New York.
[Read Chapters 3-5]

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?

November 21st – Exposing a Potential?

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

[Read Prologue, Introduction, and Conclusion]

November 23rd – Misplaced Faith

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*.

[Have a Happy Thanksgiving!]

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 both Libya and 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.

November 28th – Hail the Conquering Social Networks

Zhou, X. Wellman, B., and Yu, Justine. (2011) Egypt: The First Internet Revolt? *Peace Magazine*, 27(3), pp. 6-9.

Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., Pearce, I., and boyd, d. (in press). The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. *International Journal of Communications*.

Kinsman, J. (2011) Democracy Rising: Tunisia and Egypt, When Idealists Got it Right. *Policy Options* 32(4), pp. 37-43.

November 30th – Broader than Online Social Networking

Haass, R. E. (2011) Reflections on the Revolution in Egypt. In *The New Arab Revolt*, pp. 115-118. Council on Foreign Relations: New York.

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.

[ADDITIONAL READING]

Wilson, C. and Dunn, A. (2011) Digital Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Analysis from the Tahrir Data Sets. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, pp. 1248-1272.

Week 14 – The Future of 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, its continued use, or will social media simply fade away as another fad in the pursuit of democratization? Theories abound.

December 5th – Imagining Activism

Abdo, G. (2011) Green Movement 2.0? How U.S. Support Could Lead the Opposition to Victory. In *The New Arab Revolt*, pp. 163-167. Council on Foreign Relations: New York.

Hindman, M. (2009) *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ.

[Read Chapter 1]

[ADDITIONAL READING]

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

December 7th – Reconsidering the Drawbacks

[FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY IN CLASS]

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

[Chapter 11]

[ADDITIONAL READING]

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

[ADDITIONAL READING]

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

Week 15 – Looking to the Future (and Party)

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?

December 12th – 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, "The Age of the Internet"]

December 14th – NO CLASS (Study Days)