

#mppdigital

Media and Journalism in the Digital Age

DPI-675M Spring 2017 Syllabus

Class time: M/W 2:45-4:00pm

Class location: Littauer 140

v. 1.4 as of 14 Dec 2017

Please note that this syllabus is a DRAFT and is subject to change.

Instructor	Course Assistants
Nicco Mele Taubman 268 Assistant: Kaitlyn Dowling Kaitlyn_Dowling@hks.harvard.edu OFFICE HOURS: Visit http://nicco.org/hours/ to book an appointment on Monday or Wednesday between 3:00 and 5:00pm (15- minute slots)	Jenina Soto jenina_soto@hks18.harvard.edu Kevin Hong kevin_hong@hks18.harvard.edu

Class Description: Building on the concepts, vocabulary, and skills of DPI-662, this course will take a deep dive into the changing media landscape and its impact on public opinion. The course will cover a wide range of issues related to journalism and media communication including how technology has re-shaped the production of news; the role of social media in the distribution of news; and the overall disruption to the business model of journalism. We will also be reviewing in detail new technologies shaping storytelling and journalism across different media. Special attention will be paid to the intersection of media, politics and public policy. A significant degree of digital literacy will be required to succeed in the course.

Class Goals: Given the rapidly changing digital landscape, this course is designed to give students with a strong grounding in the digital world an opportunity to probe emerging opportunities and issues at the intersection of media and politics. Both strategy and tactics will be covered. After the course, the student should have a strong digital skill set, both in terms of theory and practice in the role technology plays in the production, distribution, and business models of journalism. Students will be expected to maintain an active Twitter feed and blog as part of the class, providing a deep immersion in the application of digital concepts and technology in the public arena.

Teaching Philosophy: To understand the digital age, you need to live it. In addition to the assigned readings, students will be expected to use the online tools that are discussed. Only by participating in the online digital culture can students begin to understand the changing nature of the media landscape and glimpse the future.

Details of Assignments

This class is designed to be a discussion on core readings. The readings are structured around four books and an additional selection of readings available online. Students will be expected to write three reading response papers. Each reading response paper must be a minimum of 2,000 words long and should be posted to the student's blog.

Reading response papers should review the assigned readings, covering these three major points:

- Summarize (highlight the main arguments of) the readings
- Analyze/evaluate (tear apart, react to, find problems or contradictions with, give strengths of, explain why you agree or disagree with) the readings
- Synthesize (place in relation to, bring together themes with, say what one author would say to another) the readings in question with other work, academic or professional

Paper Due Dates

- **Wednesday, 28 March:** First Reading Response paper on New York Times Innovation Report and
- **Wednesday, 11 April:** Second Reading Response paper on *News in a Time of Factual Recession* by John Wihbey
- **Wednesday, 25 April:** Final Reading Response paper on *World Without Mind* by Franklin Foer and *#Republic* by Cass Sunstein

Class Participation

There are three components of class participation:

1. Attendance in class
2. Class discussion: Each week you will be expected to participate in a rigorous classroom discussion of the key concepts and readings.
3. Twitter: You will be expected to Tweet two articles or blog posts a week on a digital topic of interest to you or the class, and as we move closer to the end of the semester you should also think about issues related to your final paper. Alternatively if you are at a digital related event at HKS, Harvard, MIT etc., you can also Tweet salient quotes or issues raised at the event. Your Tweets should be tagged using the class #hashtag (#mppdigital), to ensure you receive credit. Interesting and relevant Tweets on the #mppdigital feed will be discussed at the beginning of each class.

Grading Totals

- Class participation: 25% of total grade
- First reading paper: 25% of total grade
- Second reading paper: 25% of total grade
- Final reading paper: 25% of total grade

Readings and Books

- Wihbey, John. *News in a Time of Factual Recession: Understanding Networked Media and Populist Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2018.
 - Manuscript available as PDF on Canvas
- Foer, Franklin. *World without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2017.
- Sunstein, Cass R. *#REPUBLIC: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Additional web articles assigned below -- see the links in the syllabus, also on Canvas

READINGS ARE LISTED UNDERNEATH EACH CLASS: COME TO CLASS PREPARED HAVING COMPLETED THOSE READINGS

Week 1

Mon. 19 March 2018 – Overview

- **BLOG POST:** Shirky, Clay. "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable." *Clay Shirky* (web log), March 13, 2009. <http://bit.ly/MemDgH>.
- **BLOG POST:** Thompson, Ben. "The Local News Business Model." *Stratechery* by Ben Thompson. June 07, 2017. <http://a.nicco.org/2CMFZoy>
- **ARTICLE:** Starkman, Dean. "Confidence Game." *Columbia Journalism Review*. Nov./Dec. 2011. <http://bit.ly/NPfBw0>
- **PODCAST:** "Nicco Mele – In Search of a Business Model: The Future of Journalism in an Age of Social Media and Dramatic Declines in Print Revenue." Interview. *Shorenstein Center* (audio blog), February 18, 2016. <http://bit.ly/1oyqSle>

Wed. 21 March 2018 – Technology Stacks & Org Chats

- **REPORT:** Anderson, C. W., Emily Bell, and Clay Shirky. *Post-Industrial Journalism: Adapting to the Present*. Report. Columbia Journalism School, Columbia University. 2012. <http://bit.ly/LrSNFh>

Week 2

Mon. 26 March 2018 – Production of News

- **BOOK:** Wihbey, John. *News in a Time of Factual Recession: Understanding Networked Media and Populist Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2018.
 - Introduction and Chapters 1 - 3

Wed. 28 March 2018 – Production of News – FIRST PAPER DUE

- **BOOK:** Wihbey, John. *News in a Time of Factual Recession: Understanding Networked Media and Populist Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2018.
 - Chapters 4 - 5

Week 3

Mon. 2 April 2018 – Distribution of News

- **BOOK:** Wihbey, John. *News in a Time of Factual Recession: Understanding Networked Media and Populist Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2018.
 - Chapters 6 - 8

Wed. 4 April 2018 – Distribution of News

- **BOOK:** Wihbey, John. *News in a Time of Factual Recession: Understanding Networked Media and Populist Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2018.
 - Chapters 9 - 10 and Conclusion

Week 4

Mon. 9 April 2018 – Business Model of News

- **BOOK:** Foer, Franklin. *World without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2017.
 - Prologue and Chapters 1 - 4

Wed. 11 April 2018— Business Model of News – SECOND PAPER DUE

- **BOOK:** Foer, Franklin. *World without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2017.
 - Chapters 5 - 6

Week 5

Mon. 16 April 2018: Power of Digital Platforms

- **BOOK:** Foer, Franklin. *World without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2017.
 - Chapters 7 - 11

Wed. 18 April 2018 – Power of Digital Platforms

- **BOOK:** Sunstein, Cass R. *#REPUBLIC: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
 - Preface and Chapters 1 - 3

Week 6

Mon. 23 April 2018 – Verification and Fact-checking

- **BOOK:** Sunstein, Cass R. *#REPUBLIC: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
 - Chapters 4 - 9

Wed. 25 April 2018 – Closing Thoughts – FINAL PAPER DUE

- **BOOK:** Sunstein, Cass R. *#REPUBLIC: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
 - Chapters 10 - 11

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