

## **Government Information and Social Justice**

CCI660 Fall 2016, PhD Course

Dr. Kimberly Douglass, Associate Professor

School of Information Sciences (SIS), University of Tennessee, Knoxville

### **Class Meetings**

Mondays, 9:05am-11:55am

### **Office Hours**

Via email and by appointment. Expect email responses within 24-48 hours on weekdays. If you receive an “out of office” reply, response may be delayed. If you and I schedule a meeting time, assume that the time we set is in Eastern Standard Time. I am also open to Skyping.

### **Instructor's Office**

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### **Course Description**

I am assuming that you have only a general understanding of the public policy process, no more than any other well-educated citizen of the United States and/or the world.

This course will examine how existing literatures grapple with the use of political communications channels in the United States to pursue social justice goals. More specifically, this course will highlight differences in the ways social justice is operationalized. Also, this course will show how access, or lack thereof, to information has been shown to undermine or support social justice. In addition, this course will provide opportunities to identify and apply theoretical concepts such as network (electronic and human) gatekeeping and political economy of information, both of which draw attention to levels of access to decision making channels.

This course is built upon the idea that governance occurs through information flows across (state and non-state) human and technical communications networks as well as through traditional government processes and procedures. In other words governance is as much about information exchanges as it is about the structure of government. Therefore, this course offers a structural context (igovernance), a social context (social justice/movements, relationships), and an information flow context (media) to consider the pursuit of social justice.

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Operationalize the phrases social justice and government information;
- Identify and critically analyze research works that directly or indirectly discuss connections (or lack thereof) between the pursuit of social justice and the flow of information across varying nodes and clusters of power; and
- Identify and apply key theoretical concepts that speak to connections (or lack thereof)

between the pursuit of social justice and the flow of information across nodes and clusters of power.

### **Required Texts**

Braman, Sandra. (2006). Change of state: information, policy, and power. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

Johnston, Hank. (2014). What is a social movement? Polity Press: Cambridge, UK.

Other readings are cited below and are easily accessible @ lib.utk.edu.

### **Optional Text**

Yochai, Benkler. (2006). The wealth of networks: how social production transforms markets and freedom. Yale University Press: Princeton, NJ.

### **College of Communication and Information Diversity Statement**

The College of Communication & Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement; helps students develop critical thinking skills; and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity, and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College's faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community (see <http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement> for CCI's full Diversity Statement).

### **Students with Special Needs**

The University of Tennessee intends to comply with requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and those of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Students with special needs should consult with the instructor as early as possible in the term about possible accommodations under these regulations. You should also contact the Office of Disability Services as quickly as possible. The Office is located at 915 Volunteer Blvd/100 Dunford Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-4020, phone: (865) 974-6087, fax: (865) 974-9552, e-mail: [ods@utk.edu](mailto:ods@utk.edu).

### **Grading Papers and Assignments**

- Grades for individual assignments will be based upon total points earned/100 possible points. Below are assignment names, due dates, and grade weights. Refer to the scale on page 7 for the corresponding letter grade.
- All assignments are due in **BlackBoard "Assignments"** by 11:59PM on their respective due dates.
- Unless you experience some abnormality, there is no need to tell me you have posted your assignment.

- Unless told otherwise, each student will work alone to complete the assignments that follow.
- Assignment files must be labeled per instructions on the schedule. Failure to do so will result in lost points.

### Assignments

1. Issue network diagram. (issued based-drill down)
  - a. This diagram will illustrate how institutions, organizations, groups, individuals, etc. relate to each other through shared policy interests. The diagram will be supported by 5-7 page narrative. (20%)
  - b. Students should prepare at least one slide to present to the class.
2. Content for the following assignment will be drawn from social media and webpages:
  - a. Issue networking activity diagram: The product from this activity should cluster around the same issue referenced in #1. However, this diagram will show how media sites hosted by institutions, organizations, groups, individuals, etc. link to each other virtually. The diagram will be supported by 5-7 page narrative. (20%)
  - b. Students should prepare at least one slide to present to the class.
3. Based upon issue network diagram and activity diagram: 10-12 page research design with supporting literature (30%)
4. Short presentation about sequence of papers (5%)
5. Attendance and participation (25%)

### Schedule of Readings

Dates	Readings	Assignments Due
August 22	Braman, Chapter 1 An Introduction to Information Policy  Johnston, Chapter 1 What is a Social Movement?  Lewis, Kevin, Kurt Gray, and Jens Meierhenrich. "The structure of online activism." <i>Sociological Science</i> 1 (2014): 1-9.	
August 29	Discuss issue/network mapping  Johnston, Chapter 2 The Study of Social Movements  Supplemental reading ( <b>optional</b> ): Benkler, Chapter 9 Justice and Development	

September 5	Labor Day	No class
September 12	IRB 321 Communications (10am – 12pm) On September 19 <sup>th</sup> , we will discuss human participation in the context of your own research.	
September 19	Johnston, Chapter 3 What is a Political Movement?  Barzilai-Nahon, K. (May 2008). Toward a theory of network gatekeeping: a framework for exploring information control. <i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)</i> , 59(9): 1493–1512.  Supplemental reading ( <b>optional</b> ): Benkler, Chapter 1 A Moment of Opportunity and Challenge	Issue Network Diagram (18 <sup>th</sup> ) Slide (18 <sup>th</sup> )
September 26	Research Skills/Speaker  Johnston, Chapter 4 What is a Cultural Movement?  Braman, Chapter 2 Forms and Phases of Power: the Bias of the Informational State  Supplemental reading (optional): Benkler, Chapter 8 Cultural Freedom: A Culture both Plastic and Critical	
October 3	Johnston, Chapter 4 What is a Cultural Movement?  Braman, Chapter 2 Forms and Phases of Power: the Bias of the Informational State  Supplemental reading ( <b>optional</b> ): Benkler, Chapter 8 Cultural Freedom: A Culture both Plastic and Critical	
October 10	Alstott J, Madnick S, Velu C. (April 2014). Homophily and the speed of social mobilization: the effect of acquired and ascribed traits. <i>Plos ONE</i> [serial online], 9(4):1-9. Ipswich, MA. Accessed August 18, 2014.	Issue Network Activity Diagram (9 <sup>th</sup> ) Slide (9 <sup>th</sup> )

	<p>Braman, Chapter 3 Bounding the Domain: Information Policy for the Twenty-First Century</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 3 Peer Production and Sharing</p>	
October 17	<p>Johnston, Chapter 5 What do Social Movements Do?</p> <p>Braman, Chapter 4 Constitutional Principles and the Information Spaces they Create</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 4 Economics of Social Production</p>	
October 24	<p>Braman, Chapter 5 Information Policy and Identity</p> <p>Howard P, and Parks M. (April 2012). Social media and political change: capacity, constraint, and consequence. <i>Journal Of Communication</i> [serial online], 62(2): 359-362.</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 10 Social Ties Networking Together</p>	
October 31	<p>Johnston, Chapter 6 Researching Social Movements</p> <p>SALTER C. (2011). Going online for social change: techniques, barriers and possibilities for community groups. <i>Social Alternatives</i> [serial online], 30(1): 19-23.</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 7 Political Freedom Part 2: Emergence of the Networked Public Sphere</p>	
November 7	<p>Research Skills/Speaker Johnston, Chapter 7 Where are Social Movements Headed?</p> <p>Braman, Chapter 6</p>	

	<p>Information Policy and Structure</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 11 The Battle Over the Institutional Ecology of the Digital Environment</p>	
November 14	<p>Braman, Chapter 7 Information Policy and Borders</p> <p>Warren, Anne Marie, Ainin, Sulaiman, and Noor Ismawati, Jaafar. Social media effects on fostering online civic engagement and building citizen trust and trust in institutions. (2014). <i>Government Information Quarterly</i> 31(2): 291-301.</p> <p>Supplemental reading (<b>optional</b>): Benkler, Chapter 12 The Stakes of Information Law and Policy</p>	
November 21	<p>Braman, Chapter 8 Information Policy and Change</p> <p>Nahon, Karine, et al. "Information flows in events of political unrest." (2013). More information....</p>	
November 28	<p>Tinati, Ramine, et al. "Challenging social media analytics: web science perspectives." <i>Proceedings of the 2014 ACM conference on Web science</i>. ACM, 2014.</p> <p>Braman, Chapter 9 Information, Policy, and Power in the Informational State</p>	<p>Research Design (27<sup>th</sup>) Slides (27<sup>th</sup>)</p>
<p>UTK fall 2016 classes end Thursday, December 1, 2016.</p>		

### Expectations

For your submissions, you earn grades on the basis of quality of thought and writing style, thoroughness of research, and of references and originality. Only exceptional work will receive an "A" grade.

In addition to assignment specifics, all written work will be evaluated in terms of these criteria:

- Quality of the presentation-neat and free from error;
- Quality of the writing, clear, direct, and correct;
- Quality of the organization-smooth, logical flow of content;
- Quality and amount of reflection, analysis, and evaluation; and
- Use of a variety of appropriate sources.

### Student Performance Evaluation

<b>A</b>	<b>92.5 – 100</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87.5 – 92.4</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>79.5 – 87.4</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>74.5 – 75.4</b>	<b>Marginal</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>69.5 – 74.4</b>	<b>Below graduate level (C or below)</b>

### Preparation of Written Work

The standard SIS resource for matters of documentation is Kate L. Turabian, a *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th edition [or later] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [latest edition]). (Paperbound copies abound in local bookstores.) Turabian is derived from the Chicago Manual of Style. For matters not covered in Turabian or where there is ambiguity, the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style is ultimately authoritative. It is also permissible to use either the APA or MLA style of documentation.

- All sources must be cited, quotations must be formatted and attributed correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism.
- Grades for assignment submissions that include incomplete in-text citations or reference lists will be lowered by one point.
- Papers should be submitted in 12-point font, double-spaced lines.
- All work should be paginated.
- Submit work to BlackBoard “Assignments.”

### Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism in any of its several forms is intolerable, and attention to matters of documentation in all written work is expected and required. Inadvertence (i.e., "carelessness"), alleged lack of understanding, or avowed ignorance of the various types of plagiarism (including lack of proper attribution of sources and use of quoted material and mechanics for same) are not acceptable excuses.

*Specific examples of plagiarism are:*

1. Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source;
2. Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
3. Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
4. Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor’s approval;
5. Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and use without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph). See UT Hilltopics for University policy.

### Penalty for Late Work

Except by prior agreement, ½ letter grade per working day may be deducted for written or oral work not submitted by 11:59pm on the day due. For example, a paper which would normally receive the letter grade of "B" may receive a "C" if two business days late--and so forth. “Prior

arrangement” means at least 24 hours prior to the original time scheduled for the presentation or paper.

**Class Attendance and Participation Policy**

- Students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to fully participate in each discussion by having read the assigned readings.
- Meaningful participation also involves reserving space for your colleagues to communicate their ideas.
- Instructors have the option of making slides available or not. I typically post slides prior to the start of class.

**Class Cancellations**

Should it be necessary to cancel a class meeting, every effort will be taken to do so in advance. Look for e-mail announcements and an announcement on **BlackBoard** and in your email box.