Communication and Politics is an issues-oriented course that explores the impact of social media on contemporary politics and new forms of (digital) media power in Canada. Beginning with a discussion of key perspectives on politics and communication, the course will examine what happens when the real world of politics is suddenly immersed in a new order of communication, including social media and digital devices—the inclusive, participatory, app-driven world of Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube. We will ask not only what happens to traditional understandings of Canadian identity in the new era of social media, but also what happens to television, radio and newspapers and, indeed, to the meaning of citizenship itself when everyone is wired into the “global village,” instantly aware of crises near and far, and enabled by digital devices that provide connectivity 24/7. The course will approach communication and politics by discussing the writings of key contemporary media scholars as well by exploring several case studies in the area of politics and communication that highlight contemporary debates including changes in technologies of contemporary political campaigns, the future of surveillance, digital democracy, investigative journalism today and transformations in issues related to work, warfare and political resistance in a world driven at the speed of social media.

Required Readings:


Digital Sites: [www.ctheory.net](http://www.ctheory.net), [www.pactac.net](http://www.pactac.net), [http://www.pactac.net/wires/acontents.html](http://www.pactac.net/wires/acontents.html)

Grading and Assignments:
Take-Home Mid-Term Examination, Value: 25% *(Due: Feb. 11th)*
Research Paper (15-18 pages): Value: 30% *(Due: March 10th)*
Take-Home Final Exam, Value: 35% *(Due: March 24th)*
Participation: 10%
*No late papers will be accepted without a medical note. A print copy of your research paper must be submitted by the due date, March 10, 2020.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 7th: Introduction to Communication and Politics

Case Study: How Soft Power Shapes Politics

Jan. 14th: Understanding Digital Devices
Readings:

Jan. 21st: Growing Up Digital
Readings:

Jan. 28th: Power and Communication in Digital Society
Readings:
Astra Taylor, *The People’s Platform*, “Preface”

Reference: Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”
[https://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Haraway-CyborgManifesto-1.pdf](https://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Haraway-CyborgManifesto-1.pdf)

Feb. 4th: Media and Identity: The Politics of “Truth” in a Fragmented World
Readings:
-Marshall McLuhan Interview on the Future of Technology:

Case Study: “The Slot Machine in your Pocket,”
[http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/smartphone-addiction-is-part-of-the-design-a-1104237.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/smartphone-addiction-is-part-of-the-design-a-1104237.html)
Feb.11th: Politics in the Age of Connectivity: Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook: Why Resurgent Nationalism in a Time of Media Fragmentation?

Readings:
- D. Taras, *Digital Mosaic*, Chp. 4: “Me-Media and Political Connectedness [or Not]: Cable, Blogs and YouTube” and Chp. 5: “Connecting and Disconnecting on the Social Media Frontier”
- Sherry Turkle, “Alone Together”
(http://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together)

*** *(Take-Home Mid-Term Exam Due)*

Feb. 18th: Reading Break

Feb.25th: Journalism in the Data Storm: “Fake News” and Real Politics
Readings:
Reading: James Tully, ‘Communication and Imperialism,’
(http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=508)

Reference:
D. Taras, Chp.6, “The Future of Newspapers and Conventional Broadcasting,”
Chp.7, “The Ever-Shrinking World of Public Broadcasting

March 3d: Investigative Journalism Today: The Politics of Truth, Power and Violence (Against Journalists)
Readings: D. Taras, Chp.9, “Finding Citizenship in the Digital Mosaic,”

1. Internal Consortium of Investigative Journalists (https://www.icij.org)
2. The Surveillance Society (interview with Edward Snowden),
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yB3n9fu-rM
3. Edward Greenwald, Adversarial Journalism, *The Intercept*
https://theintercept.com/
4. Laura Poitras, Critical Journalism,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Poitras

March 10th:
Readings:
March 10th: The Real World of Connectivity: The Internet as “Playground and Factory”  

***Note: Research Paper Due***

March 17th: Digital Democracy and the “Information Bomb”  

March 24th: Pirate Media: Fast Data and the “Attention Economy”  
**Readings:** Astra Taylor, The People’s Platform, Chp. 5, “The Double Anchor” & Chp.6, “Drawing A Line”

***Note: Take-Home Final Exam***

March 31st: Communication and Politics: Key Trajectories in the 21st Century

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**PERCENTAGE GRADING SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The percentage grading scale applies to all Faculties at the University of Victoria.
2. The percentage grades should be associated with a letter grading schema.
3. A percentage grade for an N grade should be assigned in the following manner:
   **N GRADE**: If a student has not completed the exam, or has not completed the course requirements, but has submitted course requirements that total more than 49% of the total grade for a course, an instructor will assign a percentage grade of 49%.

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

**The responsibility of the institution** - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

**The responsibility of the student** - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: [http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

**Course Evaluation:**
Your feedback on this course would be very much appreciated. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to [http://ces.uvic.ca](http://ces.uvic.ca). You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.
1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved