

PSC 1000: POLITICS OF INFORMATION

Fall 2025 | Tuesday 3.30 pm - 6.00 pm | TOMP 310

Department of Political Science

George Washington University

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Office Hours Thursday, 2.00 pm - 4.00pm via [Zoom](#), or by appointment

Course Description

Information has become a cornerstone of politics, frequently referred to as the “new oil”, a strategic resource leveraged by states, companies, and citizens to achieve their goals. While this has been true for centuries, the widespread prevalence of global information networks and digital technologies, including social media and artificial intelligence, has amplified its importance. How does information shape political behavior, governance, and global power? How do digital technologies change opportunities and risks in the political arena?

This course explores these questions by examining the intersection of information, technology, and politics. We will analyze how information is created, disseminated, and controlled in various political contexts and investigate the challenges posed by disinformation, polarization, digital surveillance, and artificial intelligence. Drawing on academic articles, journalistic pieces, and global examples, we will examine how these phenomena impact public opinion, democracy, and global governance. Additionally, we will explore whether and how these challenges can be addressed.

This course is divided into four parts. **Part I** introduces key concepts and historical developments in the study of information and politics. **Part II** examines the rise of social media and its political consequences. **Part III** focuses on key contemporary challenges and debates that define digital technology, including surveillance, information warfare, and polarization. Finally, **Part IV** explores the political, economic, and societal implications of artificial intelligence.

As a Dean’s Seminar, this seminar-style course emphasizes active student engagement through discussion and debate. It encourages critical and analytical thinking about the challenges of information and communication in the context of digital technologies. This course fulfills the criteria for the GPAC “Critical Thinking” designation.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the role of information in politics and explain how information can influence political behavior, policy making, and governance;
2. Evaluate how digital technologies, like social media and artificial intelligence, impact political institutions, groups, and processes;
3. Understand the global dimensions of information technology and how it is created, disseminated, and controlled across the world;

4. Develop well-reasoned arguments and solutions to contemporary challenges of politics of information;
5. Produce clear and critical writing suitable for both scholarly and general audiences;
6. Work in groups to analyze information-related issues and present findings.

In fulfillment of the criteria for the **GPAC “Critical Thinking” designation**, this course will provide students the opportunity to:

1. Analyze and evaluate complex information;
2. Analyze scholarly literature, in particular its theoretical orientation and sources of support;
3. Formulate an argument based on the analysis of that scholarly literature and/or data.

Credit Hours

This is an in-person 3-credit class. Over 15 weeks, students are expected to spend 2.5 hours per week of direct instruction and 5 hours of independent learning on average.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All course materials are available on Blackboard.

Assignments

There are five components to the final grade in this course:

1. **Attendance (5%) and Participation (15%).** Attendance is compulsory and I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Students are expected to show up on time for all classes. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty and no explanation needed. Additional unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up by consulting classmates and keeping up with the readings. Excused absences (e.g., illness, family emergencies) must be communicated to me in advance and documented with a note. See below for university policies on religious holidays.

Participation goes beyond merely attending class. Students are expected to come prepared to engage in discussions, ask and answer questions, and contribute to group activities. Thoughtful participation demonstrates that you have completed and reflected on the readings, and it fosters a rich exchange of ideas in class. Since each student brings unique perspectives, your contributions are vital to creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Participation will be assessed by both the frequency and the quality of students' contributions. If you have concerns about participating in discussions, please contact me during the first week of the semester.

2. **Memos (15%; 3 x 5%).** Throughout the semester, each student will submit three reflection memos, each worth 5% of the final grade. These memos are designed to help you engage deeply with the readings, practice summarizing arguments, and prepare for class discussions by providing questions to guide your classmates. Students will sign up for memo weeks at the start of the semester. During their assigned week, students will act as discussion leaders by briefly presenting their reflections and facilitating class dialogue. Each memo must (1) be submitted on time (by **11:59 PM the day before class**), (2) summarize the key arguments across the assigned readings with attention to common themes or tensions, and (3) include at least three well-thought-out discussion questions

to spark class conversation. Memos will be graded based on the quality of the synthesis and the originality and relevance of the discussion questions.

Memos should be approximately 500 words (or about two double-spaced pages), using 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Late memos will lose approximately 3–4 points (or one-third of a letter grade) for every 24-hour period past the deadline (e.g., a 95 becomes a 91 after one day, an 88 after two days, etc.). Extensions may be granted in advance.

3. **Reflection Essay (15%).** Students will submit a reflective essay that invites them to apply core concepts covered in class to their personal experiences. Over the past two decades, digital media has transformed how people engage with politics, whether through online activism, news consumption, or political discussions on social media platforms.

For this essay, you will reflect on how digital media has shaped your own political behavior or engagement. For example, you might discuss: (a) how you have encountered political information or misinformation on social media; (b) a moment when digital activism (e.g., hashtag movements, online petitions) influenced your views or actions; or (c) how your political conversations with peers online have differed from those offline. Alternatively, if you feel you have not personally engaged much with digital media in a political context, you may instead focus on how digital media has shaped political behavior in a community or group you belong to or have observed, such as your campus, family, or friend groups.

Essays should be approximately 1,000 words (about 3–4 double-spaced pages), using 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Essays that fall outside a 20% range of the expected word count (i.e., under 800 or over 1,200 words) may be penalized unless approved in advance. The essay is due by **11:59 PM on Sunday at the end of Week 5 (09/28)**. Late submissions will be subject to the same penalty policy outlined above (one-third of a letter grade deducted for each 24-hour period past the deadline, unless an extension has been approved in advance).

4. **Group Work and Presentation (15%).** In this assignment, you will work in groups of 3–4 students to analyze a major current event. This could be a recent political development, a global crisis, a social movement, or a high-profile controversy.

Your group's task is to:

- Select a current event that has received significant media attention;
- Compare and contrast how the event is covered by at least three different news outlets, ideally representing diverse political or geographic perspectives;
- Identify key narratives, points of emphasis, and frames used by each outlet;
- Analyze what might account for these differences (e.g., outlet ideology, ownership, audience, national context);
- Reflect on how these media framings may shape public opinion or political behavior.

You will submit a short group report of approximately 1,000 words (about 3–4 double-spaced pages, using 12-point Times New Roman and one-inch margins) and give an 8–10 minute in-class presentation summarizing your findings. All group members are expected to contribute to both the written report and the presentation.

Grades for this assignment will be based on two components: (1) A shared group grade evaluating the content, clarity, and depth of the report and presentation; (2) Peer evaluations that assess each member's contribution to the project. Your final individual grade may be adjusted based on this feedback.

The group report is due at **the time of your in-class presentation during Week 10 (10/28)**. Each group will present their findings in class that week and submit their written report on the same day. No extensions will be granted, as this assignment involves scheduled presentations and group coordination. Plan ahead.

5. **Final Project (35%)**. A major part of the course will be spent introducing, discussing, and analyzing contemporary challenges related to the rise of digital media and solutions to them. For this final project, each student will select a problem, either one discussed in class or another relevant issue, that illustrates how information and communication technologies shape political behavior, institutions, or discourse today.

You are encouraged to think critically and creatively about potential solutions. Your project should combine analytical depth with practical recommendations, drawing on course concepts, empirical evidence, and real-world examples.

The assignment is worth 35% of the final grade and will be completed in three parts:

- **Part I: Proposal (5%)**. Submit a proposal of approximately 500-word (about one double-spaced page, using 12-point Times New Roman and one-inch margins) outlining your chosen issue, explaining its significance, and describing how you plan to approach it. This is an opportunity to clarify your focus early and receive instructor feedback. The proposal will be graded on a pass/fail basis and is due by **11:59 PM on Sunday of Week 8 (10/19)**.
- **Part II: In Class Presentation (10%)**. During the **last week of the semester (12/02)**, you will deliver a 7-8 minute presentation summarizing your project. This is a chance to present your core findings and proposed solutions, while incorporating feedback from your peers and the instructor ahead of the final paper submission. No extensions will be granted for in-class presentations.
- **Part III: Final Draft (20%)**. The final paper is due by **11:59 PM on 12/14** and should be approximately 2,000 words (about 6–8 pages), double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. Papers that fall outside a 10% range of the expected word count (i.e., under 1,800 or over 2,200 words) may be penalized unless approved in advance. This paper should provide a detailed analysis of your chosen issue, incorporate relevant research and course material, and propose thoughtful, well-supported solutions. Your final draft should reflect feedback from your presentation. Late submissions will be subject to the same penalty policy outlined above (one-third of a letter grade deducted for each 24-hour period past the deadline). Extensions must be requested in advance and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, given the end-of-semester timeline.

Assignment Type	Percentage	Due Date
Attendance	5%	Ongoing
Participation	15%	Ongoing
Memos (x3)	15% (3 x 5%)	Sign up sheet
Reflection Essay	15%	09/28, 11:59 PM
Group Project	15%	10/28, 3:30 PM
Final Project	35%	
Proposal	5%	10/19, 11:59 PM
Presentation	10%	12/02, 3:30 PM
Final Paper	20%	12/14, 11:59 PM

Table 1: Course Assignments and Deadlines

You will receive numerical grades on all your work unless stated otherwise. Your final grade is calculated according to the weights listed above. At the end of the semester, I round up your final grade to the nearest whole number, according to the rounding rules described below. The correspondence between numerical and letter grades is as follows:

- 97-100 = A+ (96.5-100)
- 94-96 = A (93.5-96.4)
- 90-93 = A- (89.5-93.4)
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 64-66 = D
- 60-63 = D- (59.5 rounds up to D-)
- 59.4 and below = F

Grades reflect the extent to which you demonstrate your understanding of course material through assignments. To ensure fairness and transparency, I do not adjust the grading scale on an individual basis. If you wish to contest a grade, you must prepare a brief written memo outlining the substantive reasons why you believe a higher grade is warranted. Then, email me to schedule a time to discuss your concerns.

Week-by-Week Overview

Week 1 (08/26)	.....	Course Introduction: What is the Politics of Information?
Week 2 (09/02)	.....	Traditional Media and Politics
Week 3 (09/09)	.....	Internet and Global Information Networks
Week 4 (09/16)	.....	Social Media: Opportunities and Risks
Week 5 (09/23)	.....	Social Media: Political Participation, Mobilization, Protests
Week 6 (09/30)	.....	Platform Power: Data, Surveillance, Freedom of Speech
Week 7 (10/07)	.....	Mis/disinformation, Fake News, Conspiracy Theories
Week 8 (10/14)	.....	Polarization, Echo Chambers, Radicalization
Week 9 (10/21)	.....	Digital Authoritarianism: At Home and Export
Week 10 (10/28)	.....	Information Warfare and Foreign Influence Operations
Week 11 (11/04)	.....	Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
Week 12 (11/11)	.....	Economic and Societal Implications of AI
Week 13 (11/18)	.....	Political Implication of AI: Democracy, Geopolitics, Governance
Week 14 (11/25)	.....	THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS
Week 15 (12/02)	.....	Wrap-up and Final Presentations

Course Schedule and Readings

This is a preliminary schedule and is subject to change.

Part I: Introduction

Week 1 (08/26): Course Introduction: What is the Politics of Information?

- Syllabus
- Keohane, Robert and Joseph S. Nye. "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age." *Foreign Affairs* (1998). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1998-09-01/power-and-interdependence-information-age>
- Rosenbach, Eric and Katherine Mansted. "The Geopolitics of Information." Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, May 28, 2019. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/geopolitics-information>

Week 2 (09/02): Traditional Media and Politics

- Grossman, Emiliano. "Media and policy making in the digital age." *Annual Review of Political Science* 25, no. 1 (2022): 443-461. <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-103422>
- Moy, Patricia, David Tewksbury, and Eike Mark Rinke. "Agenda-setting, priming, and framing." *The international encyclopedia of communication theory and philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1-13.
- Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis. "Economic contexts of journalism." In *The handbook of journalism studies*, pp. 324-340. Routledge, 2019. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315167497-21/economic-contexts-journalism-rasmus-kleis-nielsen>
- Groeling, Tim. "Media bias by the numbers: Challenges and opportunities in the empirical study of partisan news." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16, no. 1 (2013): 129-151. <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-040811-115123>

Week 3 (09/09): Internet and Global Information Networks

- Naughton, John. "The Evolution of the Internet: From Military Experiment to General Purpose Technology." *Journal of Cyber Policy* Vol.1, No.1, pp.5-28. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23738871.2016.1157619>
- Farrell, Henry, and Abraham Newman. "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion." *International Security*, Vol. 44, No.1:42-79, 2019. <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/44/1/42/12237/Weaponized-Interdependence-How-Global-Economic>
- Farrell, Henry. "The consequences of the internet for politics." *Annual review of political science* 15, no. 1 (2012): 35-52. <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-030810-110815>

- Ferguson, Niall. “The False Prophecy of Hyperconnection.” *Foreign Affairs*. September/October 2017. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/false-prophecy-hyperconnection>

Part II: Social Media Foundations

Week 4 (09/16): Social Media: Opportunities and Risks

- McLuhan, Marshall. “The Medium is the Message”. In *Communication theory*, pp. 390-402. Routledge, 2017. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315080918-31/medium-message-marshall-mcluhan>
- Diamond, Larry. 2010. “Liberation Technology.” *Journal of Democracy* 21 (3): 69-83. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/liberation-technology/>
- Tucker, Joshua A., Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá. “From liberation to turmoil: Social media and democracy.” *Journal of democracy* 28, no. 4 (2017): 46-59. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/from-liberation-to-turmoil-social-media-and-democracy/>
- Van Dijck, José, and Thomas Poell. “Understanding social media logic.” *Media and communication* 1, no. 1 (2013): 2-14. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2309065
- Gruet, Sam, and Megan Lawton. “What is rage-baiting and why is it profitable?” BBC. December 9, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gp555xy5ro>

Week 5 (09/23): Social Media: Political Participation, Mobilization, Protests

REFLECTION ESSAY DUE (15%) by 11:59 PM, 09/28

- Hersh, Eitan. “Politics is for Power, Not Consumption.” *Boston Review*. November 4, 2019. <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/eitan-hersh-politics-power/>
- Howard, Philip N., and Muzammil M. Hussain. “The upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The role of digital media.” *Journal of democracy* 22, no. 3 (2011): 35-48. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-upheavals-in-egypt-and-tunisia-the-role-of-digital-media/>
- Mundt, Marcia, Karen Ross, and Charla M. Burnett. “Scaling social movements through social media: The case of Black Lives Matter.” *Social media+ society* 4, no. 4 (2018): 2056305118807911. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2056305118807911>
- Gladwell, Malcolm. “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted.” *New Yorker* October 4, 2010. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell>

Part III: Digital Media and Contemporary Issues

Week 6 (09/30): Platform Power: Data, Surveillance, and Free Speech

- Zuboff, Shoshana. “The age of surveillance capitalism.” In *Social theory re-wired*, pp. 203-213. Routledge, 2023.
- Fukuyama, Francis, Barak Richman, and Anish Goel. “How to Save Democracy from Technology: Ending Big Tech’s Information Monopoly”. *Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-11-24/fukuyama-how-save-democracy-technology>
- Maréchal, Nathalie. “The Future of Platform Power: Fixing The Business Model.” *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2021): 157-162. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2021.0041>.
- Riemer, Kai, and Sandra Peter. “Algorithmic audiencing: Why we need to rethink free speech on social media.” *Journal of Information Technology* 36, no. 4 (2021): 409-426. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02683962211013358>
- Tufekci, Zeynep. “It’s the (democracy-poisoning) golden age of free speech.” *Wired* 16, no. 01 (2018): 2018. <https://www.wired.com/story/free-speech-issue-tech-turmoil-new-censorship/>

Week 7 (10/07): Mis/disinformation, Fake News, Conspiracy Theories

- Freelon, Deen, and Chris Wells. “Disinformation as political communication.” *Political communication* 37, no. 2 (2020): 145-156. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584609.2020.1723755>
- Lazer, David MJ, Matthew A. Baum, Yochai Benkler, Adam J. Berinsky, Kelly M. Greenhill, Filippo Menczer, Miriam J. Metzger et al. “The science of fake news.” *Science* 359, no. 6380 (2018): 1094-1096. <https://www.science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.aao2998>
- Guess, Andrew M., Dominique Lockett, Benjamin Lyons, Jacob M. Montgomery, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. “Fake news’ may have limited effects beyond increasing beliefs in false claims.” (2020). <https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/fake-news-limited-effects-on-political-participation/>
- Radnitz, Scott. “Why democracy fuels conspiracy theories.” *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 2 (2022): 147-161. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/852751>
- Kozyreva, Anastasia, Philipp Lorenz-Spreen, Stefan M. Herzog, Ullrich KH Ecker, Stephan Lewandowsky, Ralph Hertwig, Ayesha Ali et al. “Toolbox of individual-level interventions against online misinformation.” *Nature Human Behaviour* (2024): 1-9. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-024-01881-0>

Week 8 (10/14): Polarization, Echo Chambers, and Radicalization

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE (5%) by 11:59 PM, 10/19

- Settle, Jaime E. “Chapter 1: A Fundamental Change in Political Communication.” *Frenemies: How Social Media polarizes America*. 2019. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/frenemies/fundamental-change-in-political-communication/96DA46AFD75DDEF1DAAE110B24C3EBD9>

- Guess, Andrew, Brendan Nyhan, Benjamin Lyons, and Jason Reifler. “Avoiding the echo chamber about echo chambers.” Knight Foundation 2, no. 1 (2018): 1-25. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media_elements/files/000/000/133/original/Topos_KF_White-Paper_Nyhan_V1.pdf
- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. “America’s Epidemic of Hate: Stopping Mass Shootings Requires Combating Online Extremism”. Foreign Affairs. July 8, 2022. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2022-07-08/americas-epidemic-hate>
- Shaw, Aaron. ”Social media, extremism, and radicalization.” Science advances 9, no. 35 (2023): eadk2031. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10468141/>

Week 9 (10/21): Digital Authoritarianism: At Home and Export

- Rosenfeld, Bryn, and Jeremy Wallace. “Information Politics and Propaganda in Authoritarian Societies.” Annual Review of Political Science 27 (2024). <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-035951>
- Antoniuk, Daryna. “Russia wants to isolate its internet, but experts warn it won’t be easy.” The Record. October 17, 2023. <https://therecord.media/russia-internet-isolation-challenges>
- Yang, Zeyi. “China Just Announced a New Social Credit Law. Here’s What it Means.” MIT Technology Review. November 22, 2022. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/11/22/1063605/china-announced-a-new-social-credit-law-what-does-it-mean/>
- Polyakova, Alina, and Chris Meserole. “Exporting digital authoritarianism: The Russian and Chinese models.” Policy brief, democracy and disorder series (2019): 1-22. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FP_20190827_digital_authoritarianism_polyakova_meserole.pdf
- Mozur, Paul, Jonah M. Kessel and Melissa Chan. “Made in China, Exported to the World: The Surveillance State.” The New York Times. April 24, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/24/technology/ecuador-surveillance-cameras-police-government.html>

Week 10 (10/28): Information Warfare and Foreign Influence Operations

GROUP PROJECT DUE (15%) by 3:30 PM, 10/28

- Singer, Peter W., and Emerson T. Brooking. “What Clausewitz can teach us about war on social media.” Foreign Affairs. October 4, 2018. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/what-clausewitz-can-teach-us-about-war-social-media?check_logged_in=1
- Shedd, David R., and Ivana Stradner. “The Covert War for American Minds.” Foreign Affairs. October 29, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/covert-war-american-minds>

- Ehl, David, and Monir Ghaedi. “Russian Propaganda: How Moscow Uses Disinformation in Africa.” Deutsche Welle. February 3, 2024. <https://www.dw.com/en/how-russias-propaganda-machine-sows-disinformation-in-africa/a-71453082>
- Belogolova, Olga, Lee Foster, Thomas Rid, and Gavin Wilde. “Don’t Hype the Disinformation Threat”. Foreign Affairs. May 3, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/dont-hype-disinformation-threat>
- Singer, Peter W., and Emerson T. Brooking. “Gaza and the Future of Information Warfare.” Foreign Affairs. December 3, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/gaza-and-future-information-warfare>

Part IV: Emerging Technologies and the Future of Information

Week 11 (11/04): Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence

- Brown, Sara. “Machine Learning, explained”. MIT Sloan School of Management. April 21, 2021. <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/machine-learning-explained>
- “What is AI (artificial intelligence)?” McKinsey & Company. April 2024. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-ai#/>
- Harris, Tristan, and Aza Raskin. “The AI dilemma”. Center for Humane Technology. March 9, 2023. <https://www.humanetech.com/podcast/the-ai-dilemma>
- Crockett, Julian, Alison Gopnik and Melanie Mitchell, “How to Raise Your Artificial Intelligence: A Conversation with Alison Gopnik and Melanie Mitchell,” LA Review of Books, May 31, 2024. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/how-to-raise-your-artificial-intelligence-a-conversation-with-alison-gopnik-and-melanie-mitchell/>
- Christian, Brian. “Chapter One: Representation.” The Alignment Problem: Machine Learning and Human Values. Norton 2020.
- Green, Yasmin and Gillian Tett. “AI and the Trust Revolution”. Foreign Affairs. July 7, 2025. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/artificial-intelligence-and-trust-revolution-technology-transforming-human-connections>

Week 12 (11/11): Economic and Societal Implications of AI

- Bell, Stephanie A., and Anton Korinek. “AI’s Economic Peril.” Journal of Democracy 34, no. 4 (2023): 151-161. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a907696>.
- Rotman, David. “People are worried that AI will take everyone’s jobs. We’ve been here before.” MIT Technology Review. January 27, 2024. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/01/27/1087041/technological-unemployment-elon-musk-jobs-ai/>

- Davenport, Thomas, and Steven Miller. “What Machines Can’t Do (Yet) in Real Work Settings”. MIT Sloan Management Review. October 5, 2022. <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/what-machines-cant-do-yet-in-real-work-settings/>
- Lee, Turner Nicol, Paul Resnick, and Genie Barton. “Algorithmic Bias Detection and Mitigation: Best Practices and Policies to Reduce Consumer Harm”. May 22, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/algorithmic-bias-detection-and-mitigation-best-practices-and-policies-to-reduce-consumer-harms/>
- Miller, Jennifer. “Is an Algorithm Less Racist than a Loan Officer?” The New York Times. September 18, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/18/business/digital-mortgages.html>
- Hill, Kashmir. “Wrongfully Accused by an Algorithm” The New York Times. June 24, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/technology/facial-recognition-arrest.html>

Week 13 (11/18): Political Implications of AI: Democracy, Geopolitics, Governance

- Kreps, Sarah, and Doug Kriner. “How AI threatens democracy.” Journal of Democracy 34, no. 4 (2023): 122-131. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/how-ai-threatens-democracy/>
- Ovadya, Aviv. “Reimagining Democracy for AI.” Journal of Democracy 34, no. 4 (2023): 162-170. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/reimagining-democracy-for-ai/>
- Farrell, Henry, Abraham Newman, and Jeremy Wallace, “Spirals of Delusion: How AI Distorts Decision-Making and Makes Dictators More Dangerous,” Foreign Affairs (September/October 2022). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/spirals-delusion-artificial-intelligence-decision-making>
- Asaro, Peter. “What is an ‘Artificial Intelligence Arms Race’ Anyway?” I/S, Vol. 15, 1-2, pp. 45-64. <https://kb.osu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/6299522a-93fd-446a-a8fa-0128ddf8e5bd/content>
- Ding, Jeffrey. “The Innovation Fallacy: In the U.S.-Chinese Tech Race, Diffusion Matters More than Invention”. Foreign Affairs. August 19, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/innovation-fallacy-artificial-intelligence>
- Stanger, Allison, Jakub Kraus, Woojin Lim, Georgia Millman-Perlah, and Mitchell Schroeder. “Terra Incognita: The Governance of Artificial Intelligence in Global Perspective.” Annual Review of Political Science 27 (2024). <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-042247>

Week 14 (11/25): THANKSGIVING BREAK — NO CLASS

Week 15 (12/02): Wrap-up and Final Presentations

FINAL PRESENTATION DUE (10%) by 3:30 PM, 12/02

Finals Week

FINAL PROJECTS DUE (20%) by 11:59 PM, 12/14

University Policies

- **Academic Integrity Code:** Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the Code of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions about whether particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact Conflict Education and Student Accountability (CESA), formerly known as Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR), to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University and may include a transcript notation. For more information, refer to the CESA website at students.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity or contact CESA by email cesa@gwu.edu or phone 202-994-6757.
- **University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays:** Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.
- **Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings:** Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.
- **AI Policy:** We are entering a new technological era with the rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT and other large language models, that are driving an ongoing conversation about their academic uses. We are also learning about the potential benefits and misuse of AI and how it can be applied in the classroom. Learning to use generative AI is an emerging skill, however, we must use generative AI tools effectively and responsibly. Below I have outlined the expectations in our classroom of its permitted and prohibited use.

Permitted:

- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and reviews the generated content to help them study (i.e., a study guide)
- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them brainstorm ideas for a term paper or research project
- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them create a citation for a source and/or reference list

- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them with small group discussion

Prohibited:

- Copying and pasting all or part of generated content without proper attribution to the GAI tool. If you copy anything from a generative AI tool, you absolutely must cite it. Otherwise, this is in direct violation of the honor code Code of Academic Integrity.
- While taking an out-of-class (“take-home”) or an in-class quiz, a student types a prompt into a generative AI tool and incorporates some or all of the generated content into their submitted answer.

Be aware of the limits of GAI:

- Generative AI is a tool, but you need to cite it when you use it. Always. No exception. And you are prohibited from using it as stated above.
- It may stifle your own independent thinking, creativity, and understanding of class concepts. Minimum effort into both generative AI prompts and your assignments will produce low quality results. Effectively and correctly using AI in academic work takes time and effort.
- Don’t trust anything or everything AI says. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check it with another non-AI source. This is an opportunity for you to practice your critical analysis skills. As noted above, you will be responsible for any errors of omissions provided by the tool.
- AI tools are based on data that can include biases and reflect historical or social inequities and thus the AI tool can replicate those biases and inequities. Be aware that it can also produce problematic and potentially offensive answers.

Citing GAI and Verifying its Accuracy: By submitting work for evaluation in this course, you represent it as your own intellectual product. If you include content (e.g., ideas, text, code, images) that was generated, in whole or in part, by generative AI tools (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and other large language models) in work submitted for evaluation in this course, you must document and credit your source. Material generated using other tools should be cited accordingly. If you include material generated by a generative AI tool and it is substantively incorrect you will lose points as appropriate. You should verify the accuracy of all content you include in your work.

Sample citation: “ChatGPT-4. (YYYY, Month DD of query). ‘Text of your query.’ Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>. “ChatGPT-4 (2023, August 9) ‘What is a pressing policy issue in the District of Columbia?’ Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>.”

Academic Support

- **Academic Commons:** Academic Commons is the central location for academic support resources for GW students. To schedule a peer tutoring session for a variety of courses visit go.gwu.edu/tutoring. Visit academiccommons.gwu.edu for study skills tips, finding help with research, and connecting with other campus resources. For questions email academiccommons@gwu.edu

- **GW Writing Center:** GW Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at gwu.mywconline.net.

Support for Students in and outside of the Classroom

- **Disability Support Services (DSS), 202-994-8250:** Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.
- **Student Health Center (SHC), 202-994-5300, 24/7:** The Student Health Center (SHC) offers medical, counseling/psychological, and psychiatric services to GW students. More information about the SHC is available at healthcenter.gwu.edu. Students experiencing a medical or mental health emergency on campus should contact GW Emergency Services at 202-994-6111, or off campus at 911.

GW Campus Emergency Information

- GW Emergency Services: 202-994-6111
- For situation-specific instructions, refer to GW's Emergency Procedures guide.
- **GW Alert:** GW Alert is an emergency notification system that sends alerts to the GW community. GW requests students, faculty, and staff maintain current contact information by logging on to alert.gwu.edu. Alerts are sent via email, text, social media, and other means, including the Guardian app. The Guardian app is a safety app that allows you to communicate quickly with GW Emergency Services, 911, and other resources. Learn more at safety.gwu.edu.
- **Protective Actions:** GW prescribes four protective actions that can be issued by university officials depending on the type of emergency. All GW community members are expected to follow directions according to the specified protective action. The protective actions are Shelter, Evacuate, Secure, and Lockdown (details below). Learn more at safety.gwu.edu/gw-standard-emergency-statuses.

1. Shelter

- Protection from a specific hazard
- The hazard could be a tornado, earthquake, hazardous material spill, or other environmental emergency
- Specific safety guidance will be shared on a case-by-case basis
- *Action:*
 - * Follow safety guidance for the hazard

2. Evacuate

- Need to move people from one location to another
- Students and staff should be prepared to follow specific instructions given by first responders and University officials

- *Action:*
 - * Evacuate to a designated location
 - * Leave belongings behind
 - * Follow additional instructions from first responders

3. Secure

- Threat or hazard outside of buildings or around campus
- Increased security, secured building perimeter, increased situational awareness, and restricted access to entry doors
- *Action:*
 - * Go inside and stay inside
 - * Activities inside may continue

4. Lockdown

- Threat or hazard with the potential to impact individuals inside buildings
- Room-based protocol that requires locking interior doors, turning off lights, and staying out of sight of corridor window
- *Action:*
 - * Locks, lights, out of sight
 - * Consider Run, Hide, Fight
- **Classroom emergency lockdown buttons:** Some classrooms have been equipped with classroom emergency lockdown buttons. If the button is pushed, GWorld Card access to the room will be disabled, and GW Dispatch will be alerted. The door must be manually closed if it is not closed when the button is pushed. Anyone in the classroom will be able to exit, but no one will be able to get in.