

ICSXXX: Theories of a Digital Democracy

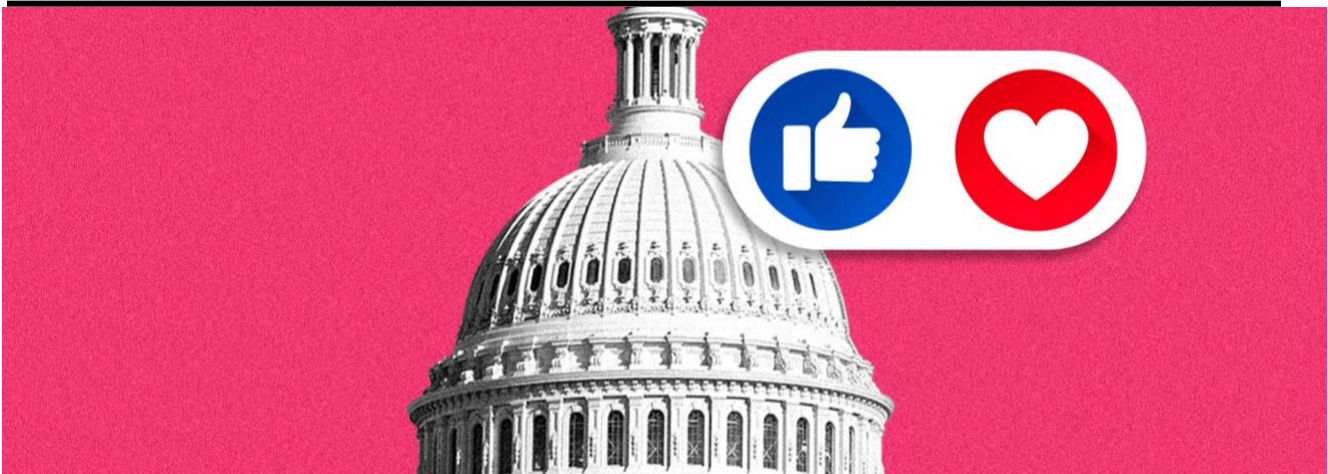


Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

Instructor	<i>Samantha (Sam) McDonald</i>
E-mail	<i>smcdona2@uci.edu</i>
Class Information	<i>Summer Quarter 2019</i>
Section #	X
Office Hours	By Appointment
Website	www.XX.uci.edu

Introduction

Welcome to ICSXXX. Every single one of us is affected by the rules, laws, and processes of government. As citizens, we have civic rights and responsibilities to our government, as well as the freedom to openly debate and engage with government officials and other citizens. Our civic interactions with both government and others is becoming increasingly digital, and governments have become primary developers and consumers of computer systems that are critical to their functionality.

This class will be an introductory exploration of how information technology transforms the processes of government and civic engagement. By the end of this class, you will have a basic understanding of theories in digital democracy and e-government and translate that knowledge to real world scenarios where information technology has played important roles in both government processes and civic engagement. You will produce a final project which will require you to civically engage in an activity and translate knowledge learned in class to that engagement.

Prerequisites

Upper level ICS Course.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand and describe theories of digital democracy.
2. To critically investigate real world examples of digital democracy and identify opportunities and limitations of technology's influence.
3. Utilized theories learned to complete a final project where students will engage with a civic or e-government system or develop an idea for their own.

Book/Literature

Purchasing literature is not required for this course. I will provide digitally scanned sections of all the readings you need on the class website. Some of the readings you will expect are:

1. *Tufekci, Zeynep. Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest. Yale University Press, 2017.*
2. *Hindman, Matthew. The myth of digital democracy. Princeton University Press, 2008.*
3. *Bimber, B. (2003). Information and American democracy: Technology in the evolution of political power. Cambridge University Press.*
4. *Sunstein, C. R. (2018). # Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media. Princeton University Press.*

How to Succeed

In this course I want our discussions and in-class activities to be longer than my lectures. Thus, active class interaction is critical. I have selected a number of readings that will stimulate this discussion. Students are expected to take the time to read thoroughly and with a critical perspective. I expect you to come into class with a series of questions or comments about the readings. A successful student will complete the readings, participate appropriately in class discussions and activities, and complete the final project.

Note of Class Material

Civics and government are obviously very large and complex topics. It would take years to fully understand the complexities of these topics, let alone the basics in one course! I will do my best to provide a baseline education on civics and government, so all students have equal knowledge for discussing civics and government with their expertise in information technology.

Although we exist in an extremely complex and global society that is affected by many different forms of government, the examples and final project will focus on the U.S. government. You are HIGHLY encouraged to provide your own insights and experience with other forms of government.

EEE/Canvas

All readings will be located on the class website. Any updates on the syllabus will be notified to students with an updated copy available on the class website. Make sure you are checking your email regularly for any readings or syllabus updates made on the EEE website.

Assignments

Weekly Reading: Before class there will be a series of pre-readings. I expect you to come into class with questions and critical thoughts about those readings.

In-Class Participation: In class participation through discussions and active learning task is required. There will be a variety of different participation options available to accommodate students.

Reading Quizzes: Quizzes will be used to take attendance and guarantee pre-readings were completed.

Final Project

The final project will be used to tie in all the theories and real-world examples discussed in class and translate them into one tangible project. Students will have three options for their final project. They will either...

[1] Write a report based on an interview with a government or advocacy official about their use of technology in their job.

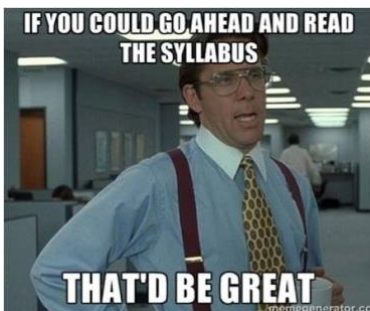
[2] Critically analyze an existing platform for civic engagement (ex. Facebook Town Halls, Countable.io, Indivisible, etc.).

[3] Develop an idea for their own platform for civic engagement. Can be designed for either citizens, government, or both.

A more detailed list of requirements for each option will be provided on the Canvas website under the document titled "ICSXXX_Final_Project_Description_Rubri.docx".

Due to the short time period, you are expected to be actively developing your project during the beginning of this course. The project options were designed to allow students to start working on them immediately and add on to their report as they acquire more information throughout the course.

How to Properly Contact Me



Students can email me their concerns at smcdona2@uci.edu. Office Hours are upon request to accommodate different student schedules. Please be professional. For the quickest response, I suggest putting the course code, your name, and email topic in the email header.

DO NOT: Expect me to return an email in less than 24 hours.

DO NOT: Email me about content that is on the syllabus. Such emails will be responded with a gif reminding you to read the syllabus.

Academic Dishonesty

The consequences of academic dishonesty (e.g., course failure and not learning the material) are not worth the small artificial benefits to your grade. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, it is always better to ask than to guess. The office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct states:

Learning, research, and scholarship depend upon an environment of academic integrity and honesty. This environment can be maintained only when all participants recognize the importance of upholding the highest ethical standards. All student work, including quizzes, exams, reports, and papers must be the work of the individual receiving credit. Academic dishonesty includes, for example, cheating on examinations or any assignment, plagiarism of any kind (including improper citation of sources), having someone else take an examination or complete an assignment for you (or doing this for someone else), or any activity in which you represent someone else's work as your own. Violations of academic integrity will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct. The impact on your grade will be determined by the individual instructor's policies. Please familiarize yourself with UCI's Academic Integrity Policy (<https://aisc.uci.edu/policies/academic-integrity/index.php>) and speak to your instructor if you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course.

Attendance and Tardiness

Because this is a very short summer class, attendance is mandatory for this course. We have limited time to get through all the information and it is important to attend and engage in class. Tardiness will be excused under teacher's discretion. Absences will be excused for emergencies and other situations with an excused absence signed by a university official.

Disability Services

I want to make this course as accessible as possible. If you have any concerns about your ability to attend class, understand material, or access resources please do not hesitate to tell me. Additional accommodations for students eligible for disability services are also available upon request. Please contact me and the Disability Services Center (DSC) for more information.

Respecting Other Students

I have provided literature and real-world examples from a variety of sources and political backgrounds. The focus of this class is not on politics but on the real-world power of information technology on all parts of government. Thus, it is essential all students respect the political opinions of other and make this a welcoming space to debate and discuss different political topics our world faces. Bigotry of any kind will not be tolerated.

Grading

Class Participation 6 points per class	30pts
Reading Quizzes 6 points per class	30pts
Final Project	40pts
Total Points	100

Scale

Include the point/percentage breakdown for your course. This is a good place to state any curving/rounding policies, as well as any extra credit opportunities.

A	<u>100-90</u>
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	<60%

Schedule/Readings

Date	Lecture	Topic	Readings
WEEK 1	What is Civics and Democracy?	Basics of Civic Education, Democracy, and E-Government	-
WEEK 2	Theories of Digital Democracy?	Basics of Digital Democracy Theories	Excerpts From Bimber and Sunstein
WEEK 3	Social Media Week	Applying Theories to Social Media	Excerpts Tufecki
WEEK 4	Government Technology Week	Applying Theories to E-government	E-Gov Papers
WEEK 5	Final Project Presentation	Class Final Project Presentations And Final Discussion	-