1 Course description:

Digital technology has enabled challenges to various societal institutions. These challenges emerge on the organizational and normative level of institutions. For instance, on the organizational level, we are witnessing challenges to media organizations or established political parties. While on the normative level, we witness challenges to the goals and actual workings of institutions along the lines of social justice and political representation. Some of these challenges promise a reinvigoration and strengthening of democratic participation and representation, while some aim at a restriction of participatory rights and political representation to specific groups.

In this course, we investigate various digitally enabled challenges to important societal institutions, such as journalism or political parties.

Please address your questions regarding entering the course to Mrs. Silke Raffel (silke.raffel@uni-bamberg.de).
Learning objectives:

• Advanced understanding of concepts, theories, causal relationships and methods relevant to the discussion and the investigation of digitally enabled challenges to institutions;

• Knowledge of the central paradigms in theory and research methods relevant to the discussion and the investigation of digitally enabled challenges to institutions and the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches;

• Understanding of the applicability or transfer of theories and paradigms from different scientific areas in relation to digitally enabled challenges to institutions.

2 Course requirements

2.1 Regular and active participation

The course features the discussion of the required readings. To benefit, students are expected to read the texts listed as required readings before each session and actively participate in the discussion for each session. In preparing the texts for each session, please use the following guiding questions where appropriate:

• What are the research questions?

• Which concepts are introduced to describe or analyze a phenomenon?

• How are these concepts measured?

• What causal relationships do the authors suggest or test?

• What methods do the authors use?

• Identify (dis)agreements between authors in this area.

• What do you feel is missing from the field? What choices by researchers in the field seem surprising to you?

• How can computational methods help in analyzing the phenomenon in question or associated puzzles.

If you are unclear about the terms used above, check out the following background readings:


Word to the wise: Not knowing these terms and being unable to use them will hurt you when trying to write your final paper.
You will find it useful to keep notes on the papers read by you.

### 2.2 Presentation

Students will be asked to present a research paper during one of the topical session. During the first session, each student will be assigned a text from the listed readings for presentations.

Please keep the following considerations in mind in preparing your presentation:

• Please plan your presentation to take between 10-15 minutes;

• Please prepare a slide deck with a presentation program of your choice (except for Prezi);

• In preparing the presentation please follow the guidelines discussed in the first session;

• Please prepare a handout of one to two pages for your fellow students, summarizing the main points of your presentation;

• Upload the handout on the day your presentation is due to the assignment folder on the course’s Ilias repository. Use the following template for the filename "your_last_name-handout.pdf";

• The presentation will be graded and contribute 30% to your final grade.

If you do not follow these questions and guidelines this will be reflected in your grade.

*Background Readings:*


### 2.3 Term paper

Students will be asked to hand in a term paper. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

• Style requirements:
  – Font: Times New Roman, 12pt;
- Line separation: 1.5;
- Page borders: 2.5 cm left and right, 2cm above and below;
- Page set: Block;
- The first line of each paragraph is indented;

- Citation Style: Please follow the citation convention of the American Political Science Review (APSR) available at http://www.apsanet.org/APSR-Submission-Guidelines-August-2016, or you could simply use the reference style APA in the references manager of your choice;

- Cover page: University, department, course title, paper title, name, Matriknr., semester count, study program, and e-mail-address;

- Length: ca. 4000 words +/-10%

- Deadline: Please return the paper on March 31 electronically at andreas.jungherr@uni-bamberg.de and by hardcopy with Silke Raffel (room FMA/01.11). The date is mandatory and can only be extended in case of officially certified illness;

- Use the following template for the filename "your_last_name-paper.pdf".

- The term paper will be graded and contribute 70% to your final grade.

Background Readings:


## 3 Course plan

Class will meet online at the following dates and times:

Wednesday 10:00–12:00 c.t.

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</table>
3.1 Week 1: Introduction (20. October)

3.2 Week 2: Contesting institutions (27. October)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


- Levin, Y. (2020). *A time to build: From family and community to Congress and the campus, how recommitting to our institutions can revive the American Dream*. Basic Books.


3.3 Week 3: Communication infrastructures and the challenge of institutions (3. November)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


3.4 Week 4: Legitimating challenges: Injustice, Representation, and Voice (10. November)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


**Presentations:**


### 3.5 Week 5: Challenging the news 1 – Economics (17. November)

**Required Reading: Background Readings:**


**Background Readings:**


• Petre, C. (2021). *All the news that’s fit to click: How metrics are transforming the work of journalists*. Princeton University Press.


**Presentations:**


3.6   Week 6: Challenging the news 2 – Partisan media (24. November)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


3.7 Week 7: Challenging the news 3 – The media as enemy (1. December)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


3.8 Week 8: Challenging party democracy 1 – Populism (8. December)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


**Presentations:**


### 3.9 Week 9: Challenging party democracy 2 – Technocracy (15. December)

**Required Reading:**


**Background Readings:**


**Presentations:**


3.10 Week 10: Challenging party democracy 3 – Strong leaders (22. December)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


Required Reading:


**Background Readings:**


**Presentations:**


Required Reading:


Background Readings:


Presentations:


3.14  Week 14: Using challenges (2. February)

Required Reading:


Background Readings:


• Surowiecki, J. (2004). *The wisdom of crowds: Why the many are smarter than the few and how collective wisdom shapes business, economies, societies and nations*. Random House.

Presentations:


### 3.15 Week 15: Conclusion & discussion (9. February)