

Seminar of digital democracy • course description

LSPRI2224 • 2022-2023 Q1 • 5 credits • Language: English • Teacher: Jonathan Piron

Content

This seminar tackles the issues raised by **digital technologies** for **political institutions, politics and policies**, and more broadly for the **evolution** of what we call “**democracy**”. It also addresses the **interaction between all things political and the digitalization of society**. Themes of discussion include, but are not limited to: **social media politics, algorithms and filter bubbles, digital divide, civic tech and online participation tools, blockchain and other governance technologies, Internet privacy and data collection, online tools for political education...**

Learning outcomes

At the end of this seminar, the students will be able to **identify the issues raised by digital technologies on democracy, to develop a critical analysis on a case study related to a challenge for democracy at the digital era, and to communicate this analysis in writing, orally, and via digital tools.**

Teaching methods

This seminar is conceived to be **interactive and participative**, and relies on the idea of **learning by doing**. Students will then be encouraged to **speak instead of only listen, to write instead of only read, to create instead of only attend**. They will have to **work on their own projects and share their findings and**

reflections during collective sessions—which will establish important concepts for studying and shaping democracy in the digital age.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation is **continuous and ends before the exams' session**. The final grade (from 0 to 20 points) is composed of **two parts**:

1. the **contribution to the course dynamics** (including active and regular participation in class and the preparation of the seminar's sessions)—**30 %** of the final grade;
2. the **production of a personal critical analysis** on a case study related to a challenge for democracy at the digital age—**70 %** of the final grade.

Contribution to the course dynamics

For each session, students are expected to share on Teams at least **3 resources** (article, scientific paper, podcast, interview, documentary, YouTube video, company's website...) related to the session's topic, to **contribute to a collaborative research** on the subject at hand (deadline: the day before at 23:59).

In class, they will contribute to the **writing of a collective 'one-pager'**, a note summarizing the 'state of the question' at stake. This '**executive summary**' is intended to be short and then not exhaustive, but it should be the group's take on **explaining the main ideas, concepts, issues, challenges...** that gravitates around the session's theme.

A student or group of students will be designated to **take the lead and coordinate** the creation of each executive summary: collecting contributions, deciding on the orientation of the paper, sorting the references...

This content will then be **uploaded on the seminar's website**: seminarofdigitaldemocracy.net.

Individual case study

Every student is expected to **produce a personal critical analysis on a topic of their choice**, a 'case study' related to an issue of 'digital democracy'.

On the 'backend', it should be a 'classical research' or **investigation**, with a research question, potential hypotheses, good references and hopefully some results in the end.

But on the 'frontend', students have to produce something 'digital' (not a simple paper in .pdf). The **format** is up to you—feel free to be creative (website, podcast, video, interactive presentation, newsletter, Twitter thread, application...). No size requirements, because it varies a lot depending on the chosen format, but it should reflect the theoretical 150 hours of work required to validate a 5-credits seminar.

This production must be **sent on Teams before ~~the first day of the exams session~~ (in 2022-2023: 8 January, 23:59) 15 January 2023, 23:59**.

Useful links

- Discussions: [on Teams](#)
- Website: seminarofdigitaldemocracy.net

Contact

- [Q&A channel on Teams](#)
- jonathan.piron@uclouvain.be