



Global Politics in the Digital Age Course Descriptor

Course Title	Global Politics in the Digital Age	Faculty	Politics and International Relations
Course code	NCHPIR776	Course Leader	Dr Sara Raimondi
Credit points	15	Teaching Period	Either
FHEQ level	7	Date approved	January 2021
Compulsory/ Optional	Compulsory		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

COURSE SUMMARY

The deployment of digital tools in politics has not only reshaped the channels of political communication and the public sphere. In the last decades, the use of digital technology can be said to have revolutionised the spaces for governance and political action globally. Digital tools have increasingly been deployed in governance and decision-making processes that involve a plurality of actors at multiple levels, with an impact on public participation, policy outcomes and demands for efficiency and accountability. The use of digital tools has simultaneously enlarged and questioned the spaces of state sovereignty, by opening new frontiers to discourses of security (such as cybersecurity) or through an intensification of channels of biopolitical control and surveillance. Finally, technology has provided new platforms for political action and mobilisation, from citizen fora in deliberative projects to spaces of resistance such as digital activism, which further reshape the spaces and processes of formation of political identities. All these phenomena demand a reconsideration of questions of governance, sovereignty, power, security, identity and agency that are at the basis of studies of International Relations, in order to attune the discipline to a new era of governance.

This core course provides the theoretical and conceptual foundations to study trends and debates around the politics of digital technology globally, with an attention to the empirical applications that inform scholarly debates in the field. By so doing, the course complements the twin course *Green Political Thought* in providing students with the skills in theoretical and problem-based analysis necessary to undertake the studies on the masters, and especially their *Extended Dissertation*, and optional courses.

COURSE AIMS

- To acquaint students with knowledge of complex dynamics around the use of digital technology in global politics and how these are engaged in evolving frameworks of governance, sovereignty, power, security, identity and agency.
- To enable students to apply the knowledge of approaches, conceptual and theoretical frameworks in the study of digital technology in politics to inform critical awareness and analysis of concrete empirical areas in the field.
- To assist students with a range of themes, issue areas, approaches and methodologies that will assist in the selection of an appropriate research focus and framework in their Extended Dissertation, and optional courses.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate knowledge and a sophisticated understanding of the areas and problems related to the use of digital technology in global politics across multiple actors, processes and institutions above and below state level.
- K2d Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how the use of digital technology in global politics challenges traditional frameworks in International Relations, including questions of governance, sovereignty and agency.

SUBJECT SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Critically evaluate the impact of digital technologies on frameworks, processes and dynamics of global governance.
- S2d Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches that support the study of digital technologies in the discipline, in particular biopolitics, spatial governance, complex system thinking and models of political agency.
- S3d Critically assess how the deployment of digital technology enlarges traditional studies in IR, including debates around International Organisations and global governance, human rights, security, agency and identity formation.
- S4d Appreciate and adopt interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of IR and global governance drawing from political theory, international sociology, political economy and Science and Technology Studies (STS).

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Produce written work that is well structured, fluent, well referenced, clear, and congruent with the standard prose of the discipline.
- T2d Gather, organise, and deploy a range of evidence and data in support of a clearly defined line of argument.
- T3d Synthesise and analyse large amounts of information to produce pertinent and critical conclusions.

- T4d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication..

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- Full-cohort lectures
- Full-cohort seminars
- Office hours

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all the formal and timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines
- Conduct independent research and explore relevant existing knowledge
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, for example individual and group presentations, projects, and experiments.

SUMMATIVE

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Oral Presentation	40	Yes	15 minutes	N/A
2	Policy Brief	60	Yes	N/A	3,000 words

The presentation and brief will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (on an *ad hoc* basis) and indirectly through discussion during group tutorials. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative written assignments which will be handed back to the students.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

BOOKS

Hoijsink, M., & Leese, M. (Eds.). *Technology and Agency in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2019).

Wagner, B., Kettmann, M. C., & Vieth, K. (Eds.). *Research Handbook on Human Rights and Digital Technology: Global Politics, Law and International Relations* (London: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019).

Bjola, C., & Zaiotti, R. (Eds.). *Digital Diplomacy and International Organisations: Autonomy, Legitimacy and Contestation* (London: Routledge, 2020).

Cubitt, S., *Finite Media: Environmental Implications of Digital Technologies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

Eriksson, J., & Giacomello, G. (Eds.). *International Relations and Security in the Digital Age* (London: Routledge, 2007).

JOURNALS

Der Derian, J. 'The Question of Information Technology in International Relations', *Millennium*, 32.3 (2003), pp. 441-456.

Fritsch, S. 'Technology and Global Affairs', *International Studies Perspectives*, 12.1 (2011), pp. 27-45.

Hofmann, J. 'Mediated Democracy—Linking Digital Technology to Political Agency', *Internet Policy Review*, 8.2 (2019).

Dillon, M., & Lobo-Guerrero, L. 'Biopolitics of Security in the 21st century: An Introduction', *Review of International Studies*, (2008), pp. 265-292.

Reid, J. 'Politicizing Connectivity: beyond the Biopolitics of Information Technology in International Relations', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 22.4 (2009), pp. 607-623.

Rosenow, D. 'Decentering Global Power: The Merits of a Foucauldian Approach to International Relations', *Global Society*, 23.4 (2009), pp. 497-517.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Additional resources will be available on the College's VLE.

INDICATIVE TOPICS

Students will study the following topics:

- Technology Governance
- Deliberative spaces and public sphere
- Human rights in the digital age
- Cybersecurity and cyberspace
- Automation and warfare
- Biopolitical surveillance
- Migration and digitalisation of borders
- Sustainability and digital media
- Digital platforms and citizens empowerment
- Resistance and digital activism

Title: NCHPIR776 Global Politics in the Digital Age					
Approved by: Academic Board					
Location: Academic Handbook/Programme Specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/ MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development Programme Specification/Course Descriptors					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	May 2022	May 2022	Dr Callum Barrell	January 2026	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes Category 2: Change to summative assessment
1.0	January 2021	May 2021	Dr Callum Barrell	January 2026	