Information Technology, Globalization and Governance

Fall 2010

Preliminary Syllabus

This graduate course provides a broad overview of information revolutions and their impact on global politics. We will examine previous episodes of transformative changes in communications to place contemporary changes in a broader historical context and we will consider theoretical explorations of the relationship between information technologies and world politics. The bulk of the course, however, will examine the practical impact of the information revolution on state sovereignty, democratization, diplomacy, international political economy, international and homeland security and international organization. A particular emphasis will be placed on the information technologies used to run government agencies and other public sector organizations. We will also examine the move from "legacy systems" to integrated suites of standardized software known as Enterprise Systems in back office of government operations as well as the website “front ends” that connect these systems to citizens, private sector entities and other governments. The course will consider the ways in which international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have taken advantage of the internet and the ways in which states attempt to control flows of information over the internet to their citizens. The course will focus extensively on the use of information technology by the US State Department and other foreign ministries as well as investigate the implementation of management information systems by international organizations such as the United Nations. The course will also consider the global digital divide, efforts to bridge that divide and use information technologies to foster international development.

Prerequisites:

There are no course prerequisites or technical background prerequisites. Students should be open to learning to use specific information technologies if the opportunities to use them for class and research projects present themselves.

Objectives:

By the end of this course: 1) students should have a basic understanding of the current state and historical development of information and communications technologies; 2) students should be able to build a basic website and post documents on it; 3) students should be able to prepare and present a presentation on a research project; 4) students should be able to critically evaluate government websites; 5) students should understand the methods of internet censorship and control employed by governments and countermeasures used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other non-state actors; 6) student should have developed an understanding of the security implications of technology and 7) students should have developed an appreciation for the consequences of information technologies for the conduct of international relations and be able to explain these consequences in considerable detail.
Texts (available at the UAlbany Bookstore):


Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) (selections)


Unless noted, all required journal articles can be accessed on-line at the UAlbany library under “e-journals.” This includes articles in *Economist, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy*, etc. Additional readings available online – at the Universal Resource Locators (URLs) given
Description of requirements:

Reviews of readings:
Students will submit three brief reviews (2 pages each -- approx. 500 words) of required weekly readings at the beginning of the session selected. Reviews are intended generate informed class discussion, so they must be written and submitted before class. These reviews should state the main arguments of individual pieces assigned, critically evaluate arguments made and relate the articles to one another (when possible). Each review is about 7% of course grade. Excellent reviews will receive 5 points, good reviews 4 points, passing reviews 3 points, failing reviews 2 points. A total of four reviews must be submitted for full credit. Students may choose which week’s readings to review, however, readings chosen must be distributed in the following manner:
One review of the readings from a session of Part I
One review of readings from a session of Part II
One review of readings from a session of Part III
One review of readings from a session of Part IV

If students do not hand in the required number of reviews by the end of each part of the course, the overdue review will be considered a failing review. They will not receive credit for the missing reviews.

Seminar Research Project:
Students are expected to write a research paper of about 7,000 words. While students are expected to draw on the material from the syllabus, the student's research effort will be demonstrated by having the majority of the paper’s references from outside material.

Students may select a topic of their own choosing as long as it is within the confines of the course and approved by the instructor.

Students will give a powerpoint presentation of their research project

Class participation --- Students are expected to attend all classes and prepare for class discussions by completing all reading assignments before class. Those students who contribute thoughtful comments and questions about the assigned readings on a regular basis and actively participate in discussions will receive an “A” for class participation. Students who do not regularly attend will receive an “F”; those who attend but do not participate will receive a “D,” those who occasionally participate or whose participation is not on topic will receive a “C” for participation.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
<td>about 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term project</td>
<td>about 60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>about 20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Late assignments will be penalized.
Students must properly reference all sources, including assigned readings, in all written assignments. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated.
Course schedule:

8/31 Introduction

Part I: The information revolution and change

9/7 Information technology and the modern world order

Required readings:
Deibert, pp. 1-131


9/14 Computing and the Internet

Required readings:
A Brief History of the Internet and Related Networks by Vinton G. Cerf http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/cerf.shtml

Thomas Friedman, The World is Flat (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), Ch. 2 (pp. 51-199)

Watch: “The Triumph of the Nerds: an Irreverent history of the PC industry” Transcript of the documentary can be found at: http://www.pbs.org/ners/transcript.html

Deibert, 131-136.


Recommended resources:

One laptop per child http://www.laptop.org/vision/index.shtml
and: http://wiki.laptop.org/go/One_Laptop_per_Child

9/21 Nanotechnology and the Future of Computing

Class webpage due

Richard Feynman, “There’s Plenty of Room at the Bottom,” Meeting of the American Physical Society, California Institute of Technology, December 29, 1959, at: http://www.its.caltech.edu/~feynman

Eric Drexler, Engines of Creation, Ch. 1 http://www.e-drexler.com/d/06/00/EOC/EOC_Chapter_1.html
Ralph Merkle, *A brief introduction to the core concepts of molecular nanotechnology*  
http://www.zyvex.com/nano

http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0vd0v7dx

http://sss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/39/1/11

http://www.wtec.org/SocietalImplications/2/si2vii_report.pdf

http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/may2007/tc20070502_768360.htm?chan=search

9/28 The Information Revolution and State Sovereignty

**Paper proposals due (Posted online)**

**Required readings:**

Deibert, 137-164


Ken Rutherford, The Landmine Campaign and NGOs: The Role of Communications Technologies  


**Recommended resources:**


Union of International Associations (UIA)
Part II: Public Sector Information Technologies and State Capabilities

5/12 Public Sector Reengineering, Enterprise Software and E-government

Required readings:


Jane E. Fountain, Building the virtual state: information technology and institutional change (Brookings Institution, 2001) part 1. (pp. 3-106)


Recommended resources:


General Services Administration, Office of Electronic Government and Technology [http://egov.gov/]


Government Technology (Trade Magazine) [http://www.govtech.net]
Government Computer News (Trade Magazine) **http://www.gcn.com/**


Institute for Development Policy and Management, The University of Manchester
GOVERNMENT - Information, Systems, Technology and Government: WORKING PAPERS
**http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/research/publications/wp/igovernment/index.htm**

Some Assembly Required: Building a Digital Government for the 21st Century
**http://www.ctg.albany.edu/research/workshop/dgfinalreport.pdf**

The Harvard Kennedy School, E-Government Executive Education (3E) Project
**http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/stratcom/3E/index.html**
Paper series: Eight Imperatives for Leaders in a Networked World
**http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/stratcom/hpg/index.htm**

United Kingdom Parliament, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology,
Electronic Government: Information Technologies and the Citizen
**http://www.parliament.uk/post/egov.htm**

IBM’s Institute for Electronic Government
**http://www.ieg.ibm.com/**

World Bank E-Government Site
**http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/egov/**

### 10/19 Diplomacy in the Information Age

**Required readings:**

**http://www.afsa.org/fsj/dec05/johnson.pdf**

US State Department, *Fiscal Years 2006-2010: IT Strategic Plan Empowering Diplomacy*
**http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/96312.pdf**

U.S. State Department, Office of Information Resource Management (especially E-diplomacy Office)
**http://www.state.gov/m/irm/**

**http://www.fcw.com/print/13_31/features/103633-1.html**


**http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pageName=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391494**

**Recommended resources:**

*The Internet and International Systems: Information Technology and American Foreign Policy Decisionmaking*, a workshop co-hosted by the Nautilus Institute and the World Affairs Council of Northern California. December 10, 2000, San Francisco, CA
10/5 State Censorship

Required readings:

Deibert, Palfrey, Rohozinski, and Zittrain eds. *Access Controlled* (read all of part 1 and select case studies of several regions and countries of interest).

http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2010/01/google-censorship-china/

http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2010/01/operation-aurora


Recommended resources:

A Web site with a view — The Third World on First Monday Special Issue #8  
http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/issue/view/253/showToc


Part III: Information Technology and Global Security

10/26 Revolutions in Military Affairs

Required readings:

Deibert, pp. 164-176

Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Garstka “Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origin and Future”  
*US Naval Institute Proceedings*, 1998  
Donald Rumsfeld, “Transforming the Military” Foreign Affairs 81:3 (May-June 2002), 20-32.

Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui Unrestricted Warfare (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999), (selections from FBIS English translation), Intro to Part 1, chapters 1-2 at: http://www.cryptome.org/cuw.htm


Recommended resources:

Wired, The Future of War Archive


11/2 Information Warfare and Cyberterrorism


Recommended resources:
11/9 Information Technology and Homeland Security

Required readings:


Rey Koslowski, “Government Information Technology and Border Security: Comparative Perspectives,” Manuscript


Recommended resources:

Thomas Homer-Dixon, “the Rise of Complex Terrorism,” Foreign Policy, No. 128 (Jan/Feb) 2002.


Making the Nation Safer: The Role of Science and Technology in Countering Terrorism Committee on Science and Technology for Countering Terrorism, Division on Engineering and Physical Sciences, National Research Council http://www.nap.edu/html/stct/index.html


U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism and Government Information http://judiciary.senate.gov/subcommittees/technology.cfm

Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC): http://epic.org/

11/16 Military Robotics

Singer, Wired for War (entire)

Part IV: Information Technology and Global Governance

11/23 Global Governance of Cyberspace

Mathiasen, *Internet Governance* (entire)

Recommended resources:

Lawrence Lessig, “Innovation, Regulation and the Internet,” *The American Prospect* November 30, 2002
http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=innovation_regulation_and_the_internet

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) http://www.icann.org/

The Internet Governance Forum http://www.intgovforum.org/

Internet Policy Institute http://www.internetpolicy.org

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/

Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC) http://www.giic.org/


11/30 International Organizations

Required readings:


Information and communications technology: Tenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, Nov. 16, 2009, A/64/7/Add.9 [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/7/Add.9&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/7/Add.9&Lang=E)

Umoja - The Blueprint for UN Administrative Reform
[http://www.unumoja.org/display/umoja/The+Blueprint+for+UN+Administrative+Reform](http://www.unumoja.org/display/umoja/The+Blueprint+for+UN+Administrative+Reform)
(take a look at the Umoja website)

**Recommended resources:**

Edward C. Luck, Reforming the United Nations: Lessons from a History in Progress
International Relations Studies and the United Nations Occasional Papers
2003 No. 1 posted at:

### 12/7 Information Technology and International Development

**Final Paper due**

**Required readings:**


Charles Kenny "Development’s False Divide: Giving Internet access to the world's poorest will cost a lot and accomplish little," *Foreign Policy* Jan/Feb 2003

Daniel H. Rosen, “New Directions in U.S. Foreign Assistance and the Role of Information and Communication Technology,” Markle Foundation Policy Brief, posted at:


**Recommended resources:**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) [http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html](http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html)

The Information for Development Program (infoDev) [http://www.infodev.org/](http://www.infodev.org/)