

Human Being and Society in the Information Hurricane: Threats of the Age of Hyperconnectivity

This seminar offers a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted nature of information warfare, focusing on how political narratives, disinformation, and media influence shape both democratic processes and global conflicts. The course covers a wide range of themes, including the use of popular culture as a tool for political messaging, resilience and vulnerability factors in information disorders, and the long-term human cost of information warfare.

Through case studies such as Russian information strategies across different geopolitical contexts, participants will analyze the tools, tactics, and platforms used to manipulate public opinion. The seminar will also explore how global and local narratives about justice, peace, and equality are influenced by these tactics, with a focus on the ethical, social, and political consequences of the global struggle for truth in the media.

1. March, 5: Reality Makers: Information Hurricane from Anthropological, Political, and Historical Perspectives

The session delves into how the unstoppable flow of information influences our perceptions of reality, viewed through anthropological, political, and historical lenses. From anthropological and historical stances, it reveals the profound impact of information saturation on cultural norms, collective identities, and our intrinsic need for storytelling. Politically, it highlights how governments, media, and powerful figures manipulate information to shape public opinion, sway elections, and alter collective memory.

Literature:

- [Floridi, L. \(2020\). The green and the blue: A new political ontology for a mature information society. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3831094](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3831094)
- **Optional:** [Levin, I., & Mamlok, D. \(2021\). Culture and society in the digital age. *Information*. 12\(2\), 68.](#)

2. March, 12: Resilience and Vulnerability Factors to Information Disorders

This session examines the factors contributing to societies' resilience or vulnerability to disinformation on macro, micro, and intermediary levels. The focus is on the

tension between the regulation of information spaces and the preservation of democratic freedoms, exploring the ethical and practical implications for digital governance.

Literature:

- [Bjola, C. \(2018\). The ethics of countering digital propaganda. *Ethics & international affairs*, 32\(3\), 305-315.](#)
- **Optional:** [Humprecht, E., Esser, F., & Van Aelst, P. \(2020\). Resilience to online disinformation: A framework for cross-national comparative research. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25\(3\), 493-516.](#)

3. March, 19: The Narrative War in Popular Culture

This topic explores how political narratives and counter-narratives are disseminated through movies, TV series, and video games. It analyzes the role of popular culture in shaping political consciousness, drawing connections between entertainment media and real-world political strategies.

Literature:

- **Optional:** [Shevchuk, Y. \(2023\). Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression. *Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication*, 34\(43\), 29-48.](#)

4. March, 26: Meme Culture as Narrative: The Role of Humor, Satire, and Symbolism in Collective Imagination and Polarization

This seminar will explore the role of memes as important artifacts of collective memory, shaping public perception and preserving significant events, individuals, and social issues within our shared consciousness. We will examine the factors that contribute to meme virality, their emotional impact, and the influential role of digital humor in commemorating contemporary history. Join us for this insightful discussion on the cultural significance of memes in our digital age.

Literature:

- [Niebuurt JT \(2021\) Internet Memes: Leaflet Propaganda of the Digital Age. *Front. Commun.* 5:547065.](#)
- **Optional:** [Liagusha, A., & Iarovyi, D. \(2025\). Memes, freedom, and resilience to information disorders: Information warfare between democracies and autocracies. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, 101247.](#)

5. April, 2: Human Agency in the Age of Hyperconnectivity: The Individual vs. Collective Narratives in Information Warfare

This topic explores the evolving role of human agency in an era dominated by digital networks and algorithmically driven communication. The class examines how individuals navigate, construct, and contest narratives within hyperconnected information ecosystems, where traditional collective action is increasingly supplanted by personalized, networked forms of engagement.

Literature:

- [Coeckelbergh, M. \(2024\). What is digital humanism? A conceptual analysis and an argument for a more critical and political digital \(post\)humanism. *Journal of Responsible Technology*, 17](#)
- **Optional:** [Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. \(2012\). THE LOGIC OF CONNECTIVE ACTION: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15\(5\), 739–768.](#)

6. April, 9: The Human Cost of Information War and a Struggle for a Just Peace

This session focuses on the social, economic, and ethical consequences of information warfare, particularly on vulnerable groups and long-term development. Participants will examine global narratives about peace and victory, particularly how fairness and justice are framed in the context of conflict resolution.

Literature:

- [Nieminen, H. \(2024\). Why does disinformation spread in liberal democracies? The relationship between disinformation, inequality, and the media. *Javnost-The Public*, 31\(1\), 123-140.](#)

- **Optional:** [Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. \(2018\). The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions. *European journal of communication*, 33\(2\), 122-139.](#)

7. April, 16: Network Society and Attention Economy: Identity and Democratic Deterioration

This session explores how the dynamics of communication in a networked society influence identity formation, political engagement, and democratic values. Participants will examine how the economics of attention - driven by algorithms and media competition for user engagement- affects the quality of democratic discourse, media integrity, and political participation. This discussion will also focus on how social media platforms shape political identities and contribute to polarization, as well as how these shifts deteriorate the health of democracy and media trust.

Literature:

- [White, D. J. \(2024\). Paying attention to attention: psychological realism and the attention economy. *Synthese*, 203\(2\), 43.](#)

8. April, 23: Case Study: Russian Information Strategies

This session offers an in-depth exploration of Russian information strategies in liberal democracies, the Global South, and post-Soviet spaces. It looks at the tools and platforms Russia employs to influence public opinion and destabilize political systems, with an emphasis on propaganda and soft power.

Literature:

- [Nye Jr, J. S. \(2008\). Public diplomacy and soft power. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, 616\(1\), 94-109.](#)
- **Optional:** [Kols, R. \(2022\). Hybrid Threats: The Baltic Perspective. *Written testimony to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*.](#)

9. April, 30: New Puritanism: Moral Policing, Information Control, and the Shaping of Public Discourse

This lecture delves into the rise of “new puritanism” in digital spaces, focusing on how online moral policing and information control influence public discourse. It examines how social media and news platforms impose strict norms on acceptable speech and behavior, resulting in public scrutiny, self-censorship, and a reduced range of viewpoints. Through case studies, the session will highlight the societal effects of these dynamics, including the exacerbation of social divides and the challenges posed to freedom of expression. Additionally, it will explore the importance of balancing inclusive online environments with the preservation of diverse perspectives in today’s rapidly changing digital landscape.

Literature:

- [Talaifar, S., & Lowery, B. S. \(2023\). Freedom and Constraint in Digital Environments: Implications for the Self. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18\(3\), 544-575](#)
- **Optional:** [Duncombe, C. 2019. “The Politics of Twitter: Emotions and the Power of Social Media.” *International Political Sociology* 13, 409–429](#)
- **Optional:** [Bouvier, G., & Machin, D. \(2021\). What gets lost in Twitter ‘cancel culture’ hashtags? Calling out racists reveals some limitations of social justice campaigns. *Discourse & Society*, 32\(3\), 307-327.](#)

10. May, 7: Memory Wars in the Digital Age: Collective Memory, Information Warfare, and Public History. Cases from authoritarian and democratic regimes

This class thoughtfully explores how digital technologies shape our collective memory in both authoritarian and democratic regimes. It highlights the significant roles that state and non-state actors play in “memory wars,” examining how governments, media, and civil society influence historical narratives via digital platforms and using memes. Key topics include memory policies, the role of social media in shaping our historical awareness, the impact of disinformation campaigns, and the emergence of digital activism in response to memory manipulation.

Literature:

- [Bekus, N. \(2022\). Memory wars in postimperial settings: The challenges of transnationalism and the risks of new totalizing mnemonics. Memory Studies, 15\(6\), 1291-1294.](#)
- [Iakovlenko, K. \(2018, January 18\). War and digital memory: How digital media shape history.](#)