School of Public Policy  
George Mason University  
Spring Term 2018  
As of October 20th 2017

PUBP 710 DL2 Internet and Public Policy: Technology or Tyranny?  
(Course Taught Completely On-line)

For a brief video description of this on line course by the instructor click here

Instructor: Stephen Ruth, Professor of Public Policy  
Office hours: By appointment  
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and stever3992@aol.com;  
Phone Ruth:703 993 1789; home:703 536 5343 (please no calls after 8 PM)  
Instructor’s Personal site http://policy-icasit.gmu.edu/bio/index.html

Face-to-face Classes None—course is fully on line

Description of Course:

This mostly on line, non-technical, non-geeky course examines the causes, effects and manifestations of globalization in the modern era and in parallel presents some of the most significant Information and Communication Technology (ICT) issues associated with globalization, like Twitter Era, Bots and Scrapers, Robots and AI, 3 D (and 4D) printing, Broadband Proliferation, Electronic Government, Cybersecurity, Internet Voting, the Digital Divide, Internet Pornography, Electronic Learning, Green IT, Social Networking, Net Neutrality, and dozens of others. Students will be able to concentrate on regions and technologies of their choosing for several of the class projects. For all the many manifestations of ICT we will be equally interested in good and bad outcomes of policy. Was Internet-enabled Arab Spring a net positive or negative? What about social networks, so-called “digital empowerment” programs, Internet voting and dozens of others? We’ll examine them with an open mind.

Notice about this Course:

It is a completely on line—so both student and instructor are required to have a continuous, productive and content-specific communications on line from beginning to end. In fact, 35 percent of the course’s grade is based on the quality and frequency of participation, both on
line and in class. So if being face-to-face is what you like best in a college course, this section of PUBP 710 may not be for you. There will be extensive class participation—far more than in a face-to-face class—but all of it will be Internet-based. **Caution: this course requires considerably more original writing than the average course.**

**Overview of Course Goals:** Approaching the Course Topics from Three Perspectives: Review of Intellectual Territory, Broad Analysis of Selected Major Policy Themes and Individual, Focused Research

**The aim** of this course is to examine positive and negative issues associated with key ICT/Internet issues of the day--legal, educational, governmental, military, business, health, etc. We will approach this broad subject from three perspectives in order to offer maximum coverage and ample customization of course material to students' needs. **First**, there will be continuing emphasis on the intellectual territory surrounding ICT and the Internet. The aim is maximum breadth, to cover as many of the most important concepts, cases and challenges as possible. The course will present, often in online lectures, some of the well-known thinkers in these areas, and examples of contemporary issues, like various Cyberterrorism, “E” topics (voting, commerce, learning, democracy, pornography, etc.), bandwidth problems, spectrum auctions, digital divide, cybersecurity, social networking effects, etc.

**The second**, and most significant, perspective is that of public policy. Questions abound. Is the globalized world really flat, as Thomas Friedman used to say, or are there differences of opinion among the experts about globalization’s actual breadth effects? To what degree will the increasing impact of globalization in delivering business and government services change standards of living in the US and overseas? Is the ”Digital Divide”, domestically and globally, a serious problem, and if so, what can be done to alleviate its effects? Can telework and Green IT policies ease energy and pollution problems? What economic effects is broadband proliferation deployment having on the body politic? Is there enough bandwidth in the world? Why is Congress unable to pass bills that are designed to reduce cyber terror? Will telemedicine and other Internet interventions cause major reductions in the death rates due to starvation in the world's poorer countries or will twenty thousand children continue to die of hunger and malnutrition every day? Which national security issues are most affected by IT and globalization? We will divide these policy matters into several dozen segments and each student in the course will be able to select areas for further research. To aid in this goal a database will be available from the first week with excellent, current citations from close to 100 different ICT topics, that will ultimately be part of the student’s choice for research emphasis.

**The third** perspective is the student's own. An individualized portfolio and a research paper will allow each person enrolled in the course to select a half dozen subjects for more detailed review. This research perspective has the goal of encouraging each student to learn more about a chosen topic within the course's coverage by delving more deeply into the literature surrounding it.

**Learning Objectives:**
By the end of the course students should have an understanding of the positive and negative aspects of ICT through these learning activities:

1. Discuss and analyze the ICT issues that affect the Internet globalization debate: technical, cultural, political and demographic including the failure of SOPA, PIPA, ACTA and CISPA, among many others.
2. Discuss, analyze and critique the broader ICT debate on topics like digital divide, cyberthreats, pollution, municipal wi-fi, Internet taxation, and net neutrality.
3. Review, locate, compare and contrast measures and indices of globalization and other key issues associated with ICT like political freedom, corruption, education, health, etc.
4. Examine, compare, contrast, and predict international differences in IT deployment and long term infrastructure development.
5. Discuss and evaluate National Security and defense aspects of globalization and the eCulture.
6. Develop proficiency in examining the manifestations and challenges of online learning.
8. Discuss, analyze and critique the broader IT debate on topics like digital divide, cyberthreats, pollution, municipal wi-fi, Internet taxation, and net neutrality.
9. Review, locate, compare and contrast measures and indices of globalization and other key issues associated with ICT like political freedom, corruption, education, health, etc.
10. Examine, compare, contrast, and predict international differences in IT deployment and long term infrastructure development.
11. Develop proficiency in examining the manifestations and challenges of online learning, through various traffic all means, including the Tele-geography website.

Requirements, Grades and Examinations:
There are four requirements for completing the course:
1. Extensive participation in class discussions 35 percent—throughout the semester
2. Review and analysis of individualized portfolio selection (student chooses portfolio topics) 25 percent—first half of semester;
3. Research project 20 percent—second half of the semester
4. A final exam (take home) 20 percent—end of the semester (distributed at week 11)

1. Class Participation (35%):
   Every week each member of the class is expected to participate actively on the Blackboard discussion site. There are two types of online participation:
   - **Formal bi-weekly posts** that reflect your views on the assigned readings and your portfolio are in the minimum range of 350 or more words and should have several qualities, like relevance, comprehensiveness, coherence, clarity and focus, in addition to being well written. See sample below. A formal post is due every other week by 7 PM Monday.
   - **Informal posts** are expected as part of the discussion and should be about whatever is on your mind, but please remember that a simple post that says something like, "I agree" or "Right on" with no indication of the "because" part is not very helpful. A minimum 4 informal posts are due every week. This covers all aspects of interaction from the
first class to the last, like sharing information or perspectives through emails, occasional snippets, comments and insight, etc.

Samples of formal and informal posts can be found here

2. ICT portfolio (25%):
Each student selects a portfolio of several ICT topics during the first half of the semester and reports on the selected material as part of the weekly course discussions: on-line and in-class. At week 8 the student posts a detailed summary of the findings on the six portfolio topics on the class site. Several samples of completed portfolios are to be found at the course site. The ICT Portfolio instructions are at the end of this syllabus.

3. Research project (20%)
Students select, with instructor’s approval, a short, highly focused research project related to the course material. Target length: 1500 words. Due date: weeks 9 through 12.

4. The final exam (20%):
The final exam will be a take-home test with five questions. It will be distributed during week 11 and will require about 10-12 hours of preparation

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January 22 May 5
Formal bi-weekly posts X X X X XX XX XX XX
Informal posts X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X
ICT portfolio XXXXXXXXXXXX
Research project XXXX X X X XXXXXX
Final Exam XXXX X X X X X X X X

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Reminder : Samples of formal and informal posts can be found here

Weekly Schedule—please note that actual assignments will be shown at the course web site and the ones noted below are tentative-after week 1 the course web site will replace this syllabus as the basis for assignments.

Week 1 Introduction, significant ICT policy issues and student portfolio (On line)

Assignment: READ: David Brooks ”Death by Data”; White House Big Data Report ;(Skim) Mary Meeker “Internet trends 2014” WATCH: Susan Etlinger ”What to do with all this big data?”;Kenneth Cukier ”Big Data is Better Data”;Charting technology’s new directions: A conversation with MIT’s Erik Brynjolfsson
Due: At least 4 informal posts on week 1 themes by all the class due before January 2nd face to face meeting.

Next week: ICT portfolio selections due Friday January 30 at 7 PM, preferably sooner--six selections-- for details see end of this syllabus. Excerpt follows

“General topics (select two), specific topics (select three) and regions (select one). To assist in the three specific topics see the extensive list at the ICASIT site. Each student is requested to make selections from each of the three parts and notify the instructor of six portfolio preferences by Tuesday, January 30th, preferably sooner, in the following message format: “Part 1— globalisation, network neutrality. Part 2—Big Data, CISPA, E-Voting, Part 3--Middle East”

Week 2 On line education and telework--metaphors for the ICT policy dilemma (On line)

See details at course site

Week 3 ICT-related legislative issues, National Broadband Plan, network neutrality debate, Flat World” ideas (on line)

See details at course site

Week 4 Security, sabotage and other threats (online)

See details at course site

Week 5 Social and societal issues in ICT (On-line)

See details at course site

Week 6 ICT indicators and statistics; green IT (Online)

See details at course site

Week 7 Governments' role in ICT (Online)

See details at course site
Week 8 Spring break--no assignments

Week 9 The Digital Divide, State and Local ICT Statistics (On line)
See details at course site

Week 10 ICT and social networks
See details at course site

Week 11 Global ICT indices and issues (Online)
See details at course site

Week 12 Machines vs People – Which is Ahead? (Online)
See details at course site

Week 13 Major Forces in the Future for ICT ; the Internet of Things (IoT)(Online)
See details at course site

Week 14 Trends and strategies
See details at course site

Week 15 Review and Synthesis (Face-to-face)
See details at course site

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Technology Requirements

Hardware:
You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required to take a distance education course consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you are considering the purchase of a new computer, please go to the GMU computer store site or to this guide for other recommendations.

Software:
This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Select "Browser Support for October 2014". Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java (Windows), Windows Media Player, and QuickTime. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free at http://antivirus.gmu.edu.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Blackboard Support

Email address for support
courses@gmu.edu

Student support website
http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/students/
Are you looking for quick video help about Blackboard? Visit

http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm

If you can not log in to myMason please contact the ITU Support Center at (703) 993-8870 or reset your Mason NetID password at http://password.gmu.edu

For walk-in support, visit the Collaborative Learning Hub in the Founders Hall, Room B 117B (703) 993-7553 Chris Tilley

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University Requirements:

Academic Accommodation for a Disability

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

SPP Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined. Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa. To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.
Student Journal: New Voices in Public Policy
The instructor will consider nominating the very best papers in this course for publication in New Voices in Public Policy. New Voices is a student-and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP's finest student work with the rest of the world.

Importance of Good Writing and Presentation Skills. From the outset, the highest standard of writing will be expected. Here are some of the criteria that will be used to measure submitted written work, especially the team research project:

- **Quality of Content:** analytical clarity/persuasiveness; objectivity; quality of source material; use of evidence/methodology.

- **Tone, Structure and Organization:** focused introduction, thesis, conclusion; use of transitions, headings and other cohering strategies; logical paragraphing in support of main points.

- **Mechanics:** Correct citation and documentation; required elements like title page, works cited, page numbering; grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. All work should be submitted in MS Word Times New Roman 12 or 14 pt. format single or double spaced, depending on the style guide selected.

- **Structure:** The normal breaks between paragraphs will be observed, using any style guide you choose. The Chicago Manual of Style is available and another popular choice is Diana Hacker, A Pocket Manual of Style, (New York, St. Martin’s Press, latest edition). Work should be neatly arranged with clear demarcation of sub-units.

- **Grammar:** Impeccable word usage and grammar will be expected in all submitted work. Students may wish to show early work to someone else--a friend or colleague or the instructor--for a review of style, grammar and other details. Papers with more than a very small number of errors in grammar and word usage will be returned.

- **Method of submission:** All papers will be submitted to the instructor by email as MS Word attachments using a clear description in the subject line of the message. For example: **Julia Jones, Assignment 3.**

**Grading:** The grade of A or A minus is reserved for a high level of achievement; B and B plus grades indicate good mastery of the material. Grades of B minus and below indicate incomplete achievement of an assignment’s requirements. On a 100% scale, A is equal to 95%, B 85%, C 75%
Each student in the class can specialize within the immense variety of course themes and focus on individual interests with respect to these three areas: **policy level topics (select 2), specific IT topics (select 3) and regions (select 1)**. You are requested to make selections from each of the three parts and notify the instructor of preferences before the end of week 2 or earlier. Once that is done, weekly class sessions can offer the opportunity for you to share your growing expertise of these topics as a segment of the weekly required posts. After you have selected your six portfolio options (two from part 1, three from part 2, and one from part 3) you will be expected to stay current on the topics selected.

Note—several samples of completed portfolios are available at the class web site in the section titled “ICT Portfolio”

**Part 1 – Policy level topics (Select two from this group)**

- Globalization—Key ICT issues
- Outsourcing—Challenges
- Internet Regulation
- Big Data
- The Internet of Things
- Copyright challenges—SOPA/PIPA
- Cybersecurity—CISPA
- Education and Training – Key ICT issues
- Health Care – Key ICT issues
- Personal Safety—Key ICT issues
- Accessibility for People with Disabilities—Key ICT issues
- Environment—Key ICT issues (Creating a Cleaner World)—Pollution and Waste Mitigation;
- Energy – Key ICT Issues
Transportation and Safety—Key ICT issues

Public Safety and Defense Policy – Key ICT issues

Government efficiency—Key ICT issues

Sharing Economy (Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, etc)--ICT and societal issues

Part 2 – Specific IT topics from ICASIT Technology topics

Select three from this group

Part 3 – Regional focus beyond the US.

Select one nation or region. Examples: India or Brazil or Middle East or European Union

What to include in the portfolio -- The format of the portfolio can be of any type that suits the student's interest, but the essential ingredients are these:

First, multiple descriptions of examples of the topic, past and present.

Second, URLs and explanations for some of the salient issues associated with the topic. Note: all URL’s in the portfolio must be clickable

Third, clear view of the topic's importance and relevance in terms of public policy. (This need not be rigid or didactic, since some topics may have modest policy impact)

Fourth, a description of the very latest manifestation of the topic, which might be called "late-breaking stories"

Format: In the past, most students have chosen to use a PowerPoint approach, like that shown in the examples provided, but any format, like Prezi, that achieves the goals is suitable. All the portfolios will be displayed at the class site starting the end of week 8

Submitting your portfolio preferences to the instructor—before January 30th at latest, inform the instructor of your choices by this simple email format

Typical short email notification of portfolio selection to instructor:
“Part 1—globalization, network neutrality. Part 2—Big Data, CISPA, E-Voting, Part 3--Middle East”