



**COMM 576:
Civic Media and Participatory Politics
4 Units**

Spring 2020 – Tuesday – 3:30-6:20pm

Section: #20854D

Location: ASC G34

Instructors: Colin Maclay, Sangita Shresthova

Office: Room or meeting area

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: c.mac@usc.edu, shrestho@usc.edu

I. Course Description

COMM 576 dives into the growing field of “civic media”, or use of any media (including technology) for the purpose of increasing civic participation. We will explore a wide range of theories, conceptual tools, and contemporary and historical case studies...while developing our own applications of civic media.

Students will also have a unique opportunity to collaborate and learn with civic media practitioners and makers affiliated with the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab’s Civic Media Fellowship, a MacArthur Foundation funded program that connects and empowers social entrepreneurs, artists, activists, scholars and other catalysts working to increase awareness, understanding and engagement around pressing areas of public interest.

This graduate level course is a blend of theory and practice: a fully-participatory imagining - learning - teaching - exploring - building endeavor! From experiential learning to critical inquiry, from brainstorming to creating media objects, and sharing practices, elements will be both designed and emergent as we connect with this dynamic space and new generation of practitioners using media and technology to support civic action. By the end of the semester, we will have collectively engaged, re-imagined, and experienced the multi-faceted relationships between democratic participation, cultural production, and civic engagement in a changing media landscape.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Students will explore the following themes and topics through engagement with theory and practice:

- The arguments supporting nuanced definitions of civic media.
- Relationships between democratic participation, cultural production, and civic engagement in a changing media landscape.
- A historically contextualized look at how information and communications technologies and related policy issues interact with civic engagement.
- The role of new and digital media in facilitating and challenging civic engagement and political participation.
- Hands-on approaches to designing, developing, and appropriating media and technologies for activism, social movements, and social change.

- A look at state-centered and grassroots-based cases of civic media, including various genres and medium-specific practices.

Prerequisite(s): n/a

Co-Requisite(s): n/a

Concurrent Enrollment: n/a

Recommended Preparation: n/a

III. Course Notes

Participation in this course will be evaluated through a letter grade.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Assignment	Percentage of Grade and Due Date
<p>Civic Media Case Study 1 — Students will develop either a five-page report or creative media project focused on a civic or activist organization they feel is making innovative use of civic media. Media projects can include short videos, podcasts, slideshows, photo-essays, or anything else approved by the instructors. Students will share their report in class.</p>	<p>10% Due January 21</p>
<p>Civic Media Prototype — Students will work collaboratively to prototype a civic media action informed by civic media case studies, guests and personal knowledge / experience. The action can include text, short videos, podcasts, slideshows, photo-essays, or anything else approved by the instructors. They will be shared in short pitch-like presentations.</p>	<p>20% Due February 18</p>
<p>Civic Media Case Study 2— Students will develop either a five-page report or creative media project which traces the political impact of an organization, network, movement or particular story (from popular culture, folklore, history, religion, etc.) as it becomes a resource or battleground for the civic imagination and action. Media projects can include short videos, podcasts, slideshows, photo-essays, or anything else approved by the instructors and need to include a written guide. Students will share their report in class.</p>	<p>20% Due March 10</p>
<p>Final Reflection - Students will develop engaging content around themes, concepts and examples surfaced in class to arrive at a collective emergent definition of civic media. It can be conveyed in any medium and will be shared in our final class. This assignment can be combined with the Making Project or completed separately.</p>	<p>10% Due May 5</p>
<p>Final Making Project - Students will create a work-in-progress civic media artifact that applies the broad ideas of the course. A prototype can include an app, a website or digital tool, a short film, social media campaign or any</p>	<p>25% Due May 12</p>

other medium the students wish to play with for this assignment. We invite experimentation and learning new tools. Students should discuss their project with the instructor so we can set an appropriate scale for this project. Students should be ready to give a 10 minute presentation on their project in the final weeks of the class. We expect students to dedicate no more than 15 hours to this project and ask that they provide a short (~150 word) description of their process and what they learned along the way.	
Participation/Ongoing Short Reflections - In addition to classroom participation, students will introduce a student-selected reading/case study for discussion periodically over the course of the semester.	15%

*Many projects can be completed in groups. Grading will take into account both individual and collective contributions.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Civic Media Case Study 1	10	10%
Civic Media Prototype	20	20%
Civic Media Case Study 2	20	20%
Final Reflection	10	10%
Final Making Project	25	25%
Participation/Ongoing Short Reflections	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Assignments will be graded in accordance with standards applicable to a graduate level course.

d. Grading Timeline

Students can expect to receive grades on submitted assignments within 2 weeks.

VI. Assignment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics will be explained in class.

VII. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments can be submitted in person and/or email.

VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All required readings and supplementary materials will be made available to the students.

IX. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, February 28: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 1/14	Welcome to Civic Media		
Week 2 Date: 1/21	Introduction to Civic Media	Bring in an example of civic media to share with class Readings: Gordon, E., & Mihailidis, P. (Eds.). (2016). Introduction. In Civic Media: Technology, Design, Practice.	Civic Media Case Study 1

		<p>Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press</p> <p>Zuckerman, E. (2014). New Media, New Civics?: New Media, New Civics? Policy & Internet, 6(2), 153–160. https://doi.org/10.1002/1944-2866.POI360</p>	
<p>Week 3 Date: 1/28</p>	<p>The civic media landscape - strategies, dilemmas, ethics</p>	<p>Readings: Pierre Rosanvallon and Arthur Goldhammer, “Introduction,” Counter-democracy: Politics in the Age of Mistrust (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).</p> <p>Zuckerman, Ethan. Rewire: Digital Cosmopolitans in the Age of Connection – Introduction</p> <p>Guest: D’Lo</p>	
<p>Week 4 Date: 2/4</p>	<p>Publics, Audiences, Networks, Participation</p>	<p>Readings: Manuel Castells, “Networking Minds, Creating Meanings, Contesting Power,” Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age (New York: Polity, 2012)</p> <p>Patrisse Marie Cullors-Brignac, “We Didn’t Start a Movement. We</p>	

		<p>Started a Network.” (https://medium.com/@patrissemariecullorsbrignac/we-didn-t-start-a-movement-we-started-a-network-90f9b5717668#.4q060svov)</p>	
<p>Week 5 Date: 2/11</p>	<p>Participatory Politics</p>	<p>Readings: Henry Jenkins, “Youth Voice, Media, and Political Engagement: Introducing the Core Concepts,” in <i>By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism</i> (New York: New York University Press, 2016).</p> <p>Elisabeth Soep, “Youth Agency in Public Spheres: Emerging Tactics, Literacies, and Risks,” in Eric Gordon and Paul Mihailidis (eds.) <i>Civic Media: Technology/Design/Practice</i> (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).</p> <p>Guest: TBD (Event)</p>	
<p>Week 6 Date: 2/18</p>	<p>Power and Opportunity: Who participates?</p>	<p>Readings: Christopher Kelly, “From participation to power” In Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Henderson (eds.) <i>The Participatory Cultures Handbook</i> (Routledge, New York and London).</p>	<p>Civic Media Prototype Due</p>

		Guest: TBD	
Week 7 Date: 2/25	Civic Media and Cultural Production	<p>Readings: Ethan Zuckerman, “Cute Cats” in Danielle Allen (ed.) From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).</p> <p>Peter Dahlgren “Civic Culture: An Analytic Frame,” Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication, and Democracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)</p> <p>Guest: AJ Christian</p>	
Week 8 Date: 3/3	Imagination and Theories of Change	<p>Readings: Civic Imagination Casebook Introduction (Forthcoming 2020).</p> <p>Gianpaolo Baiocchi et al., “The Civic Imagination,” The Civic Imagination: Making a Difference in American Political Life (New York: Routledge, 2014).</p> <p>Guest: Susu Attar</p>	
Week 9 Date: 3/10	Digital Activism and Contentious Politics	<p>Readings:</p> <p>DiSalvo, C. (2012). Adversarial design. The MIT Press.</p>	Civic Media Case Study 2 Due

		<p>Alex Khasnabish and Max Haiven, "Lessons from Social Movements: Six Notes on the Radical Imagination." `</p> <p>Sasha Costanza-Chock, "Walkout Warriors: Transmedia Organizing," Out of the Shadows and Into the Streets!: Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrant Rights Movement (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014).</p> <p>Guest: Amber J. Phillips</p>	
<p>Week 10 Spring Break Dates: 3/16-3/20</p>	No Classes		
<p>Week 11 Date: 3/24</p>	Productive Collaboration	<p>Readings: Adrienne Maree Brown - "Emergent Strategies"</p> <p>Nick Couldry - "Rethinking the Politics of Voice."</p> <p>Guest: Michelle Zenarosa</p>	
<p>Week 12 Date: 3/31</p>	Design and Social Change	<p>Readings: VozMob, P. (2011). Mobile voices: Projecting the voices of immigrant workers by appropriating mobile phones for popular communication. Communications</p>	

		<p>research in action: scholar-activist collaborations for a democratic public sphere, 177-196.</p> <p>Guest: Tyree Boyd Pates</p>	
<p>Week 13 Date: 4/7</p>	<p>Pedagogies and Praxis</p>	<p>Readings: Paulo Freire, excerpt from Pedagogy of the Oppressed - Chapter 1</p> <p>bell hooks, "Paulo Freire," Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom (New York: Routledge, 1994).</p> <p>Guest: Martha Diaz</p>	
<p>Week 14 Dates: 4/14</p>	<p>Cultural Strategies</p>	<p>Readings: Mark Dery, "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs," in Marilyn DeLaure and Moritz Fink (ed.) Culture Jamming: Activism and the Art of Cultural Resistance (New York: New York University Press, 2017)</p> <p>Henry Jenkins, "From Culture Jamming to Cultural Acupuncture" in Marilyn DeLaure and Moritz Fink (ed.) Culture Jamming: Activism and the Art of Cultural Resistance (New York: New</p>	

		York University Press, 2017). Guest: An Xiao Mina	
Week 15 Dates: 4/21	Ethical Coding & Hacking	<p>Readings: Sasha Costanza-Chock, Maya Wagoner, Berhan Taye, Caroline Rivas, Chris Schweidler, Georgia Bullen, & the T4SJ Project (2018). "#MoreThanCode: Practitioners reimagine the landscape of technology for justice and equity." Research Action Design & Open Technology Institute.</p> <p>Noble, S.U. (2018). Algorithms of Oppression (Introduction). NYU Press.</p> <p>UK Guardian Article: Aaron Swartz stood up for freedom and fairness</p> <p>Watch Surveillance is About Power What Happens at an MIT Hackathon</p> <p>Guest: Justino Mora</p>	
Week 16 Dates: 4/28		Final project presentations, Civic media definitions and reflections, course evaluations	

STUDY DAYS Dates: 5/2-5/5		No class	Final Reflection Due
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Dates: 5/6-5/13		No class	Final Making Project Due

XII. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Participating in class and collaborating are key dimensions of this class. We welcome experimentation!

Communication

Students are welcome to contact instructors to meet outside class. Meetings can be arranged by email. Response can be expected within 48 hours.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | *Title IX* – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscsa.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XIII. About Your Instructors (optional)

Colin Maclay - Executive Director Annenberg Innovation Lab, Professor (Research) - Despite a fairly firm — if optimistic — grip on reality, Colin continually engages wicked problems around the interaction of media, technology and society, and imagining and implementing visionary responses of institutions, organizations and individuals. As a believer in the power of genuine collaboration committed to a tight and timely loop connecting scholarship and practice, he’s worked extensively with diverse organizations in the US and worldwide on media, learning, innovation, policy, and many other topics on which he claims no expertise. Before his own westward expansion, Colin spent more than a decade helping to build and lead the Berkman Center at Harvard University and the Digital Initiative at Harvard Business School. He holds degrees from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Harvard’s Kennedy School and Northeastern University.

Sangita Shresthova Ph.D. – Director of Research@Civic Paths - Sangita focuses on digital media, civics, participation, the civic imagination and cross cultural dialogue. Her work has been presented in academic and creative venues around the world including the Schaubuehne (Berlin), the Other Festival (Chennai), the EBS International Documentary Festival (Seoul). She is currently the director of research for the Civic Imagination Project @Civic Paths at the University of Southern California. The project taps the civic imagination (our collective vision for what a better tomorrow might look like) to help diverse communities harness creativity for real world change. She is working on several forthcoming books, including: Practicing Futures (a guide to harnessing the civic imagination) and the Civic Imagination Casebook.