New Media and Society: Theoretical Advances and Chinese Context  
School of Journalism, Fudan University

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Course Description

This course explores selected “frontier” theoretical and empirical issues on how new media and society are interacting with each other with an emphasis on Chinese context. It addresses three sets of questions: what are the basic characteristics of new media development in China? How ordinary Chinese people adopt and use Internet and other new information and communication technologies? How have the Internet and other new media technologies affected Chinese people and what are further implications of the new media on Chinese society? The topics to be discussed will include new media adoption and usage, new media regulation, social media and public opinion, online activism, new media and social stratification, new media and journalism, among others.

Prerequisites

Although not formally required, it is strongly recommended that students come to this course with knowledge of the basic situation of Chinese new media and, ideally, some knowledge of the new media events in China. It would be fantastic if students have read Chinese cyberspace.

Course Evaluation

This class combines brief lecturing with extensive discussion. Additional class activities include video screening, individual term project, and in-class presentation. Students will complete a final research project in lieu of final exam. Grading will be based on class attendance and participation (50%) and final project (50%).

Assignments

1) Class Attendance and Participation: All students should come to class every week well prepared to discuss the assigned readings. To facilitate class discussion, you are expected to email instructor and all classmates at least one discussion question at least three days before the class. You are also encouraged to share any related academic literature or media items with the instructor and all classmates.

2) Final project: In lieu of a final exam, you will hand in an original research paper to advance knowledge in some area of new media and Chinese society. This topic should be approved by the instructor on or before November 1 (to be double-checked). Papers will be a literature review (theoretical synthesis) or an empirical study (quantitative or qualitative). Towards the end of this course, each student will be given the opportunity to talk about their research ideas in class.
Readings

There is no specific textbook for this course; individual readings are instead assigned. The majority of readings will be available at the course email box (TBA). Students are encouraged to share literature they think useful to the whole class by sending to the email box and notifying the instructor and all classmates.

Lecture & Readings Outline (tentative)

Week 1: New media scholarship and Chinese new media study

Week 2: Social construction of new media

Week 3: New media adoption and usage

Week 4: New media and politics 1 – Regulation

Week 5: New media and politics 2 – Engagement (expression, participation and online opinion)
Week 6: New media and politics 3 – Activism

Week 7: New media and journalism 1 – The interaction between new and old

Week 8: New media and journalism 2 – Social media usage by journalists

Week 9: New media and journalism 3 – Citizen journalism, professional-amateur and journalistic authority
Week 10: New media and social stratification (digital divide, subjective consciousness, ICT4D and empowerment)

Week 11: New media and sociability

Week 12: New media and social integration/divergence (online nationalism)

Week 13: New media and migrants/ Diasporas

Week 14: New media events
157-166.

Week 15: Student presentations