

GE3202: CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Citizen Journalism and Civil Society

Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

Course Number

3202

Academic Unit

Media and Communication (COM)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

GE Area (Primary)

Area 2 - Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course is designed to prepare students to work as local citizen journalists in the context of emerging personalized media and diminishing public trust in traditional media. The civil society is vibrant and dynamic. It is therefore theoretically critical and practically important that students become aware of such journalistic practices and their impacts on the structure and processes of social activism, political involvement and public life in Greater China in general and in Hong Kong in particular.

Course Aims

The students will discover how digital media, especially social media (e.g., smart-phones, blogs, micro-blogs, discussion forums, social networking sites, and etc.) empower citizens to express their views or report on various issues and to be actively engaged in public affairs on a daily basis. They will examine the interplay between citizen participation in public affairs and journalism in Hong Kong and Greater China, with particular emphasis on such issues and problems as public transportation, urban development, street safety, public health, democracy and elections in recent years. Students will have hands-on opportunities in and out of class to observe and conduct journalism-related activities in public affairs.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe the relationship between journalism and democracy			x	
2	Demonstrate analytical ability and skills to discuss issues and problems facing civil society			x	
3	Demonstrate skills to use digital media to produce citizen journalism items and gather information and data about real world events and issues			x	x
4	Apply relevant theories and perspectives of journalism and democracy to analyze issues of public affairs and citizen life		x	x	x
5	Conduct research on concepts, practices and structures related to citizen journalism		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Students will engage in formal lectures to understand key concepts, theories, perspectives, and case studies	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Two hours of lecture and one hour of tutorial
2	Class participation, Discussion, and Presentation	Students will participate in in-class discussions and presentation. They will also use the Internet to search for materials and real-world cases related to citizen journalism and civic participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Case studies	In small groups, students will conduct a case study through field observations on issues related to public life and civil society	1, 2, 3, 4	
4	Group projects & Presentation	In small groups, students will write papers and give oral presentations of research findings	4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation: Assessment will be based on how students attend the lectures and participate in class activities.	1, 2, 3	10	Small group discussion and in-class activities	No
2	Short online assignments: Assessment will be based how students reflect on the readings and use the citizen media to report and analyse real-world social issues.	4, 5	30	Weekly internet assignments#	No

3	Quizzes: Assessment will be based on students' knowledge of key concepts, theories and perspectives	1, 2, 3, 4	30	Texts and lectures-based quizzes#	No
4	Group projects: Assessment will be based on students' ability to apply relevant concepts and principles to analyze issues and problems involving journalism and civil society. Assessment will also be based on the quality of research, clarity of presentation in oral and written form, and organization.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	A real-world related issue or event to be considered as part of the project^	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Additional Information for ATs

The final group project of the course requires students to select a social issue of their interest, gather first-hand information about the issue from interview with key stakeholders, and write reports on their findings.

In doing the group project, students will be guided to incorporate AI use in their learning by collaborating with AI to brainstorm for potential topics and approaches to the topics. Students will also be guided to use AI tools to generate video footage to visualize their investigation findings for presentation in the class.

However, students are prohibited from using the AI to generate their final report. Students must clearly declare their usage of AI (including the specific AI tool used and the purpose and scope of usage) in the progress of completing their final group project.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Quiz

Criterion

KNOWLEDGE of health theories and communication theories

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Individual assignments

Criterion

CAPACITY for analyzing health issues

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Group Project and Presentation

Criterion

CAPACITY for SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING to understand health communication and identify key health issues

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Class participation

Criterion

ATTITUDE for active learning and participation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Citizen journalism, democracy, civil society, public affairs, digital media, social activism, political involvement, Internet.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Week 1: Introduction to Citizen Journalism Gillmor, Dan. (2004). We the media: Grassroots journalism by the people, for the people. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Papacharissi, Zizi. (2009). Journalism and citizenship: New agendas in communication. New York: Routledge.
2	Week 2: New Media and Empowerment Domingo, David & Heinonen, Ari. (2008). Weblogs and journalism: A typology to explore the blurring boundaries. Nordicom Review, 29, 3-15. Lowrey, Wilson. (2006). Mapping the journalism-blogging relationship. Journalism, 7, 477-500. Lowrey, Wilson & Anderson, William. (2005). The journalist behind the curtain: Participatory functions on the Internet and their impact on perceptions of the work of journalism. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10(3), article 13. http://jcme.indiana.edu/vol10/issue3/lowrey.html Matheson, Donald. (2004). Weblogs and the epistemology of the news: Some trends in online journalism. New Media & Society, 6, 443-468.
3	Week 3: Journalism and Civic Engagement Robinson, Susan. (2006). The mission of the j-blog: Recapturing journalistic authority online. Journalism, 7, 65-83. Rosenberry, Jack & St. John, Burton. (2009). Public journalism 2.0: The promise and reality of a citizen engaged press. New York: Routledge. Thurman, Neil. (2008). Forums for citizen journalists? Adoption of user generated content initiatives by online news media. New Media & Society, 10, 139-157. Williams, Eesha. (2007). Grassroots journalism: A practical manual, 2nd edition. Boston: Dollars and Sense.
4	Week 4: Civil Society Eberly, Don E. (Ed.). (2000). The essential civil society reader: The classical essays. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Ehrenberg, John. (1999). Civil society: The critical history of an idea. New York: New York University Press. Scheuer, Jeffrey. (2008). The big picture: Why democracies need journalistic excellence. New York: Routledge.

5	Weeks 5-6: The Rise of Civil Society in Hong Kong and Mainland China Rosenblum, Nancy L. & Post, Robert C. (Eds.). (2002). Civil society and government. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Ma, N. (2008). Civil Society and Democratization in Hong Kong Paradox and Duality, Taiwan Journal of Democracy, 4(2), 155-175. Tai, Zixue. (2006). The Internet in China: Cyberspace and civil society. New York: Routledge.
6	Week 7: Media and Society Arterton, F. Christopher. (1987). Teledemocracy: Can technology protect democracy? Newbury Park: Sage. Bennett, W. Lance. (1988). News: The politics of illusion, second edition. New York: Longman. Davis, Richard. (1999). The web of politics: The Internet's impacts on the American political system. New York: Oxford University Press.
7	Week 8: News and Democracy Davis, Richard & Owen, Diana. (1998). New media and American politics. New York: Oxford University Press. Davis, Steve; Elin, Larry; & Reeher, Grant. (2002). Click on democracy: The Internet's power to change political apathy into civic action. Boulder, CO: Westview. Edelman, Murray. (1985). The symbolic uses of politics. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
8	Week 9: New Media and Local Politics Entman, Robert M. (1989). Democracy without citizens: Media and the decay of American politics. New York: Oxford University Press. Fuller, Jack. (1996). News values: Ideas for an information age. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Lippmann, Walter. (1922). Public opinion. New York: Free Press.
9	Week 10: The Interplay among the State, Society and Media Page, Benjamin I. (1996). Who deliberates? Mass media in modern democracy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pavlik, John V. (1996). New media and the information superhighway. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Seib, Philip. (2002). Going live: Getting the news right in a real-time, online world. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
10	Week 11: Internet and the Changing Media Environment Sunstein, Cass. (2001). Republic.com. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Toulouse, Chris & Luke, Timothy W. (Eds.). (1998). The politics of cyberspace. New York: Routledge. Wilhelm, Anthony G. (2004). Digital nation: Toward an inclusive information society. Cambridge: MIT Press.
11	Week 12: Challenges from Citizen Journalism to Professional Journalism Anderson, David M. & Cornfield, Michael. (Eds.). (2003). The civic Web: Online politics and democratic values. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Bugeja, Michael. (2005). Interpersonal divide: The search for communication in a technological age. New York: Oxford University Press. Kamarck, Elaine Ciulla & Nye, Joseph S., Jr. (Eds.). (1999). Democracy.com? Governance in a networked world. Hollis, NJ: Hollis.
12	Week 13: Cyberspace and Citizen Participation Chadwick, Andrew. (2006). Internet politics: States, citizens, and new communication technologies. New York: Oxford University Press. George, Cherian. (2006). Contentious journalism and the Internet: Towards democratic discourse in Malaysia and Singapore. Singapore: Singapore University Press. Gurak, Laura J. (2001). Cyberliteracy: Navigating the Internet with awareness. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Nil

Annex (for GE courses only)

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning

1, 2, 4

PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology

3, 4, 5

PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

3, 4, 5

PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues

1, 2

PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

3, 4, 5

PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task

Class participation, quizzes, group project, online assignments, presentation