

Titel: Selected Topics in Political Sociology I: Politics of the Internet: Social Networks, Institutions and Engagement	Verantw.: Deth, Jan Willem. Theocharis, Yannis Durchf.: Theocharis, Yannis
Art der Veranstaltung: Hauptseminar	Angeboten im: Frühjahrssemester 2014

Kursbeschreibung:

Daily life has become a connected life and is driven by non-stop incoming mail notifications, Facebook updates, (re)tweeted messages, YouTube videos and other electronically mediated fragments. This ‘networked’ lifestyle gives us an increasing feeling of connectedness (or disconnectedness?) and provides constantly opportunities for learning, problem-solving, enriching our social life through diverse interactions and becoming better informed about, and engaged with, the world around us. Over the last two decades, the proliferation and convergence of networked media and information technologies have profoundly redefined communication patterns between citizens and their representatives, altered significant aspects of everyday life, and reshaped our thinking about the conduct of democratic politics. This course is concerned with the rise of the internet as a political tool and its potential to empower individuals. It explores the ways in which it constantly reconfigures relations between states, citizens and institutions. It discusses the rise of social networks and focuses on their transformative role on civic engagement, organisation, participation and democracy. Finally, it critically assesses the internet’s role as a tool for democratisation, drawing on recent cases such as the Occupy Wall Street, and the Arab Spring mobilisations. What are the political consequences

of the intersection of politics and the internet? How does intense online networking change the way we think about and practice politics? Some say that the internet does not simply empower political participation but can even trigger revolutions. Yet, others insist that it is just ‘politics as usual’, if not a dangerous tool for cyber-bullying, censorship and surveillance. This course engages with these controversies and tackles these difficult questions aiming to help students think critically and constructively about some of the most important the challenges of the information age.