[NM5201 The State and Civil Society in the Information Age]
Detailed Module Guide

Module Coordinator: Weiyu Zhang, Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore

Module Coordinator's Contact:

- Office @ **65168156**
- Email: **cnmzw**@nus.edu.sg

Module Timetable

- Time and Duration: 3 hours weekly
- Venue: **online**

Modular Credits: 5 (Amend, if applicable)

Synopsis

The moment of the ascent of ICT oriented Civil society interventions coincides with a general consensus on the need for strengthening civil society against a degenerating and authoritarian State and/or a totalising market. This position is often denoted as the civil society argument. An in depth analysis of the patterns and processes of this fusion of ICTs and Civil society provides new insights into the dynamics of state- civil society-market interaction on the one hand and throws new light into an understanding of edifices of the emerging information society.

This module will expose students to emerging issues in state-society relationships and governance within the context of rapid changes in information and communication technologies (ICTs). It addresses how the notions of 'community', 'citizenship', and 'democracy' have been changed by the creation of a transnational public sphere due to ICTs.

This module also explores the contexts and practices of ICTs based interventions in the Civil Society arena at the local, national and global levels to provide a cross cultural and multifaceted analysis of its ramifications. It draws on psychological, sociological, anthropological and new media theories and methods to engage with the problems of inclusion, social capital formation, community empowerment, civil resistance, voluntary action, social movements and dynamics of the public sphere.

Aims & Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

- Students will explore the historical conceptions of civil society (Locke, Marx, Gramsci) and the implications of the information age on these views
- Students will understand the role of civil society and the state in the fluid and fast-changing world of social media, virtual communities and mobile technology
- Students will develop qualitative, ethnographic skills in engaging with online social movements (both state and independent) that constitute contemporary civil society

Teaching Modes

The Module is taught in a seminar format. There will be a 1 hour lecture by the instructor, followed by work-in-progress discussions about students' ongoing ethnographic investigations.

Each week one student will lead a 45 minute discussion on a selected paper (to be announced at the start of term). Depending on class sizes, students should expect to lead at least 1 discussion over the course of the module. This discussion will be graded.

Syllabus

Please refer to the Schedule. A detailed reading list will be released in Week 1.

For those unfamiliar with concepts of Civil Society (or would like a quick refresher on Hegel, Gramsci and Marx's views), please read Parekh (This is available as an e-book in the NUS Library Portal)

Parekh, B. (2004). Putting civil society in its place. In M. Glasius, D. Lewis, & H. Seckinelgin (Eds.), *Exploring Civil Society: Political and cultural contexts* (pp. 14–23). London and New York: Routledge.

Schedule

Week	Topic	Remarks
1	Introduction – What is State?	
2	Introduction – What is Civil Society?	Country submitted
3	What is case study?	
4	The politics of researching ICTs	
5	Censorship and ICTs: The Great Firewall	
6	Elections and ICTs: The cases of Malaysia and Singapore	
Reading Week		
7	**No Class – Preparation for Midterm Presentation**	
8	Student Presentations/Q&A	Mid-Term Presentation Due
9	Activism and ICTs: The Arab Spring	
10	**No Class – Deepavali**	
11	Social movement and ICTs: The Occupy Movement	
12	Public sphere and ICTs: The case of EU	
13	Student Presentations/Q&A	
Reading Week		
Final Essay Submission (Nov 27, 2014)		

Week 1:

Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). Habermas and Focault?: Thinkers for civil society? British Journal of Sociology, 49(2), Available at: http://flyvbjerg.plan.aau.dk/CIVSOC5%200PRINTBJS.pdf

Koh, Gillian and Soon, Debbie. The Future of Singapore's Civil Society. (2012). Social Space. , 92-98. Social Space. Available at: http://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/lien_research/104

Week 2:

Hall, J. A., & Ikenberry, G. J. (1989). *The anthropology of the state*. Available at: http://65.100.139.119:8080/get/pdf/The%20Anthropology%20of%20the%20State_%20A%20Reader%20(Blackwell%20Readers%20in%20Anthropology)%20-%20Aradhana%20Sharma,%20Akhil%20Gupta_7510.pdf#page=373 Read "Introduction: Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization"

Terence Chong (2006) Embodying society's best: Hegel and the Singapore state, Journal of Contemporary Asia, 36:3, 283-304. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00472330680000181

Week 3:

Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 5). Boston: Pearson. Available at: https://sisis.rz.htw-berlin.de/inh2012/12424693.pdf Read chapter 10.

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for?. *American political science review*, *98*(02), 341-354. Available at: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~nmstuewe/CaseStudy/pdf/whatisacasestudy.pdf

Week 4:

Zhang, W. & Neyazi, T. (2021). Communication and Technology Theories from the South: The Cases of China and India. Annals of ICA.

Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. Television & New Media, 20(4), 336-349.

Week 5:

Qiu, J. L. (1999). Virtual censorship in China: Keeping the gate between the cyberspaces. *International Journal of Communications Law and Policy*,*4*(Winter), 1-25. Available at: http://ijclp.net/old_website/4_2000/pdf/ijclp_webdoc_1_4_2000.pdf

MacKinnon, R. (2009). China's Censorship 2.0: How companies censor bloggers. *First Monday*, *14*(2). Available at: http://www.firstmonday.dk/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2378/2089

Week 6:

Skoric, M., Poor, N., Achananuparp, P., Lim, E. P., & Jiang, J. (2012, January). Tweets and votes: A study of the 2011 singapore general election. In *System Science (HICSS), 2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on* (pp. 2583-2591). IEEE. Available at: http://www.researchgate.net/publication/232631921_Tweets_and_Votes_A_Study_of_the_2011_Singap

ore_General_Election/file/e0b4952cb91e2616c9.pdf

Zhang, W. & Lim, J. (May 2012). *Social media and general elections in authoritarian democracies: The cases of Malaysia and Singapore.* Paper presented at the 62nd Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Phoenix, USA. (See Workbin)

Week 9:

Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs, and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004–2011. *Journal of Communication*, *62*(2), 231-248. Available at:
http://www.academia.edu/download/29890003/Lim_JoC_2012_Egypt.pdf

Aouragh, M., & Alexander, A. (2011). The arab spring| the egyptian experience: Sense and nonsense of the internet revolution. *International Journal of communication*, *5*, 15. Available at:
http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/1191/610

Week 11

Castells, M. (2013). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the internet age*. John Wiley & Sons. Read chapter "Occupy Wall Street". (See Workbin)

Haciyakupoglu, G., & Zhang, W. (May 2014). *Information Verification in the Course of the Turkish Gezi Social Movement*. Paper presented at the 64th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Seattle, USA. (See Workbin)

Week 12

Koopmans, R., & Erbe, J. (2004). Towards a European public sphere? Vertical and horizontal dimensions of Europeanized political communication. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, *17*(2), 97-118. Available at:
http://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/56470/1/385535384.pdf

Trenz, H. J. (2004). Media coverage on european governance exploring the european public sphere in national quality newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*, *19*(3), 291-319. (See Workbin)

Prerequisites (What should I know?)	<u>Top</u>

Prerequisites: None
Enrolment: CNM major who has accumulated 120 MC, CNM, FASS, and other graduate students
Preclusion: IF4880A or IF5201

Assessment	<u>Top</u>

Class participation (attendance and taking part in class discussions and WIP updates) 20%

Class presentations (discussion lead) 15%
Mid term WIP Poster 25%
Final Essay 40%

Mid-term Assessment

Project - Virtual Ethnography of Online Communities

Over a period of 10 weeks, you should conduct a virtual ethnography of an online community that can claim to be part of Civil Society. This can be related to the state (residents' committees, People'a Association, Community Clubs, etc) or can be independent (internatonal activitist groups, local interest groups, etc).

You should attempt to gain access to your chosen field by Week 3, and conduct participant observation over a period of 5 weeks to Week 8. At week 8 (week starting Monday March 10, 2014) you will then present a Work-in-Progress poster mapping your field, including but not limited to the social makeup, actors, relationships, space and design of that particular online community.

Final Project

Submit a 5000 word paper on your ethnography of your chosen online community. This should be written in the style of an academic journal article, thematically centered on *either* **The relationship of the State and Civil Society in Online Environments** *or* **Civil Society and the Internet**.

Standard formatting rules apply, please use APA 6th edition formatting for your citations.