Pol481H1F/POL2240H1F / GLA2010H – Geopolitics of Information and Communication Technologies

Professor: Ron Deibert

Term: Fall 2017
Day & Time: Tuesday 4-6pm ; Thursday 2-4pm
Room: TBD

Title: This syllabus covers two identical courses: **Pol481H1F/POL2240H1F**, which is a Political Science course offered Tues 2-4 pm, and **GLA2010H**, which is a Masters in Global Affairs course offered Thursdays 2-4 pm in room B019.

New information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, are widely believed to be transforming world politics. While these transformations have brought about important challenges to state power and authority, they have not eliminated power politics and the quest for security and competitive advantage among actors on the world stage. Today, states and non-state actors alike are seeking ways to exploit information and information systems to pursue political objectives. The control of information has long been widely seen as a source of political power, and is manifest today in competition over both the media and the messages of the global communications environment. From the filtering and interception of Internet traffic to the circulation of home-made videos by militant Islamists, a new geopolitics of information and communication technologies is underway. The Geopolitics of ICTs course is an intensive examination of the ways in which states and non-state actors are contesting the newly evolving terrain of global digital-electronic-telecommunications. Topics covered include Internet censorship and surveillance, information warfare, computer network attacks, hacktivism, and governance of global communications. The course is organized as a series of intensive modules. One feature of the class will be a hands-on" analysis of censorship circumvention and network interrogation techniques at the Citizen Lab (https://citizenlab.ca/).

Readings: All of the readings are found online on a password protected class website. Please email r.deibert@utoronto.ca for the URL and username and password for access.

Format: Aside from the first class (which is primarily an overview), the seminars are discussion-based. You are expected to do the readings prior to the class and come to each class prepared to discuss them. This is not a lecture course. **You will be graded on participation**. There are usually two types of readings for each week: *required* and *optional*. You must complete all the required readings, and select at least two optional readings or links. Content may change as current events dictate.

The course focuses heavily on the research of the Citizen Lab. Please familiarize yourself with the work of the Lab here: https://citizenlab.ca/, and follow the citizen lab twitter account @citizenlab and my twitter account @RonDeibert. We will have several Citizen

Lab researchers visit the class, and you will get a tour of the Citizen Lab at some point during the term.

Contact: I do not hold regular office hours. The best way to reach me with a question is by email and I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible. Please be patient. To facilitate a timely response, please put in the subject header "**The Geopolitics of Cyberspace Course**".

Grading and Assignments:
Short paper: 30% (due the fifth week of class)
Long paper: 40% (due last day of class)
Class Participation: 30%
Class participation involves active, engaged contributions to the discussion. Each student should come to the class prepared to make a few prepared comments about the readings. Additional points are given for contributing comments that show some degree of analytical sophistication (e.g., comparing readings to one another; contrasting assumptions made in readings with empirical data brought to the class by the student). Poor participation involves not being engaged, not communicating or preparing comments in advance (i.e., being a "spectator" in class). Do not wait for me to direct the discussion. Come willing to engage. Participation marks will also be based on short student presentations, which will be organized in the last two weeks of the term.

Late penalties: 1% off of the assignment for each weekday late.