

15.S11 SSIM: Economics and Politics of Media, Internet, and Social Networking Platforms

Charles Angelucci (MIT Sloan) and Alexey Makarin (MIT Sloan)

This graduate-level course is designed for students in economics and related fields who are interested in exploring the topics of the economics of media, the internet, and social networking platforms. The past decade has seen a proliferation of economic research related to the organization of the media industry and the causal effects of technological advancements such as the internet and social media. The course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of this literature, supplementing the graduate curriculum in economics and political science, including the topics on media and politics covered in 14.773. Assessment for the course will be based on participation (50%) and a final research proposal of two pages (50%; due by **March 24**).

Classes are going to take place on Mondays 1:00PM – 3:50PM at E62-587, MIT Sloan School of Management, during the first half of the Spring semester. Administrative support for this class is provided by Sam Reisman (reisman@mit.edu). Office hours can be scheduled by sending an email request to either Charles (cangeluc@mit.edu) or Alexey (makarin@mit.edu).

Class Schedule

1. [February 3, Angelucci]

Market structure and content variety: Theory and empirics

- Angelucci, C., & Cagé, J. (2019). Newspapers in Times of Low Advertising Revenues. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 11(3), 319–364.
- Angelucci, C., Sinkinson, M., & Cagé, J. (2024). Media Competition and News Diets. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 16(2), 62–102.
- Berry, S., Eizenberg, A., & Waldfogel, J. (2016). Optimal Product Variety in Radio Markets. *The RAND Journal of Economics*, 47(3), 463–497.
- Berry, S. T., & Waldfogel, J. (2001). Do Mergers Increase Product Variety? Evidence from Radio Broadcasting. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116(3).
- Fan, Y. (2013). Ownership Consolidation and Product Characteristics: A Study of the US Daily Newspaper Market. *American Economic Review*, 103(5), 1598–1628.
- Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2010). What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from US Daily Newspapers. *Econometrica*, 78(1), 35–71.
- Gentzkow, M., Shapiro, J. M., & Sinkinson, M. (2014). Competition and Ideological Diversity: Historical Evidence from US Newspapers. *American Economic Review*, 104(10), 3073–3114.
- George, L., & Waldfogel, J. (2003). Who Affects Whom in Daily Newspaper Markets? *Journal of Political Economy*, 111(4), 765–784.
- George, L. M., & Waldfogel, J. (2006). The New York Times and the Market for Local Newspapers. *American Economic Review*, 96(1), 435–447.

2. [February 10, Angelucci]

Market structure and content variety: Theory and empirics

- Anderson, S. P., & Waldfoegel, J. (2015). Preference externalities in media markets. In S. P. Anderson, J. Waldfoegel, & D. Stromberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Media Economics* (pp. 3-40). North-Holland.
- Armstrong, M. (2006). Competition in Two-sided Markets. *Rand Journal of Economics*, 37(3), 668-691.
- Athey, S., Calvano, E., & Gans, J. S. (2018). The Impact of Consumer Multi-homing on Advertising Markets and Media Competition. *Management Science*, 64(4), 1574-1590.
- Bhuller, M., Havnes, T., McCauley, J., & Mogstad, M. (2020). How the Internet Changed the Market for Print Media.
- Cagé, J., Hervé, N., & Viaud, M.-L. (2020). The Production of Information in an Online World. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 87(5), 2126-2164.
- Jeon, D.-S., & Nasr, N. (2016). News Aggregators and Competition among Newspapers on the Internet. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 8(4), 91-114.
- Durante, R., & Knight, B. (2012). Partisan Control, Media Bias, and Viewer Responses: Evidence from Berlusconi's Italy. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 10(3), 451-481.
- Mullainathan, S., and A. Shleifer. 2005. The Market for News. *American Economic Review*, 95 (4): 1031-1053.
- Szeidl, A., & Szucs, F. (2021). Media Capture Through Favor Exchange. *Econometrica*, 89, 281-310.

3. [February 17] Presidents' Day — HOLIDAY

4. [February 24, Angelucci]

Misinformation

- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.
- Angelucci, C., & Prat, A. (2024). Is Journalistic Truth Dead? Measuring How Informed Voters Are about Political News. *American Economic Review*, 114(4), 887-925.
- Barrera, O., Guriev, S., Henry, E., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2020). Facts, Alternative Facts, and Fact Checking in Times of Post-Truth Politics. *Journal of Public Economics*, 182, 104-123.
- Guriev, S., Henry, E., Marquis, T., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2023). Curtailing False News, Amplifying Truth. *Working Paper*.
- Henry, E., Zhuravskaya, E., & Guriev, S. (2022). Checking and Sharing Alt-Facts. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 14(3), 55-86.
- Nyhan, B. (2020). Facts and Myths about Misperceptions. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 34(3), 220-236.
- Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The Spread of True and False News Online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151.

5. [March 3, Makarin]

Social media and individual well-being

- Braghieri, L., Levy, R. E., & Makarin, A. (2022). Social media and mental health. *American Economic Review*, 112(11), 3660-93.
- Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., & Song, L. (2022). Digital addiction. *American Economic Review*, 112(7), 2424-63.
- Allcott, H., Braghieri, L., Eichmeyer, S., & Gentzkow, M. (2020). The welfare effects of social media. *American Economic Review*, 110(3), 629-76.
- Mosquera, R., Odunowo, M., McNamara, T., Guo, X., & Petrie, R. (2020). The economic effects of Facebook. *Experimental Economics*, 23(2), 575-602.
- Bursztyn, L., Handel, B. R., Jimenez, R., & Roth, C. (2023). When product markets become collective traps: The case of social media (No. w31771). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Aridor, G. (forthcoming). Measuring Substitution Patterns in the Attention Economy: An Experimental Approach. *RAND Journal of Economics*.
- Armona, L. (2023). Online Social Network Effects in Labor Markets: Evidence from Facebook's Entry to College Campuses. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1-47.

Online dating platforms and dating markets

- Buyukeren, B., Makarin, A., & Xiong, H. (2022). The Impact of Dating Apps on Young Adults: Evidence from Tinder
- Hitsch, G. J., Hortacısu, A., & Ariely, D. (2010). Matching and Sorting in Online Dating. *The American Economic Review*, 130-163.
- Hitsch, Günter J., Ali Hortacısu, and Dan Ariely. "What makes you click?—Mate preferences in online dating." *Quantitative Marketing and Economics* 8 (2010): 393-427.
- Greenwood, B. N., & Agarwal, R. (2016). Matching platforms and HIV incidence: An empirical investigation of race, gender, and socioeconomic status. *Management Science*, 62(8), 2281-2303.
- Huber, G. A., & Malhotra, N. (2017). Political homophily in social relationships: Evidence from online dating behavior. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1), 269-283.
- Antler, Y., Bird, D., & Fershtman, D. (2022). Learning in the Marriage Market: The Economics of Dating.

6. [March 10, Makarin]

Social media and authoritarian politics

- Enikolopov, R., Makarin, A., & Petrova, M. (2020). Social media and protest participation: Evidence from Russia. *Econometrica*, 88(4), 1479-1514.
- Qin, B., Strömberg, D., & Wu, Y. (2024). Social media and collective action in China. *Econometrica*, 92(6), 1993-2026.
- Qin, B., Strömberg, D., & Wu, Y. (2017). Why does China allow freer social media? Protests versus surveillance and propaganda. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(1), 117-140.
- Acemoglu, D., Hassan, T. A., & Tahoun, A. (2018). The power of the street: Evidence from Egypt's Arab Spring. *The Review of Financial Studies*, 31(1), 1-42.
- Little, A. T. (2016). Communication technology and protest. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(1), 152-166.

- Guriev, S., & Treisman, D. (2022). Spin dictators: The changing face of tyranny in the 21st century. Princeton University Press.
- Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., & Sonin, K. (2018). Social media and corruption. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 10(1), 150-174.
- Enikolopov, R., Makarin, A., Petrova, M., & Polishchuk, L. (forthcoming). Social image, networks, and protest participation. *Journal of Politics*
- King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 326-343.
- King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2017). How the Chinese government fabricates social media posts for strategic distraction, not engaged argument. *American Political Science Review*, 111(3), 484-501.

7. [March 17, Makarin]

Political and economic effects of the Internet expansion

- Political effects:
 - Zhuravskaya, E., Petrova, M., & Enikolopov, R. (2020). Political effects of the internet and social media. *Annual Review of Economics*, 12, 415-438.
 - Guriev, S., Melnikov, N., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2021). 3G internet and confidence in government. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(4), 2533-2613.
 - Melnikov, N. (2021). Mobile internet and political polarization.
 - Tabellini, G., Manacorda, M., & Tesei, A. (2023). Mobile Internet and the Rise of Communitarian Politics.
 - Falck, O., Gold, R., & Heblich, S. (2014). E-elections: Voting Behavior and the Internet. *American Economic Review*, 104(7), 2238-2265.
 - Campante, F., Durante, R., & Sobbrío, F. (2018). Politics 2.0: The multifaceted effect of broadband internet on political participation. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 16(4), 1094-1136.
 - Chen, Y., & Yang, D. Y. (2019). The impact of media censorship: 1984 or brave new world?. *American Economic Review*, 109(6), 2294-2332.
 - Gavazza, A., Nardotto, M., & Valletti, T. (2019). Internet and politics: Evidence from UK local elections and local government policies. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(5), 2092-2135.
- Economic effects
 - Akerman, A., Gaarder, I., & Mogstad, M. (2015). The skill complementarity of broadband internet. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 130(4), 1781-1824.
 - Hjort, J., & Poulsen, J. (2019). The arrival of fast internet and employment in Africa. *American Economic Review*, 109(3), 1032-79.
 - Hjort, J., & Tian, L. (2021). The economic impact of Internet connectivity in developing countries.
 - Akerman, A., Leuven, E., & Mogstad, M. (2022). Information frictions, internet, and the relationship between distance and trade. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 14(1), 133-163.
 - Chiplunkar, G., & Goldberg, P. K. (2022). The Employment Effects of Mobile Internet in Developing Countries (No. w30741).

- Social change:
 - Bhuller, M., Havnes, T., Leuven, E., & Mogstad, M. (2013). Broadband internet: An information superhighway to sex crime?. *Review of Economic Studies*, 80(4), 1237-1266.
 - Geraci, A., Nardotto, M., Reggiani, T., & Sabatini, F. (2022). Broadband internet and social capital. *Journal of Public Economics*, 206, 104578.
 - Golin, M. (2022). The effect of broadband internet on the gender gap in mental health: Evidence from Germany. *Health Economics*, 31, 6-21.
 - Arenas-Arroyo, E., Fernández-Kranz, D., & Nollenberger, N. (2022). High-Speed Internet and the Widening Gender Gap in Adolescent Mental Health: Evidence from Hospital Records (No. 15728). IZA Discussion Papers.
 - Donati, D., Durante, R., Sobbrío, F., & Zejcirovic, D. (2022). Lost in the net? Broadband Internet and youth mental health.