

**CEU SUN Summer Course on
Advocacy, Activism and the Internet: Communication Policy for Social Change
Central European University, Budapest**

Course dates: 6-12 July, 2014

Duration: 1 week

Organized by:

Center for Media and Communication Studies (CMCS), SPP, CEU
Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Statement of purpose:

This intensive summer course is designed to help both researchers, activists and policy advocates gain new insights into the role civil society can play in advocating for a free and open internet. Through the course, participants will also learn digital tools for mobilizing and organizing constituencies and for enhancing their own online security and privacy, as well as that of activists and journalists.

Course directors:

- Kate Coyer (Center for Media and Communication Studies, CEU)
- Susan Abbott (Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School, University of Pennsylvania, USA)
- Monroe Price (Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, U Pennsylvania and Chair Center for Media and Communication Studies, CEU)

Coordinators:

- Eva Bognar, (Center for Media and Communication Studies, CEU)
- Laura Schwartz-Henderson, (Annenberg School for Communication, UPenn)

Course Objectives

The goal of the course is to **equip participants with substantive knowledge and strategic skills to advocate for an open internet**. The objectives of the course are, then, to:

1. Provide advanced training and practical skill building to enable participants to better develop internet policy advocacy campaigns and to engage with the latest developments in digital activism;
2. Teach online tools to promote and enhance online security and privacy;
3. Stimulate and advance research, scholarship and academic discourse on the role of civil society around internet policy-making, critical debates around the relationship between technology and social change, and the role of research in communication policy advocacy;
4. Provide a forum for knowledge, experience and skill sharing of advocacy tools and tactics and case studies in the domestic, regional and global context; To identify a core group of scholars working in this area and nurture their research interests and capabilities with the aim of future collaborations amongst faculty, course participants, institutions and CEU;
5. Give participants the opportunity to gain valuable experience in developing an advocacy campaign through hands-on case study work, interaction with local organizations involved in innovative new media technologies, and networking with a diverse group of participants; and

6. Engage partners such as the OSF Information and Media Programs, Center for Democracy and Technology, Global Network Initiative, Internews and Google, and to further develop our network of human rights activists, bloggers and media policy advocates in the field.

Course Structure

The course will be organized with **thematic sessions in the mornings and afternoon hands-on trainings and Internet Policy Lab**. The sessions will, thus, feature a mix of lectures, group discussions, hands-on practicums, as well as a field trip within Budapest to meet with organizations engaged with work in this field at a local “hacktivist” space.

The course will begin by conceptualizing civil society and internet policy advocacy as well as providing an understanding in to Internet governance issues and online free expression policies. The course will also look broadly at a range of technologies and tactics, in addition to hands-on policy clinics and case studies in video advocacy work from Witness. The course will draw on experiences from recent policy debates around copyright, privacy, social corporate responsibility, and global internet governance. Case studies and in-class presentations from leading civil society advocates will be arranged and integrated into the class.

As part of the course, the organizers ask that all **applicants apply with a case study on an internet policy issue** that they are working on at their home institution/organization or as part of their academic research. All selected participants will be required to come prepared to give a 10 minute presentation about the internet policy issue of their choice at the start of the summer school. Based on these presentations, the class will break into small teams for an afternoon **Internet Policy Lab** and be tasked with creating a public policy advocacy campaign in conjunction with the selected case studies. Each team will be required to give a multi-media presentation to the group at the end of the course.

In addition, the 2014 course will focus **heavily on hands-on trainings**, including interesting and timely skills based opportunities to learn about the latest techniques in video advocacy, data visualization and infographics, social media campaigns, and other key tools needed to run effective internet policy advocacy campaigns and projects.

We will also allocate time to discuss global and international trends and actors in internet governance and media development such as the Internet Governance Forum and the International Telecommunications Union involvement and interest in internet regulation.

In order maximize the output and opportunities for participants the course will have a maximum of 20-25 students.

Course Background

The development of the internet as a global, free and open resource stands at a perpetual crossroads. The dynamic and decentralized nature of the internet continually offers new avenues for open communication and free expression as well as new challenges and threats. The strategic use of digital technologies and information tools with the goal of empowering and building capacity for civil society is critical, but who is shaping internet freedoms? What is the relationship between technology and law with respect to free expression? What are the complexities raised by the use of the internet by repressive governments as well as by forces of opposition? What is the role of industry standards and corporate policies in the promotion and /or restriction of openness and communication freedoms? The issue of free and open communication on the internet is not only relevant in the case of repressive regimes and transitional democracies, but is also crucial in the context of innovation and economic progress worldwide. What is the relationship between companies, governments and civil society with regards to pressing policy questions such as privacy, filtering, security and surveillance? The complexities of the relationship between technology, free expression, and policy lie at the heart of the relationship between global security and human rights.

If the future of the internet is to be that of a free and open platform, civil society must be at the forefront of internet policy making. But communication policy can be overwhelmed by complex technical protocol, corporate interests, and a lack of civil society capacity to take on communication policy advocacy. The aim of this course is to help build that capacity and to provide civil society with necessary knowledge, advocacy training and digital tools to play a leading role in advancing internet freedom and communication rights, and to help human rights advocates and researchers gain knowledge of the issues around internet governance.

In short, free expression online does not come easy nor can it be guaranteed. The contestation over access, openness and privacy is a struggle over power between states, publics and corporations, Online free expression is increasingly taking center stage as an integral part of media development and democratization agendas, but there remains an urgent need for capacity building, knowledge exchange and network development. The movement for internet freedom and digital activism continues to grow and with it, demands for further research as well as a more common understanding of tools, strategies and tactics for policy advocacy.

Prerequisites

This course is intended for media policy advocates, PhD students, advanced MA students, activists, bloggers, policy makers, media development professionals (drawing from government, civil society/NGOs, foundations), journalists and other media practitioners with a demonstrated interest in new media and technology and communication policy advocacy.

Applicants will demonstrate an interest in the connection between theory and practice through their advocacy experience and research topics and output. Applicants will be required to submit an outline of an existing or proposed advocacy campaign for media and communication policy change, in addition to a relevant writing sample; statement of interest that addresses the relevancy of this course to their research, work or field of study; a CV; and possess sufficient English skills (reading and writing) in order to participate in the course.