



Seminar “Digital Democracy”
University of Zurich, Spring, 2023

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Karsten Donnay (donnay@ipz.uzh.ch)

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course number: 615i508a Seminar

Overview and Objectives

This seminar gives students practical exposure to conducting research in the area of digital democracy. It builds on the reading-based seminar in the fall term in which students developed their own detailed research design. In this second part of the two-semester cycle, students carry out their research projects while receiving regular guidance and feedback throughout the process. Substantive and methodological focus topics will be discussed where appropriate in addition to the individual feedback on the progress of each project.

Course Objectives and Key Skills

- Students will learn to execute a state-of-the-art quantitative project in the area of political behavior and digital media.
- They will get experience in writing a journal publication-style research paper that documents their project.

Course Times

The course takes place every Monday 10:15 – 12:00 starting on Feb. 20, 2023; the last session of the class is on May 22, 2023. Sessions take place in person in AFL-E-009.

Course Assessment

Students are required to give an update on the progress of their project about mid-term. This takes the form of an in-class presentation with an extended Q&A session. Grading is based on this in-class presentation (20%) and a written assignment in the form of a final seminar paper (80%).

Communication

Email addresses of the instructors and all participants in the course are to be treated confidentially. The classroom is the best place to raise questions which are relevant for everybody in the class. The best time to ask short questions that might not be relevant for everybody is after class. The office hours should be dedicated to discuss more in- depth questions. I strongly discourage emails about class content that could be solved in class, after class or during office hours. I would like to encourage you to contact me via email or during office hours if there is something that makes you feel uncomfortable in class or about the course.



Course Organization

The goal of the second term of the research seminar is the successful completion of the project conceived of in the fall term. With this in mind, less regular class sessions are planned and instead students benefit from 1:1 feedback sessions for each of the individual projects that will be flexibly scheduled throughout the term. There are three main blocks of classes outlined below at the start, middle and end of the term and in addition sessions on substantive topics that are of interest to the class can be scheduled.

Session 1 (Feb. 20). Coordination

This session serves to coordinate and agree on the structure of the course. We will also discuss the plan for in-class presentations and (individual) feedback sessions throughout the term.

Session 2 (Feb. 27). Next Steps - Session 1

In this session, max. 3 projects are discussed in depth with regard to the concrete next steps for implementing the research project.

Session 3 (Mar. 6). Next Steps - Session 2 (if needed)

In this session, max. 3 projects are discussed in depth with regard to the concrete next steps for implementing the research project.

[other sessions and individual feedback scheduled as needed]

Session 4 (Apr. 24). Mid-term Presentations

The goal of these presentations is to give the opportunity for in-depth feedback from the whole class about mid-term.

[other sessions and individual feedback scheduled as needed]

Session 5 (May 22). Final Presentations

In this session, students give an overview over their (near final) results.