

GLOBAL STUDIES PROGRAMME

GLOBAL PUBLIC SPHERE, MEDIA & CIVIL SOCIETY

Course Syllabus 2024

CHAIR | Dr. Alejandro Pelfini (apelfini@flacso.org.ar), Dr. Patricia Ferrante and Dr. Adrián Beling (abeling@flacso.org.ar)

GUEST LECTURER | Dr. Mariano Fressoli (mfressoli@fund-cenit.org.ar)

DATES AND TIME | Thursdays from Aug. 15th to Nov 28th, from 11 am to 1.00 pm
(check the calendar) **Part II from 10:30 to 1pm**

CREDIT HOURS (total) | 30 hours

1. INTRODUCTION

In a historical context of increasing global multi-dimensional interdependence, but also of mounting tensions and vulnerability in the socio-economic, ecological, and military realms, the question of democratic steering of global developmental trajectories seems more relevant than ever. Indeed, the production of collective outcomes is increasingly a *glocal* affair; and democratic accountability seems the only possible basis for their legitimacy. Furthermore: critically; what is at stake in current global affairs (particularly in the ecological and military realms) is possibly the survival of the species itself (and that of most life on earth in its current form).

But an effective and legitimate steering of world affairs also appears as more problematic than ever before: Both the political institutions inherited from the 'Westphalian era' and their theoretical underpinnings come under stress and are in need of a profound revision in the face of the unfolding 'global age'. For better or for worse, the liberal democratic state does not provide any applicable model for global (democratic) governance. The absence of a constitutional regime (typically a sovereign power with representatives democratically appointed to office through elections) is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it yields the obvious problem of lack of enforceability at the global level; but then again frees the transnational/global from the polarizing and short-term logic of electoral politics. How can democratic governance be thought of at a global level; then? Challenges notwithstanding, a *deliberative democracy* seems particularly well placed to take on the global challenge: indeed, the lack of any empowered decision-making authority to put an end to talk means that joint action necessarily requires persuasion – but how consequential can this deliberative governance expected to be? And can it be democratic? The *public sphere* and *civil society* are arguably the key socio-political instances to facilitate the transition from the Westphalian to the global world order, not least because they seem the most promisingly adaptable to deal with truly global issues, as opposed to the international

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or inter-governmental bias of formal political institutions. Yet transnationalizing (let alone globalizing) the public sphere and civil society implies major redefinitions and adjustments.

Addressing these issues implies bringing media into the equation. The material condition of permanent connectedness and the rise of the so called platform society (Van Dijck et al, 2018) call for a reflection of the role of media and mediatized practices, including the role of algorithms in shaping (sub)cultural imaginaries and the public space itself. In the module Global Media and Citizenship we will explore critical theories and case studies regarding global media (what is it, how it operates), social media (what kind of media are they, how the local and the global are entangled within them), participation and the status of information in the contemporary digital societies. We will also discuss the increasing datafication of social, cultural, political and civic practices as they raise questions about our “digital self”, the platformization of public values (van Dijck et al, 2018) and the possibilities of resistance (Bonini & Treré, 2024). Bringing contemporary experiences and discussions, this module aims to think about media, global media, media consumption and citizenship in today's connected world.

Despite those structural and discursive constraints, public sphere theory relies on the emancipatory potential of deliberative practices and institutions. In the last section, we are going to review discourses and practices that attempt to confront the main civilizational challenge that is presented to us: the global sustainability transition. This is probably not at a macro level but rather "global" in its nature and scope, and based on innovative institutional arrangements and sociotechnical devices.

2. OBJECTIVES

- Providing the students with a synthetic yet solid conceptual framework for public sphere and civil society and their potential and limitations in the governance of a global world.
- Developing an alternative, complementary perspective to the current institutionalist approach to global governance.
- Analyzing the globalization of media in the digital age, media practices and media concentration.
- Exploring the status of the digital citizen: how we produce and consume media and the possibilities for algorithmic resistance.
- Identifying and analyzing new institutional arrangements and alternative practices that contribute to a global sustainability transition.

3. COURSE SECTIONS

1. Theoretical Foundations: Public Sphere as a Global Sphere?
2. The construction of global agendas and citizenship participation in the digital age

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3. Performativity of the public sphere and civil society: discourse production, social innovation, and governance for a global sustainability transition.

4. STRUCTURE & SCHEDULE

Part I: Theoretical Foundations. The Public Sphere as a Global Sphere? (Alejandro Pelfini) 11 am to 1pm

1.1. August 15: Presentation of the course. Discussion on the concepts Public Sphere, Civil Society and Public goods. The Public Sphere in Latin America.

- Hunter, Emma and Leslie James (2020). "Introduction: Colonial Public Spheres and the Worlds of Print". *Itinerario*, pp. 1-16. doi:10.1017/S0165115320000248

- Piccato, Pablo (2010): Public sphere in Latin America: a map of the historiography, *Social History*, 35:2, 165-192
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071021003795055>

1.2. August 22: The Transnationalisation of the Public Sphere. The conditions for an intercultural public sphere

- Castells, Manuel (2008): "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), (pp. 78–93)
- Fraser, Nancy (2007): "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere. On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World", *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 24(4), (pp. 7-30).

1.3. August 29: Global and National Public Goods: Cosmopolitan citizenship

- Delanty, Gerard (2006), "The cosmopolitan imagination: critical cosmopolitanism and social theory", *The British Journal of Sociology* 2006 Volume 57 Issue 1 (25-47).
https://oneworlduv.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/cosmopolitan_imagination.pdf
- The globality of global public goods. Case discussion in class: The Yasuni-ITT initiative. Input for the discussion:
 - o Acosta, Alberto, Eduardo Gudynas, Esperanza Martínez, and Joseph H. Vogel, "Leaving the Oil in the Ground: A Political, Economic, and Ecological Initiative in the Ecuadorian Amazon," Americas Program Policy Report (Washington, DC: Center for International Policy, August 13, 2009) Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/16/ecuador-approves-yasuni-amazon-oil-drilling>

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1.4. September 5: Latin American peculiarities: Lessons for a democratization of a global public sphere

- Avritzer, Leonardo (2012): *Democracy and the Public Sphere*, Princeton University Press (pp. 38-50).
- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia: "Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 111:1, Winter 2012
DOI10.1215/00382876-1472612 <http://www.adivasiresurgence.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Silvia-Rivera-Cusicanqui-Chixinakax-Eng1.pdf>
- Segato, Rita (2018): "A Manifesto in Four Themes". *Critical Times* (2018) 1 (1): 198–211. https://doi.org/10.1215/26410478-1.1.198_198segato.pdf (silverchair.com)

1.6 September 12: The current conditions of the Public Sphere: Postdemocracy and Posttruth

- Arias Maldonado, Manuel (2017): "Rethinking Populism in the Digital Age: Social Networks, Political Affects and Post-Truth Democracies". XIII Congreso AECPA, Santiago de Compostela, 20-22 September 2017
<https://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/14500/Rethinking%20Populism%20in%20the%20Digital%20Age%20-Manuel%20Arias%20Maldonado%2C%20GT%201.8%2C%20XIII%20Congreso%20Aecpa.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Seeliger, M., & Sevignani, S. (2022). "A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere? An Introduction." *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39(4), 3-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221109439>

Part II: Global Media and Citizenship (Patricia Ferrante) 10:30am a 1pm

2.1. September 19: What is global media? From radio amateurs and international news to a global information environment. New media in old power structures. Where and who is the audience: everyday media practices.

- Manuel Castells (2011), *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press. Ch 2.
- David Morley and Kevin Robins (1995), *Spaces of Identity. Global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries*, Routledge, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Tehri Rantanen (2005), *The media and globalization*, SAGE. Chapters 2 and 3.T

2.2. September 26: International Conference "Reconfigurations of educational inequality in a digital world" at OEI - Keynote Speaker – Rebecca Enion,

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2.3. October 3: Media, politics and citizenship in a connected world: Citizenship practices with the media: an over informed citizen is a better citizen? The private sphere as the new public sphere in the digital age.

- Manuel Castells (2011), *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- Zizi Papacharissi (2010), *A private Sphere. Democracy in the digital age*, Polity. Chapters 4 and 6.
- García Canclini, Néstor (2018). Disposal and Reinvention: Citizenship in an Era of Electronic Capitalism, in *Open Cultural Studies* 2(1):273-284. DOI: 10.1515/culture-2018-0025

2.4. October 10: Ambient Culture. Fusion News. Old media, new media, social media.

Guest lecturer: Eugenia Mitchelstein

Reading:

Mitchelstein et al (2020), Incidental on a continuum: A comparative conceptualization of incidental news consumption, *Journalism*, 1-18.

There won't be GSP activities during the week of 16th October

2.5. October 24. The platform society. If the internet was expected to trigger more just and participative democracies, descriptions of current platform societies and the datification of politics set new challenges. Is polarization shaping politics? Is it enough to "know" how to manage social media to gain power?

Aruguete, N., Calvo, E., & Ventura, T. (2020). News Sharing, Gatekeeping, and Polarization: A Study of the #Bolsonaro Election. *Digital Journalism*, 9(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1852094>

- José van Dijck, Thomas Poell, and Martijn de Waal (2018), *The Platform Society. Public values in a connective world*. Oxford University Press, chapters 1 and 2.

2.6. October 31: Algorithms, polarization and populism.

Algorithms of oppression, algorithms of resistance the biases of datafied citizenship and the possibilities to (re) create a different connected world. Populist representation as a research challenge.

- Bonini and Treré (2024). *Algorithms of resistance*. Chapters 1 and 2.

- Casullo, Maria & Colalongo, Rodolfo. (2022). The populist body in the age of social media: A comparative study of populist and non-populist representation. *Thesis Eleven*. 173. 072551362211399. 10.1177/07255136221139913.

Part III: Performativity of the public sphere and civil society: discourse production, social innovation, and governance for a global sustainability transition. (Adrian Beling; Mariano Fressoli) 11am to 1pm

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3.1. November 7 (Adrián Beling; Online session): Social-ecological transformation and the global public sphere: key narratives.

- Adloff, Frank, and Sighard Neckel (2019): "Futures of Sustainability as Modernization, Transformation, and Control: A Conceptual Framework." *Sustainability Science*, March 9, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00671-2>.
- Gudynas, Eduardo, Miriam Lang, and D. Mokrani. "Debates on Development and Its Alternatives in Latin America: A Brief Heterodox Guide." In *Beyond Development. Alternative Visions from Latin America*, 15–40. Transnational Institute & Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation, 2013.

[http://rosalux-](http://rosalux-europa.info/userfiles/file/Beyond_Development_RLS_TNI_2013.pdf#page=16)

[europa.info/userfiles/file/Beyond_Development_RLS_TNI_2013.pdf#page=16](http://rosalux-europa.info/userfiles/file/Beyond_Development_RLS_TNI_2013.pdf#page=16).

2.3. November 14 (Adrián Beling; Online Session): Sustainability governance, civil society and the public sphere.

- Hausknost, Daniel (2020). "The Environmental State and the Glass Ceiling of Transformation." *Environmental Politics* 29, no. 1: 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2019.1680062>
- Vanhulst, Julien, and Adrian E. Beling (2019). "Post-Eurocentric Sustainability Governance: Lessons from the Latin-American Buen Vivir Experiment." In *Routledge Handbook of Global Sustainability Governance*, 115–28. London: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Global-Sustainability-Governance-1st-Edition/Kalfagianni-Fuchs-Hayden/p/book/9781138048287>

2. 4. November 21: Transformation in progress? Technology, social innovation and socioeconomic change (Dr. Mariano Fressoli, Cenit – Centro de Investigaciones para la Transformación)

- Arvidsson, Adam (2019): "Capitalism and the Commons", *Theory, Culture & Society* 0(0) 1–28
- Benkler, Y. (2016): Peer production, the commons, and the future of the firm. *Strategic Organization*, 15(2), 264–274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127016652606>
- Pansera, Mario & Fressoli, Mariano (2020): "Innovation without growth: Technological change in a post-growth era", *Organizations* (forthcoming).

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class discussion on the mandatory readings (40%)
- Final Essay elaborating on the readings and questions of one of the 3 parts (around 5.000 words). Submission: 21st December