



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2024

8,722: Technologien/Technologies: From Zero to Hero - The Role of Digital Technologies in Post-/Conflict Settings

ECTS credits: 3

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (60%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (40%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,722,1.00 Technologien/Technologies: From Zero to Hero - The Role of Digital Technologies in Post-/Conflict Settings](#) -- English --
[Ebert Isabel Laura](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

None

Learning objectives

Students are able to

- critically reflect on the role of digital technology in post/conflict settings
- to differentiate between different patterns of corporate conduct regarding the usage of technology in conflict settings
- to understanding of the ambivalent character of technology in specific political contexts and ecosystems

Course content

This course will explore challenges of digital global governance, including the narratives of "technology of oppression" vs. "technology of liberation". We will discuss governance gaps in the context of digital technologies and their implications for corporate conduct in post-/conflict settings, as well as their effects on human rights and international humanitarian law. The course will further depict what responsible business conduct constitutes in complex environments and what are the consequences and leverage of corporate behaviour in post-/conflict settings illustrated by case scenarios e.g. network shut downs/data disclosure requests/incitement of violence. Among other case scenarios, patterns of social media platforms' behaviour and its consequences in fragile state settings will be analysed. Following a solution-based approach, expectations towards managerial responses of tech companies in fragile state settings and strategies for heightened due diligence will be emphasised, building on emerging guidance for technology operators and developers. Under this lens, the course will also depict policy responses by states and intergovernmental institutions as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

This class will be designed inter-active, allowing students to conduct a case study to apply the course contents and will be accompanied by two guest lectures (on in-person, one virtual) from leading policy experts in the field.

The content of the course are structured as follows (chronological order of session sequence)



1. Challenges of digital global governance: technology of oppression vs. technology of liberation
2. Governance gaps in digital technology and their implications for corporate conduct in post/conflict settings
Patterns of social media platforms' behaviour and its consequences in fragile state settings
3. Guest lecture: International Committee of the Red Cross, Phillippe Stoll
4. Expectations towards managerial responses of tech companies in fragile state settings: Human Rights Due Diligence in conflict settings
5. Consequences/leverage of corporate behaviour in post-/conflict settings illustrated by case scenarios
6. Guest lecture: Global Network Initiative, Idan Ben Yakir
7. Introduction to solution-based approaches for responsible tech conduct, emerging guidance for technology operators and developers
8. Regulatory and policy responses by states and intergovernmental institutions as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen. A detailed course outline and all relevant documents will be made available on **StudyNet**. Only the current timetable as published on **Courses** does apply.

Course literature

Relevant literature:

Cohen, J. E. (2016). The surveillance-innovation complex: The irony of the participatory turn. The Participatory Condition D. Barney, G. Coleman, C. Ross, J. Sterne and T. Tembeck. Minnesota University of Minnesota Press

Deibert, R. (2019). "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: Three Painful Truths About Social Media." Journal of Democracy 30(1): 25-39

Deibert, R. (2015). "Authoritarianism goes global: Cyberspace under siege." Journal of Democracy 26(3): 64- 78.

Flyverbom, M., et al. (2019). "The Governance of Digital Technology, Big Data, and the Internet: New Roles and Responsibilities for Business." Business & Society 58(1): 3- 19.

Freyburg T., Garbe L. (2018): Authoritarian Practices in the Digital Age| Blocking the Bottleneck: Internet Shutdowns and Ownership at Election Times in Sub-Saharan Africa. International Journal of Communication. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/8546>

Howard, P. N. (2015). Pax Technica: How the Internet of things may set us free or lock us up. New Haven, Yale University Press.

MacKinnon, R. (2007). "Shi Tao, Yahoo!, and the lessons for corporate social responsibility."

Additional course information

Isabel Ebert is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Business Ethics, University of St. Gallen, a Technology and Human Rights Fellow at Harvard's University Kennedy School of Government, and serves as a Strategic Adviser to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights B-Tech Project, focusing on Business & Human Rights in the technology sector. Her research explores regulatory and policy responses to emerging human rights challenges connected with technology company conduct and implications for policy coherence.

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus



Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	60%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

Term paper

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	40%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

Group presentation

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

1. Students will be required to conduct and present a short research project in groups, which articulates the key takeaways from the class i.e. an analysis of a technological product/service of a company in a post-/conflict setting. (40%, group grade)
2. The term paper should have a length of approx 5000-7500 words, excl. title page and references. It will be evaluated by the issues addressed, the concepts used and the critical analysis made. (60%, individual grade)

Examination relevant literature



See course literature

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 25 January 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 18 March 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2024);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: Starting with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 08 April 2024).