SMPA 3194 (Undergraduate) or 6270 (Graduate):
Development, Governance and Digital Technology
Wednesdays 6:10 – 8:00 PM
3 credits

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This interdisciplinary course examines the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), news media, and advocacy groups. It is intended for upper-division undergraduates or graduate students. We are interested in the role of technology in efforts to strengthen the enforcement of broadly recognized international norms, especially those concerning individual and collective security. Put another way, we are interested in the role of technology in addressing human rights violations. Examples of the technologies considered here would include commercial high-resolution remote sensing satellites that are now used to document indiscriminate violence directed at civilian populations. We are also interested in the forensic sciences, especially DNA matching, when used to identify massacre victims or to reclaim the identity of those who have been "disappeared" by state security forces or by insurgent groups. Archival forensics is also used by a wide array of groups in their efforts to address norms violations. This sometimes involves the use of scanners to digitize analog print content, turning an unorganized stack of documents into a searchable database. Both DNA analysis and archival forensics are important to building legal cases against those responsible for organizing and executing campaigns of violence against civilian populations. Finally, we consider the use of mobile telephony and related technologies (FrontlineSMS, Twitter, Facebook) in documenting norms violations.

We want to know how these technologies affect the work of journalists, advocacy organizations, and international tribunals. In this respect, we reevaluate the advocacy model presented in Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's landmark 1998 book, *Activists Beyond Borders.* How has transnational advocacy changed since 1998?

We place our revised model of transnational advocacy in the context of economic development and governance theory. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has written about the link between political accountability and the prospects for economic development, understood as a closer realization of human capabilities. In this view, poverty and famine are the consequence of mismanagement of resources, rather than the result of a net deficiency of needed food stocks. Mismanagement is often the result of unaccountable political and economic elites. Accountability mechanisms constitute important steps toward rectifying *unaccountability*. Sen's work has inspired a generation of scholars who have written about development and systems of accountability. We situate our focus on ICT and accountability in this larger intellectual project.

Reading material will include the following books:

- Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*
- Pippa Norris, *Making Democratic Governance Work* (selections)
- Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*
- Steven Livingston and Gregor Walter-Drop, *Bits and Atoms: Information and*

Communication Technology in Areas of Limited Statehood (selections)
- Sarah Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies: DNA Technology and the Search for Srebrenica's Missing*.
- Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*

Two essay examinations and a research paper that is calibrated to either undergraduate or graduate expectations determine the course grade.