# COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Code / Title** : HA3036 Digital Publics & Policy: Social Media & Governance

**Pre-requisites** : HA1003

**No. of AUs.** : 3

**Contact Hours** : 39

## Course Aims

1) Critically examine the role of social media in shaping public discourse, protest dynamics, and state responsiveness, with attention to both democratic and authoritarian contexts.
2) Analyze the implications of digital mobilization and online backlash for agenda setting, misinformation regulation, and content moderation policies.
3) Explore how governments use social media monitoring and digital engagement tools (e.g., dashboards, listening software) to manage crises and respond to evolving public sentiment.
4) Develop students' ability to work with real-time digital data and design policy interventions, fostering practical competencies in digital policy design, public communication, and media governance.

## Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

Upon the successful completion of this course, you would be able to:

1) Analyze how digital publics influence policy agendas, public discourse, and state legitimacy in both democratic and authoritarian contexts.
2) Evaluate state strategies for responding to online mobilization, misinformation, and digital protest, using real-world case studies and policy frameworks.
3) Interpret and critically assess social media data (qualitative or quantitative) to draw insights about public sentiment, issue framing, and government responsiveness.
4) Design policy responses that account for the risks and opportunities of social media, including regulatory, ethical, and communication considerations.

## Course Content

This course critically examines the evolving relationship between digital publics and state governance, with a particular focus on how social media platforms influence agenda setting, policy responsiveness, and legitimacy in both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Core areas of inquiry include the dynamics of hashtag activism, the governance of misinformation and content moderation, state strategies for digital protest repression, and the use of social listening tools in crisis management and policy design. Students will engage with interdisciplinary literature spanning policy theory, media studies, and political communication, and analyze empirical case studies from Southeast Asia and beyond. The course places particular emphasis

on the ethical and regulatory challenges of governing digital platforms, and equips students with the analytical tools to interpret digital discourse and formulate policy responses grounded in principles of accountability, inclusion, and democratic governance.

| Week | Topic |
|------|-------|
| 1 | Introduction to Digital Publics and Governance |
| 2 | Social Media and Public Deliberation |
| 3 | Debate: Are governments listening to the right signals from social media? |
| 4 | Digital Authoritarianism and Repression |
| 5 | Misinformation and Content Moderation |
| 6 | Social Listening and State Response |
| 7 | Ethics, Surveillance, and Digital Engagement |
| 8 | Platform Power and Algorithmic Governance |
| 9 | Digital Protests and Authoritarian Response in Southeast Asia |
| 10 | Public Sector Messaging in the Age of Virality |
| 11 | Social Media Data Analysis Workshop |
| 12 | Designing Policy for Digital Publics |
| 13 | Student Presentations and Course Synthesis |

**Course Assessment**

Individual Project        : 30%

Problem Set            : 20%

Class Discussion        : 20%

Group Task             : 15%

Case Presentation      : 15%

**Total**                    --------
                           **100%**