Click here to apply for the Gov 3.0 online mentoring and training program!

LOGISTICS

Instructor: Professor Beth Simone Noveck, noveck@nyu.edu, @bethnoveck

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Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 4:55 - 6:35pm

First Class: January 29th

Physical location: 194 Mercer Street, Room 201

Virtual location: Unhangout permalink

Class blog: Gov30.tumblr.com

Short Description: A mentoring and training program that helps you to develop the mindset and skillset for leveraging the power of institutions and networks to design and implement effective solutions to public interest challenges. You will develop a project and a plan for its implementation, including a long and short description, a presentation deck, a persuasive video and project blog.

Suggest corrections or changes to this syllabus: send a pull request to this GitHub repo or email Mehan.

Previous syllabuses:

- Fall 2013
- Spring 2013

INTRODUCTION

The first years of the 21st century have been characterized by seemingly intractable global challenges. Huge, complex problems, from climate change to global inequality, threaten the stability of our economies, the health of the planet and the human race itself. We have looked to traditional societal institutions to tackle these problems, and we have been frustrated by their inability to act effectively and legitimately. People are increasingly angry about political systems where every day is Election Day, campaigning has a higher priority than problem-solving, and political expediency seems to take precedence over the public interest. As a result, trust in existing institutions is at an all-time low.

To solve today's complex problems, from climate change to economic inequality, we will need innovation in the very design of our democratic institutions. In our current model of government, an elite group of elected and appointed leaders is supposed to solve critical problems largely on their own, without significantly engaging the insights, experience, and brainpower of the people they represent. Moreover, our systems of government have failed to use the new tools and technologies that have been successfully applied in other arenas including the private sector. Consider:

- Technology has lowered the cost and ease of communication, yet we still have an 18th century model of representative democracy where participation is limited to occasional voting and affords few opportunities for people to participate in governing.
- Technology enables diverse experts with different skills and experience to work together, across a distance, yet we still have a 19th century model of centralized and professional bureaucracy.
- Research demonstrates that people can and will collaborate in purposeful groups on- and off-line, yet we still have a political culture dominated by entrenched
parties and deep pockets that treats a talented public as outsiders and impedes collaboration.

- The private sector is increasingly embracing data-driven experimentation and collaboration with customers and suppliers, yet our governing institutions are still bounded by legal rules and policies that prohibit rapid experimentation.

Groundbreaking technological advances, together with new social science research on collaboration, have inspired many to reexamine how we make decisions and solve problems. For example, the U.S. and UK governments have released open data for public use leading to path-breaking new tools; the U.S. federal government has used prizes and challenges to spur innovative approaches to solving problems; and 1500 cities around the world have instituted participatory budgeting to give citizens direct control over some public funds to limit corruption and improve how we govern.

This shift from top-down, closed government to decentralized, open and smarter governance may become a major social innovation in the 21st century. Yet we still know very little about what works when, why, and under what conditions.

COURSE GOALS

TO BEGIN TO DEVELOP THE MINDSET AND THE SKILLSET TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO PUBLIC PROBLEMS.

Gov 3.0 is aimed at those who want to develop a specific social good project for which they want to build the skills to move it closer to implementation. The course targets the "purpose driven learner" -- the person with a topic about which they are passionate -- who wants to expand her toolkit for social change. Group projects are strongly encouraged.

The syllabus is designed to expose you to a new skill and have you teach yourself how to apply it to the topic you are passionate about. We have the daunting task of teaching ourselves something about technology and something about law & policy and how to combine them effectively to translate good ideas into implementable action.

COURSE OUTPUTS

You will develop a project and a plan for its implementation, including a long and short description, a slide deck, a persuasive video and project blog.

PREREQUISITES

Intellectual curiosity and a willingness to experiment are essential for this course. No formal technology training are assumed or required but an interest in and willingness to play with new tools will be.

READINGS

All readings will be freely available on the open web or distributed during class. For additional reading on the topics of the course, there are four books I recommend acquiring: Beth Noveck, Wiki Government (2009) which is also freely available from the library as an eBook [Wiki Government Electronic Version](http://govlab.github.io/gov30_spring_14.html); Steven Johnson, Future Perfect (2012); Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness (2010); and Laurel Ruma, ed., Open Government (2010) ([link](http://govlab.github.io/gov30_spring_14.html)) (freely available online).

COURSE WEBSITE

Everything you need will be linked to from this syllabus. We do not use Google Classes or Blackboard. Updates will be circulated via the Gov 3.0 listserv.

TWITTER

#gov30 is the class hashtag.

OTHER STUFF ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- During seminars: Participants will attend and participate actively. Because lectures will be online and watched prior to class, seminar time will be used for conversations, demonstrations, and design problems. Attendance at all seminars, given our limited time together, is mandatory; if you must be absent, let Beth and Mehan know in advance.
- Presenting Early and Often: During the course of the term, we will work together to develop an approach to tackling the problem you are passionate about. We want to learn to develop projects that are high impact and yet practical to implement and to avoid inventing or reinventing wheels. Hence you will be asked to identify your problem and solution very early and constantly refine it throughout the semester through iterative presentations.
- Speakers: We will have cool and interesting visitors through the semester to enliven our discussions and offer additional coaching and mentoring. Speakers will be announced prior to class and the syllabus will be updated with their bios and presentation materials where relevant.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- Project Plan (40%)
- Long Description
- Two Page Memo
- Presentation Deck
ICONS

The following icons pertain to project milestones as well as skillsets that you can expect to learn and use over the course of the semester. Look for these icons next to items in the syllabus to get a sense of what you’ll be doing each week.

- Innovation Toolkit: These are the core skills you’ll learn in the program—ideas that are being used to solve public problems in new ways. Tools in this kit include Open Data, Big Data, Linked Data, Personal Data, Urban Analytics and Smart Disclosure.

- Prototyping Toolkit: These are the skills you’ll use to complete a prototype or mock-up of your idea. While we won’t be formally teaching most of these skills during seminars, we’ll point you toward resources you can use to teach these skills to yourself. In some cases, we’ll even bring in outside experts to introduce you to new tools for prototyping. Tools in this kit include Data Analysis, Data Scraping, Data Visualization, Research Techniques, Video Production, Presentation Skills, Web Design and Visual Design.

- Project Alert: This denotes either a major milestone for your project, an opportunity you’ll have to discuss progress made on your project and solicit feedback or a project presentation.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

January 29th - CLASS 1 - The Crisis of Governance and the Potential for New Technology

- Introduction: Through collection, computation and visualization of large-scale data sets, we might be able to make better-informed decisions. We could use new methods for generating ideas from more people in response to wicked challenges. New insights from social and behavioral research are teaching us how to use tools like prizes, games, challenges and “nudges” to create incentives for engagement. We are developing social machines – collaboration platforms – for organizing work at a distance that could translate into ways to get all hands on deck to undertake action together. Advances in technology – as well as social scientific insights about how to make use of the tools now available – are helping us to re-imagine how we govern in the 21st century.
- Reading: Readings: Scott Adams, What If Government Were More Like an iPod? WSJ, Nov. 5, 2011 (link); Joi Ito, An Open-Source Society, Innovating By the Seat of Our Pants, New York Times (link);
- Watching: Video: Clay Shirky, How the Internet will (One Day) Transform Government? (VIDEO); Beth Noveck, Demand a More Open Source Government (VIDEO); David Cameron (VIDEO); Tim O’Reilly, Government as a Platform (2010) (VIDEO); Jen Pahlka, Coding a Better Government (VIDEO)
- In Class: The case of Peer to Patent; Phase I - Define your problem, articulate why it matters, establish the metrics.
- After Class: Write and send me one page about “your compelling problem”; fill out the class skillshare survey (link forthcoming).

February 5th - CLASS 2 - Institutional Innovation and the Open Government Movement: Three Modalities of Innovation

- Introduction: In this class, we discuss the recent history of the open government movement and three modes of open governance: 1) Smarter Governance: Getting Knowledge In; 2) Open Data Governance: Pushing Data Out; 3) Devolved Governance: Sharing Responsibility
- Watching: Video: Andrew Rasiej, Founder of Personal Democracy Media, Chairman of NY Tech Meetup (AUDIO); Carl Malamud, Founder of Public Resource.org (VIDEO)
- Video: Jeremy Weinstein, Professor, Stanford University; National Security Council (2009 - 2011). (VIDEO) (pw: enjoy)
- In Class: Writing the Killer One Page Memo
- After Class: Refine your one-page memo based on feedback from Beth and Mehan.

February 12th - CLASS 3 - In-Class Skillshare

All your work will be iterative. We will repeatedly design, present, revise, enabling you to finish the course with vetted writing samples. I expect that you will tweet, live blog and/or blog out of class. Postings are not letter graded. You will submit one posting to me in the first half of the semester, which I will edit and you will revise and republish before the end of the semester.
Get to know your fellow participants' skills, interests and passions in this class-long skillshare. Participants will fill out a form indicating what skills they are able to teach and what skills they would like to acquire in order to fully realize their final projects. Beth and Mehan will then organize a skillshare whereby participants will be asked to run workshops and outside experts will be brought in as necessary. Schedule TBD.

After class: Familiarize yourself with the NYU Library resources listed here. During the next class, we'll be visited by NYU librarians, who will explain how to get the most out of these tools when conducting research.

February 19th - CLASS 4 - Smarter Governance: Getting Better Expertise In: Big and Small Data

- Introduction: In this class, we explore how data can help to produce social change by learning about the tools and techniques of big data, predictive analytics, and small data. We will examine examples of how big data and small data are changing governance at the local and national level and talk about the impact of data on our project designs.
- Reading: James Manyika et al., ‘Big data: The next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity,’ The McKinsey Global Institute, May-2011 (link); David Robinson, Harlan Yu, William Zeller, and Edward W. Felten, “Government Data and the Invisible Hand,” Yale Journal of Law & Technology, vol. 11, p. 160, 2009 (link); Richard H. Thaler, “Show Us the Data: It’s Ours After All,” New York Times, April 23, 2011 (link); Esther Dyson, The Quantified Community (link); Reinventing Society in the Wake of Big Data (link); Beth Noveck and Daniel Goroff, Liberating Non-Profit Data (link); “The Promise of Urban Informatics,” Center for Urban Science and Progress, May 30, 2013 (link); Deborah Estrin, Professor of Computer Science, Cornell NYC Tech, “small data, where n=me” (link)
- Watching: GovLab Academy Resources on Urban Analytics and Crowdsourcing Opinions; Sandy Pentland, Edge.org (VIDEO); Steven Koonin Interview, CUSP, NYU (VIDEO); Deborah Estrin, Small Data, Big Health Changes (TEDMED VIDEO)
- Skill Share: Defining Your Problem: The Lit Review & Scanning the Field
- In Class: Lit Review training with NYU library staff and Joel Gurin; Understanding what else is out there; articulating differentiators
- After Class: Complete a first draft of your project deck. This should serve to summarize your project memo and explain your main points in as compelling a manner as possible.

February 26th - CLASS 5 - Smarter Governance: Getting Better Expertise In: Expert Discovery

- Introduction: In this session, we shift from talking about how better data can improve decision making to explore how to leverage human intelligence to solve problems. Techniques such as citation networks, reputation scores, recommender systems and disciplines such as network science, Web science and computer science are teaching us how to pinpoint who knows what, making it possible to imagine eliciting expertise that is relevant to and useful for decision making. We explore three strategies for leveraging collective intelligence: 1) expert discovery; 2) expert matching; 3) crowdsourcing
- Reading: Noveck Book Chapter Handout (TBD)
- Watching: GovLab Academy resources on Crowdsourcing Data and Crowdsourcing Tasks
- In Class - Writing a letter to an expert in your field.
- After Class - Write a draft of your letter and send it to Beth and Mehan--they will provide you with feedback and assign you an outside expert to whom you will send the letter; send the second draft of your memo and sliddeck to Beth and Mehan.

March 5th - CLASS 6 - Smarter Governance: Getting Better Expertise In: Crowdsourcing Ideas and Crowdsourcing Tasks

- Introduction: In this class, we look at the emerging technologies for collaboration and participation. We focus on the different typologies of crowdsourcing, including crowdsourcing ideas, tasks, data, and funding and discuss what kinds of problems lend themselves to such solutions.
- Watching: Noveck (VIDEO TBD); Optional Videos - Alexander Howard, O'Reilly Media (VIDEO) (VIDEO 2); Brandon Kessler, Challenge Post (VIDEO); Joel Spolsky, Stack Exchange (VIDEO)
- In Class: Francois Grey , NYU ITP on Citizen Science (TBD); Expanding your toolkit discussion
- After Class: Send a letter to your expert in order to solicit advice and feedback.

March 12th CLASS 7 - Incentives to Participate: Lessons from the Social Sciences; Prize-Backed and Grand Challenges
Introduction: In both the private and public sectors, the use of prizes and contests to spur innovation is on the rise. These types of initiatives largely fall into one of two categories: prizes and grand challenges. As budgets tighten and information and communication technologies continue to advance, leveraging the expertise of the public through contests and challenges is becoming more attractive to government agencies. While there are differences between the two techniques, both shift the locus of innovation from inside a government agency to the public, while creating motivation beyond basic market incentives.

Reading: Darren Brabham, Moving the Crowd at iStockPhoto (link); Tom Kaill and Cristin Dorgelo, “Identifying Steps Forward in Use of Prizes to Spur Innovation,” White House Blog: Office of Science and Technology Policy, April 10, 2012 (link) OSTP Memo on Prizes and Challenges, Department of Health and Human Services (link); “And the winner is…” Capturing the promise of philanthropic prizes,” McKinsey & Company, July 2009 (link)

Watching: GovLab Academy resources on Crowdsourcing Expertise (VIDEOS); Video: Tom Kaill (link) and Cristin Dorgelo (VIDEO: Collaborative Innovation)

Skills Share: From Idea to Implementation

In Class - Lecture from Rudi Bornmann, Buenos Aires city government

After Class: Designing a great project is only part of the battle—you'll also need to present your project in the most convincing manner possible. Read this article on how to give a great presentation. How might you take these principles into account as you begin to plan your final presentation?

March 19th NO CLASS - NYU Spring Break

March 26th - CLASS 8 - Devolved Governance: Participatory Budgeting

Introduction: In this class, we examine one of the most advanced and widespread examples of institutions devolving power over a traditional government function to citizens: participatory budgeting. Practiced now in 1500+ communities, we will look at what it is, why it works, and how devolved governance differs from privatization.


In class - Lecture from Hollie Russon Gilman, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

After Class - Begin to shift your thinking from problem to solution; identify potential partners and collaborators.

After class: Start thinking about product design. This week, your job is to learn the basics of User Experience (UX) design, a methodology that seeks to design products based on users’ needs. Read through the following article: Learning to Design: How I Bombed Art Class But Still Designed A Remarkable Website. Now that you've focused on a problem, how does design thinking influence your vision for a potential solution?

April 2nd - CLASS 9 - Open Data Governance: Behavioral Insights and Smart Disclosure

Introduction: In this class, we look at the ways in which data are being used as an alternative regulatory strategy to improve consumer decision making and consumer protection. We explore what's working and where this approach falls short.


GovLab Academy Resources on Open Data (VIDEOS) and Smart Disclosure (VIDEOS)

Leif Perciveld, Don’t Flush Me; (AUDIO)

Peter Levin - Veterans Affairs, Blue Button (AUDIO)

Skills Share: From Idea to Implementation

In Class - Guest Speaker: Joel Gurin

After class: Dive into mockups. Why are mockups such a powerful tool? Read this article to find out. Then, learn about two simple ways to start making mockups of your product: using Apple’s Keynote presentation software and using the application Balsamiq Mockups. Pick whichever tool best suits your needs and start experimenting. If you decide you want to learn more, check out UX Apprentice, from the makers of Balsamiq. How can you visually communicate what you want to build using mockups?

April 9th CLASS 10 - Devolved Governance: Peer Progressivism

Introduction: This week, we will continue our discussion of social and collaboration technologies by exploring how to apply online participation to the work of governance. We look at the opportunities and impediments to effective participation at a distance.

Information: Readings: Steven Berlin Johnson, Future Perfect (book); Laura Anthony, “Sam Ramon Fire Dept. launches app for CPR help,” ABC7 News, January ...
April 16th - CLASS 11 - Open Data Governance: Open Government Data

- Introduction: Governing produces a lot of data. Governments generate, collect and compile vast amounts of digitized data continually through activities such as collecting vital statistics, administering the tax system, recording government operations activity, managing public infrastructure and natural resources, surveying and recording public and private lands, processing regulatory requirements and managing social service delivery. Add to this flood of new digital data the large stock of previously collected data – stored in warehouses and filing cabinets in non-digital forms and archaic computer systems – and the challenges of governing in a complex environment don’t seem to reside in a lack of data. Rather, the challenge seems to be how to convert data into usable information, and how to apply knowledge to the interpretation of that information. Over the last few years, in the U.S., the United Kingdom and a growing number of other countries, the drive to open up more government data has become a national priority. Not only federal agencies, but state and local governments too are releasing more data in open formats to make their operations more transparent, bring information on government services to the public, and fuel new data-driven businesses. In this class, we explore how institutions and networks are collaborating to solve problems using newly available open government data. We discuss what is open government data and how it might lead to innovative solutions.


Joel Gurin, Former Chair, White House Task Force on Smart Disclosure (WEB: Consumer.data.gov Launch), (AUDIO), (Class Presentation)

- In Class: Video production workshop with ITP resident researcher Roopa Vasudevan.
- After Class: Beth and Mehan will schedule one-on-one meetings with each group to discuss progress made on final projects.

April 23rd - CLASS 12 - Legal and Policy Impediments to Opening Governance

- Introduction: In order to fully leverage modern technological capabilities to make governance more open, legal and policy challenges must be understood and addressed. Many institutions remain unsure of how new tools and more data will help them achieve their missions. When combined with doubts about the legal permissibility of consulting with outside experts, publishing data freely and online, or devolving power, law and policy can contribute to a resistance to institutional innovation. As a result, collaborative platforms are often used merely as tools for broadcasting messages to the public, rather than for their full potential of co-creating solutions. In particular, significant American legislation and regulation developed before the current era of network technologies is a significant constraint on governing institutions’ ability to leverage citizen-engagement in the digital age. In this session, we survey some of the legal, policy and cultural barriers to innovations in governance.


- Guest Speaker: Jillian Raines, legal and policy fellow at the GovLab.
- In Class: Navigating the legal landscape
- After Class: Beth and Mehan will schedule one-on-one meetings with each group to discuss progress made on final projects.

April 30th - CLASS 13 - In Class Project Pitch Dress Rehearsals

May 7th - CLASS 14 - FINAL CLASS

FINAL PRESENTATIONS - Presentation dates/times TBA