

Faculty of Economics and Political Science

Freedom of Information

Information :

Course Code : PMM 204

Level : Undergraduate

Course Hours : 3.00- Hours

Department : Faculty of Economics and Political Science

Instructor Information :

| Title | Name | Office hours |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Associate Professor | MIRAL SABRY TAHA ALASHRY ABOFRIKHA | 4 |

Area Of Study :

By default, citizens have the right to know about themselves, their country, and the performance of the government they chose. However, freedom of information is not a very prevalent concept, especially in the Arab World. This course delves into the pros and cons of governments' decision to allow their citizens free access to information and the implications on national security.

Course Goals:

- Investigate the development of the concept of freedom of expression through history, theory and application.
- Analyze conditions of freedom of information in diverse communities.
- Examine the impact of freedom of information on ethical, social and national security issues.
- Compare the conditions of freedom of expression in democratic and autocratic regimes.
- Illustrate causes and effects of applying freedom of information through case studies.
- Think critically through evaluating a media personnel's social responsibility role.

Description :

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Course outcomes :

a. Knowledge and Understanding: :

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| 1 - | Explain the effects of freedom of information on the government, national security and the public. |
| 2 - | Recognize the impact of new media on freedom of information. |
| 3 - | Recall the effect of freedom of information on the Arab Revolutions. |

b. Intellectual Skills: :

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| 1 - | Evaluate the harms and benefits against states in applying freedom of information. |
| 2 - | Assess the constraints that should be placed on filtering the access to information and their relation to National Security. |
| 3 - | Judge the advantages and disadvantages of classified information leaks on people and governments. |
| 4 - | Estimate the need for freedom of information in the Arab Countries. |

c. Professional and Practical Skills :

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| 1 - | Demonstrate how filtering access affects the democratic process. |
| 2 - | Apply the WikiLeaks model to other media forms. |
| 3 - | Illustrate the effects of institutionalization laws and regulations. |

d. General and Transferable Skills :

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| 1 - | Use computers and the Internet. |
| 2 - | Work in a team environment. |
| 3 - | Translate to and from other languages. |
| 4 - | Apply practical and professional problem solving. |

Course Topic And Contents :

| Topic | No. of hours | Lecture | Tutorial / Practical |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------------|
| Introduction and syllabus | 3 | 1 | |
| What Kind of Information and Why? | 3 | 1 | |
| Open Government: Role of Citizens vs. Parliament | 3 | 1 | |
| In Dictatorships, Information is Power | 3 | 1 | |
| Freedom of Information's Threat to National Security | 3 | 1 | |
| Threats to National Security: New Media and Instant Circulation | 3 | 1 | |
| Midterm Exam | | 1 | |
| Filtering Access: What to Show/Hide? | 3 | 1 | |
| Filtering Access: Who and When to Access? | 3 | 1 | |
| WikiLeaks: A Successful Model? | 3 | 1 | |
| Laws and Regulations Necessary for Institutionalization | 6 | 2 | |
| Arab Revolutions: Building the State and Transparency | 6 | 2 | |
| Final Exam | | 1 | |

Teaching And Learning Methodologies :

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| Demonstration videos |
| Presentation |
| Debates |
| Group discussion |
| Research Paper |

Course Assessment :

| Methods of assessment | Relative weight % | Week No | Assess What |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Course Work (Attendance, Participation, Assignments, Quizzes, Research Paper) D | 30.00 | | To assess understanding and to assess theoretical background of the intellectual and practical skills. |
| Final Exam | 40.00 | 15 | To assess knowledge and intellectual skills. |
| Midterm Exam | 30.00 | 7 | To assess professional skills. |

Recommended books :

Daniel Berliner, "Institutionalizing Transparency: The Global Spread of Freedom of Information in Law and Practice," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 2012.

Christopher Horner, The Liberal War on Transparency: Confessions of a Freedom of Information "Criminal", New York: Threshold Editions, 2012.