

Investigating the Influence Industry in Elections: Proposed Agenda*

The mastercourse will explore the techniques, scope and work of the influence industry worldwide. Through international case studies, the course offers investigation methods, resources and sharing space for professionals.

The sessions detailed below highlight the presentations by the Tactical Tech team, each session will feature a guest speaker as well.

Session 1: 2024 Elections

18th April 9am – 12pm CET

- In this first session, we will identify current topics and trends in 2024 elections for investigation, including data-driven AI, misinformation and the influence industry. We will share concerns, discuss frameworks for understanding digital campaigns, and begin to explore the private firms behind cross-border influence practices.

Session 2: Data as Influence

23rd April 9am – 12pm CET

- In this session, we will explore which tools are currently used to target voters with information, and what type of information is trending including approaches to misinformation, and the private actors supporting these trends. We will explore how to investigate misinformation content, as well as how to identify other tactics of influence.

Session 3: Data as Intelligence

24th April 9am – 12pm CET

- In this session, we will look at current forms of profiling practices, and understand how different groups are used to influence. We will explore our own understanding of what is good or bad for democracy. We will look at tools for exploring how profiling works.

Session 4: Data as an Asset

25th April 9am – 12pm CET

- In this session, we will explore where data is being collected from and how it is exchanged between political parties and private firms to support their political influence campaigns. We will also look at voter literacy and what we can do to support voters.

Session 5: The Cost of Political Influence

29th April 9am – 12pm CET

- In this session, we will explore ‘follow the money’ approaches, as well as financial databases and their use in monitoring political campaigns. Participants will also have a chance to share research with one another, develop research and investigation plans for the future.

