

Real-World Immersion: Tech Law and Policy Exploration and Simulation

[Overview](#)

[Objectives](#)

[Sessions](#)

[Session 1 — Introduction \(Sept 29\)](#)

[Session 2 — Tech and Regulatory Landscape \(Oct 6\)](#)

[Session 3 — Tech Business Models and Policy Implications \(Oct 13\)](#)

[Session 4 — Tech Business Models and Policy Implications Continued \(Oct 20\)](#)

[Session 5 — How Technology Companies Approach Content and Speech \(Oct 27\)](#)

[Session 6 — How Technology Companies Approach Kids Safety \(Nov 3\)](#)

[Session 7 — Ethical and Emerging Issues in Artificial Intelligence \(Nov 10\)](#)

[Session 8 — Trade, Geopolitics, and Technology \(Nov 17\)](#)

[Session 9 — Final Presentation \(Dec 1\)](#)

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Overview

This practice-based course explores the intersection of technology and regulation in the context of how real-world technology companies must navigate an ever-changing policy environment, both in the US and abroad, putting students in the shoes of legal and policy leaders supporting business growth and innovation.

The course applies theory to practice, with students placed in small teams that will prepare a handful of projects responding to real-world scenarios.

Students will also have opportunities to interact with prominent professionals who will join as guests.

Grading will be based on the quality of the group project outputs, and the quality of each student's contributions to the group collaboration.

Objectives

- Understand the product development and launch process, and the role of legal and policy professionals as advisors and co-creators of product narratives.
- Evaluate the challenges and opportunities in regulating innovation, and how technology companies can play a constructive role in informing new regulation.

- Develop critical thinking skills to assess regulatory proposals and debates, including consideration of ethical dimensions of emerging technologies.
- Apply regulatory concepts to real-world case studies, from the perspective of both technology companies and regulators. Most weeks, we'll have a new project requiring students to work from a not-so-hypothetical set of facts and address an issue, either from the perspective of a technology company or a regulator / lawmaker

Sessions

Session 1 — Introduction (Sept 29)

We'll cover the goals for the course and the spirit with which we'll tackle our learning together: simulating the experience of policy practitioners working within technology companies. That means understanding both technology and the business behind the technology, understanding the role the technology practitioner plays, and exploring the evolution of the government affairs profession within technology companies over the last 10-15 years.

Students should come prepared to describe their desires and intentions for the course, and be ready to debate and ultimately align on our policy regarding the use of AI, which we'll develop together.

Session 2 — Tech and Regulatory Landscape (Oct 6)

We'll begin our exploration of some of the most important global regulatory frameworks with a comparative examination of US and European approaches to regulating technology. We'll also explore how regulations happen and how technology companies adapt to it, including the geopolitical trends shaping the landscape and how technology companies influence the course of regulation.

One group of students will be selected to present a comparison of US and European approaches to technology regulation, including the growing salience of state-based technology legislation in the US and the exchange of policy ideas across borders.

Students should also come prepared with discussion topics for **our guest, Tyler Diers, Technet's Executive Director for Illinois and the Midwest.**

Reading Materials

- Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World*, Oxford University Press (2020)
- Anu Bradford, *Digital Empires: The Global Battle to Regulate Technology*, Oxford University Press (2023)
- Mario Draghi, [“The Future of European Competitiveness,”](#) European Commission (2024)
- Scott Kohler, [“Technology Federalism: US States at the Vanguard of AI Governance,”](#) Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2025)
- Scott Babwah Brennen & Matt Perault, [“The State of State Technology Policy,”](#) Center on Technology Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2023)
- Scott Babway Brennen & Zeve Sanderson, [“The State of State Technology Policy,”](#) NYU Center on Tech Policy (2024)

Session 3 — Tech Business Models and Policy Implications (Oct 13)

We'll survey the most common business models in technology, why companies might choose one business model over another, and the policy and regulatory implications over time. We'll use that as a springboard to consider the value of ex ante competition policy compared to traditional antitrust approaches.

One group of students will be selected to present a comparative discussion of different approaches to competition policy.

Students should also come prepared for a simulation in which they'll be asked to advise a technology company on how to change or evolve its business model in light of growing regulatory pressure on that model. They'll consider alternative approaches, both in terms of practical impact on the business and how they'll be received by regulators.

Reading Materials

- Marc Andreessen, [“Product/Market Fit”](#) (2007)
- Aaron Epstein, [“YC Guide to Business Models,”](#) Y Combinator (2022)
- [“What Is Product-Market Fit? What Startups Need to Know,”](#) Stripe (2024)
- Ben Thompson, [“Aggregation Theory,”](#) Stratechery
- Parker, Van Alstyne & Choudary, *Platform Regulation: How Networked Markets Are Transforming the Economy and How to Make Them Work For You*, Norton (2017)
- Fiona Scott Morton, [Digital Platform Regulation: Making Markets Work for People](#) (2025)
- [“Blitzscaling 01: Overview of the Five States of Blitzscaling,”](#) Greylock Partners (2015)
- Reid Hoffman & Chris Yeh, *Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies*, HarperCollins (2018)

- Peter Thiel, [“Competition is for Losers”](#) (2017)
- [The Digital Markets Act](#), European Commission
- Tom Romanoff, [“The American Innovation and Choice Online Act: What it Does and What it Means,”](#) The Bipartisan Policy Center (2022)
- [“Analysis of the American Innovation and Choice Online Act \(AICOA\): Putting the Brakes on Innovation,”](#) Computer & Communications Industry Association (2022)

Session 4 — Tech Business Models and Policy Implications Continued (Oct 20)

We'll continue our exploration of technology company business models and their regulatory implications, this time with an emphasis on the perspectives of governments and regulatory enforcers.

Students should come prepared for discussion topics with **guest speakers**

Time permitting, students will also participate in a simulation where they'll be asked to put themselves in a regulator's shoes by analyzing and responding to complaints of anticompetitive conduct.

Session 5 — How Technology Companies Approach Content and Speech (Oct 27)

We'll examine how technology companies approach content and speech, starting with Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, the E-Commerce Directive, and the Digital Services Act. We'll look at these topics against the backdrop of the First Amendment, other speech traditions, and business considerations in establishing frameworks for online content.

One group of students will be selected to give an overview of the main regulatory frameworks impacting technology platforms' approaches.

Students should come prepared for a simulation in which they'll be asked to advise a technology company on several content controversies in quick succession, illustrating the challenge of applying principles consistently.

Reading Materials

- [47 U.S. Code § 230](#) (“Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act”)
- [Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) (“The e-Commerce Directive”)
- [The Digital Services Act Package](#), European Commission

- Jeff Kosseff, *The Twenty-Six Words that Created the Internet*, Cornell University Press (2019)
- [Meta Community Standards](#)
- [TikTok Community Guidelines](#)
- [YouTube Community Guidelines](#)
- [Apple App Review Guidelines](#)
- [Google Play Developer Policies](#)
- Eric Goldman, ["The United States' Approach to 'Platform' Regulation,"](#) Santa Clara Univ. Legal Studies Research Paper No. 4404374 (2023)
- Eric Goldman, ["Speech Nirvanas on the Internet: An Analysis of the U.S. Supreme Court's Moody v. NetChoice Decision,"](#) Santa Clara Univ. Legal Studies Research Paper No.4904497 (2024)
- Daphne Keller, ["Lawful But Awful? Control Over Legal Speech by Platforms, Governments, and Internet Users,"](#) University of Chicago Law Review Online (2022)
- Daphne Keller, ["The Long Reach of Taamneh: Carriage and Removal Requirements for Internet Platforms,"](#) Brookings Institution (2023)
- Daphne Keller, ["The Future of Platform Power: Making Middleware Work,"](#) Journal of Democracy (2021)
- [Murthy v. Missouri](#), United States Supreme Court (2024)
- Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com*, Princeton University Press (2002)
- Cass Sunstein, ["Sunstein on the Internet and Political Polarization,"](#) The University of Chicago Law School (2007)

Session 6 — How Technology Companies Approach Kids Safety (Nov 3)

We'll use our discussion of content policy considerations and technology business models to consider one of the most important issues in technology policy today: protecting kids online. We'll consider how answers to content and competition policy questions, as well as cultural attitudes towards parenting, affect kids' safety. We'll consider approaches to protecting children online, from COPPA and its potential evolution to new, active debates on the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), age assurance, school phone bans, and other policy proposals.

Students should come prepared for a simulation in which they'll be asked to either (1) assume the position of a technology company that wants to advance affirmative legislation that levels the playing field and improves children's safety, or (2) assume the position of a regulator or lawmaker considering such legislation.

Reading Materials

- TBD

Session 7 — Ethical and Emerging Issues in Artificial Intelligence (Nov 10)

We'll explore the topic most laypeople immediately think of when we mention technology policy: artificial intelligence. True to the spirit of the course, we'll ground our discussion in the practical, considering not just policy considerations but how AI impacts the work of government affairs and policy professionals and how to adopt AI to improve our effectiveness as professionals.

One group of students will be selected to present an examination of three topics: (1) the proliferation of corporate AI codes of conduct or principles, and what they tell us about companies' businesses, (2) "everything old is new again" and the connection between current AI policy debates and predecessor debates in technology policy, and (3) how AI is transforming work and a demonstration of how to use AI tools to improve our work as policy thought leaders and government affairs specialists.

Students should also come prepared for discussion topics with **our guest, an Illinois lawmaker proposing AI legislation.**

Reading Materials

- TBD

Session 8 — Trade, Geopolitics, and Technology (Nov 17)

We'll explore the role technology now plays in geopolitics, with technology companies sometimes thought of as geopolitical actors in their own right, and used by governments as a geopolitical tool. We'll do this through the specific lens of manufacturing, examining the role of prominent technology companies in shaping and contributing to the US-China geopolitical rivalry.

One group of students will present a case study focused on the mobile industry, with particular attention to companies like Apple, Google, Huawei, and Samsung.

Students should come prepared for a simulation in which they will assume the position of a technology company facing a government policy that would prevent them from working with a major partner based in another part of the world.

Reading Materials

- Eva Dou, *House of Huawei*, Penguin Random House (2025)
- Patrick McGee, *Apple in China: The Capture of the World's Greatest Company*, Simon & Schuster (2025)
- [Patrick McGee on *The Daily Show*](#) (2025)

Session 9 — Final Presentation (Dec 1)

We'll cap the course with a final group project. Students will be divided into groups representing the government, a technology company, consumer advocates, and industry groups. Each group will need to determine how to address a hypothetical scenario involving an emerging technology that raises untested policy questions. The scenario could involve the use of AI in early disease screening, but which performs inconsistently with certain populations, or the use of AI to deliver psychotherapy.

Students will also be asked to share their reflections on the course and what they will take forward in their careers as government affairs and policy professionals.