One of the most persistent narratives explaining the Arab Spring protests is the notion that technology, especially social media tools such as Twitter, significantly contributed to the activities of protesters. Early on in the Arab Spring many activists, media sources, and academics cited the protests as evidence that technology offers a crucial advantage in organizing participants in marginalized societies. This argument was made without reference to any study of social media messaging content or trends, begging the question: To what extent is social media an effective organizing tool for activists? Do these tools enhance activists’ mobilization efforts? If so, in what ways? The purpose of this lecture will be to assess the credibility of this narrative and situate it within a broader discussion of the role social media plays in upsetting traditional state-society relations, using case studies of Egypt and Kuwait.

Geoffrey Martin is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada. His research interests focus on looking at collective action processes that lead to social movements and the impact of oil wealth on civil society dynamics. He has an emphasis on the Gulf region, with specific interest in Kuwaiti politics. He is currently a visiting researcher and instructor at the Center for Gulf Studies at the American University of Kuwait.

**DATE:**
Tuesday, 10 May 2016

**TIME:**
6:00 pm

**VENUE:**
Multipurpose Room