

Fall 2016
The University of Texas at Austin
School of Journalism

Course Title: J349T Elections/Voters/News Meets with J395 Elections/Voters/News
TTh 12:30-2:00 p.m.; BMC 3.204

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Office Hours: TTh 2-3:30 p.m. or by Appointment

Course Description and Learning Objectives:

Elections/Voters/News is a new course that I proposed last year because of the historic importance of the 2016 presidential election. Also, because the Millennial generation has played such a significant role in this presidential season, this course will provide an opportunity to examine the Millennial Generation's role in this election along with other traditional and non-traditional factors. The in-class and out-of-class assignments and activities as well as class and group discussions and projects, this class is designed to ultimately answer the question: What are the components and influencers in a U.S. presidential election and how well is the press performing its First Amendment responsibility in covering the 2016 presidential race?

Since specific knowledge is needed to answer this question, this class will look closely at the following:

- How presidents of the U.S. are elected
- Past presidential leadership
- Candidates and their campaigns
- Presidential debates
- Voters
- Issues
- Polling, advertising, fundraising, and other issues that can influence media coverage, voter perceptions, and election results
- Presidential News coverage
- Presidential election results

After completing this course, students will not only have that specific knowledge, but students will be more knowledgeable about presidential elections in general and they will be more knowledgeable about this historic 2016 presidential election. They will also have more sophisticated critical thinking skills for assessing news coverage in general and presidential election coverage in particular.

Required Text, Materials, Multimedia, and Resources:

Washington Post Presidential Podcasts

In-home and in-class viewing of films and video

Millennials and News on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/Nlejee>.

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE at Tufts University), <http://civicyouth.org/>

Pew Research Center Reports <http://www.people-press.org/category/publications/>

Chapter 8, "Political Identity, News, Social Media, and Mobile," *News for a Mobile-First Consumer*, NY: Peter Lang, 2016

Grading. Plus and minus will be used in calculating course grades. The final course grade will be based on the following formula:

1. Attendance	25%
2. Graded Assignments	25%
3. Final Group Project	20%
4. Completion Assignments:	30%
a. "Like" <i>Millennials and News</i> on Facebook	
b. Journalism IQ and Attitude Quiz	
c. Written responses to questions following viewing of films, videos, etc.	
d. Group assignments	
e. Weekly <i>Millennials and News</i> activities	
f. News Engagement Day activity	

Attendance, which will be taken at the beginning of class, is calculated as a percentage of days attended by total number of class days. There are no official excused absences but there is an opportunity to "bank" up to three attendance days in case they are needed. To qualify for the Attendance Bank, students can get up to three people who have not used the *Millennials and News* page to "like" the page by the beginning of class, Tues., Sept. 1. After confirming the "likes," submit the names and addresses on the official *Millennials and News* Attendance Bank sheet by the deadline, Tues., Sept. 1.

The grade for **completion assignments** is calculated as a percentage of completed assignments by total number of completion assignments. **Late completion assignments will not be accepted unless an arrangement has been made in advance.** If the attendance sheet is not signed for any reason, you must send an email to me before the next class and write a note with the date on the next day's attendance sheet.

Expectations of Students.

1. Always come to class ready to learn and prepared to participate.
2. Listen, take notes and participate during class discussions.
3. Attend all classes and oral presentations.
4. Meet all assignment deadlines. Late completion assignments will not be accepted.
5. If an emergency prevents a student from meeting the deadline of an assignment, the student must notify the instructor prior to the deadline.
6. Always turn in professional-level written work. Points will be deducted for spelling, grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization errors.
7. **Abide by the University of Texas at Austin Honor Code, which reads:**
"The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community."
8. **Abide by the University of Texas at Austin Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty, which reads:** The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. See: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

9. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

Fall 2016 Calendar of Assignments and Activities

1. Week of August 22:

First Day of Class, Thursday, August 25; Introductions, Course Goals, Learning Objectives, Expectations.

- a. Presidential Election IQ and Attitude Quiz Completion
- b. Introduction to *Millennials and News* on Facebook.
- c. Introduction to Attendance Bank

2. Week of August 29:

Organize Groups (Groups decide which president they will report on from Washington Post Presidential Podcasts which can be found on the Washington Post site or iTunes. Listen to introductory podcast and select one of the presidents to report on.)

Fundamentals of Electing a President: Primaries, Conventions, Debates, Election, Electoral College, Inauguration

- a. What components of the presidential election process are determined by the U.S. Constitution, Amendments, Tradition, etc.?
- b. How Presidents Lead
Film and **Completion:** *All the Way*

Due Tuesday, September 1:

- a. *Millennials and News* Completion Assignment: Before class on Tuesday, “like” the *Millennials and News* page. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story on *Millennials and News* that was posted between Mon. and Thurs.
- b. Attendance Bank

3. Week of September 5:

Group Presentations from Washington Post Presidential Podcasts

(PowerPoint slide with Photo, which president, term, background, character, attributes, leadership test, if any, major accomplishment(s), etc.

Millennials and News Completion Assignment: Before class on Thursday, comment on a story on *Millennials and News* that was posted between Mon. and Thurs.

4. Week of September 12:

- a. Republican Convention and Donald Trump Acceptance Speech and **Completion**
- b. Democratic Convention and Hillary Clinton Acceptance Speech and **Completion**
- c. Groups compare candidate websites, social media, and report with PowerPoint slide

Millennials and News Completion Assignment: Before class on Thursday, comment on a story that was posted on *Millennials and News* between Mon. and Thurs.

5. Week of September 19:

Continue reports on comparisons of candidate websites and social media

Millennials and News Completion Assignment: Before class on Thursday, comment on a story on *Millennials and News* that was posted between Mon. and Thurs.

Journalism speaker event substitutes for Thurs., Sept. 22 class. Details to be announced during class.

6. Week of September 26:

Required: First Presidential Debate, Monday, September 26, 2016. Complete **Graded Assignment** except last question. For last question, examine at least one news story on debate then compare your debate reaction to news story. First Presidential Debate will be discussed in class.

Millennials and News Completion Assignment: Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on *Millennials and News* between Mon. and Thurs.

7. Week of October 3:

Tues., Oct 4. News Engagement Day: Engaging with news to be informed about presidential election

Recommended: Vice Presidential Debate (Tues., Oct. 4)

Voters:

Millennial Voters (PBS Video) Completion

Group Reports on Voters as defined by demographics, religion, identity, and issue with PowerPoint slide
Laws affecting voters' rights

How voters engage with news, especially election news and politics

Millennials and News Completion Assignment: Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on *Millennials and News* between Mon. and Thurs.

8. Week of October 10:

Required: Second Presidential Debate (Sunday, Oct. 9). Complete **Graded Assignment** except last question. For last question, examine at least one news story on debate then compare your debate reaction to news story. Second Debate will be discussed in class.

Role of following in Presidential Elections:

Presidential Election Polling

Advertising

Fundraising

Endorsements

Other

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on *Millennials and News* between Mon. and Thurs.

9. Week of October 17:

Required: Third Presidential Debate (Wednesday, Oct. 19). Complete **Graded Assignment** except last question. For last question, examine at least one news story on debate then compare your debate reaction to news story. Third Presidential Debate will be discussed in class, including overall comparison of three debates and post-debate polling.

Most important issues; candidates' stands on issues

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on Millennials and News between Mon. and Thurs.

10. Week of October 24:

News Coverage of 2016 Presidential Election; Role, Performance, Perception; Fact Checking

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on Millennials and News between Mon. and Thurs.

11. Week of October 31:

News Coverage of 2016 Presidential Election cont.

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on Millennials and News between Mon. and Thurs.

12. Week of November 7:

Tues., November 8, Election Day

Completion: Reaction and Screenshot of Election Result: Bring to Class Thursday

Thurs., Discuss Results of 2016 Presidential Election

Begin Work on Final Project

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on Millennials and News between Mon. and Thurs.

13. Week of November 14:

Continue Work on Final Project

Millennials and News Completion Assignment. Before class on Thursday, comment on a story posted on Millennials and News between Mon. and Thurs.

14. Week of November 21:

Continue Work on Final Project.

Holiday: Thanksgiving, November 24

15. Week of November 28:

Final Project Presentations

Evaluations

Last Day of Class: Thursday, December 1