

J349T News Media & Politics (08205)

Instructor: Dr. Tom Johnson

Office: Belo 3.328

email: tom.johnson@austin.utexas.edu

Office Hours: TTH 11-12:30, by appointment and when you least expect it

Class time: TTh 2-3:30, CMA 6.174

Course Description: This course examines central controversies and theories about the role the media in politics and the political systems. Some key questions we will consider are: What are the appropriate functions of mass media in a democracy? What laws, economic imperatives, and cultural forces affect the quality of the news citizens get? How do political elites attempt to manage the news? What is media bias, media trust and media credibility and why do they matter? How do news routines affect not just the news the public receives but also the ability of political officials to lead? And to what degree and how has all of this been transformed by the rise of today's media system?

Books:

The following required book is available at various on-line booksellers and through the UT bookstore.

Shanto Iyengar (2015). *Media Politics: A Citizens Guide*

Additional book chapters and readings are available on Canvas.

Learning Outcomes:	Assessments:
Students will be able to identify and describe major theories used in the study of the news media and politics.	Classroom presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom discussions• Written Assignments
Students will be able to identify and describe the role of the news media in the political process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom presentations• Classroom discussions• Written Assignments
Students will be able to identify and describe how the news media affects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom presentations

individuals and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom discussions • Written Assignments
Students will be able to write a research paper that uses pertinent evidence to support relevant research questions or hypotheses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom discussions • Written Assignments

ATTENDANCE:

I will allow you three unexcused absences. After the third absence, I will deduct half a letter grade for each additional absence. You need to contact me **in advance** if you are going to miss a class. All assignments are due by the beginning of class, except the final paper. The final paper is officially due by Friday, May 5 at 4:30, but I accept it by Tuesday, May 9 at 4:30 without penalty. I will deduct 10 percent for every day the assignment is late. I will not accept any papers more than a week late.

Religious Holy Days Observance Policy:

The Texas Education Code specifies that an institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi03-04/ch4/ch4g.html#attendance>

Students with Disabilities:

Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized

services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities.

<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:

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. http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

The Honor Code:

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, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Cell Phones

Few things are more annoying than a cell phone going off during class, so be sure to turn them off before class. I will try to remember too. I also do not want to see them out, as texting during class is distracting to me and to the students around you.

Laptops

I encourage you to bring your laptops to class. I post the power points online before class and I encourage you to download them and to take notes on the lectures. I cannot police you to see if you are taking notes or updating your Facebook page. Those who pay attention to class,

however, perform better. If you are disrupting the class with your laptop use, you will be asked to put it away.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: There will be three one-hour exams. The exams will be equally weighted and will not be comprehensive. The tests will be multiple choice, definitions and short answer questions.

Book Review: Each undergrad student will read a recent book (one written in 2012 or after) and prepare a 3-5-page book review, which provides a description of the scope of the book and analyzes its strengths and weaknesses. Graduate students are required to do 4-6 page book reports. The book can deal with any aspect of the media and politics, with the term media viewed broadly to include traditional media, online media, social media and advertising. Book titles must be approved in advance. You will also give a 7-10 minute oral review of the book to the class. You need to have an outline of your paper for each member of the class. A PowerPoint presentation or a typed outline is also required. We will be picking for due dates for the oral book reports.

Final paper: Each undergraduate student will write a 7-10 page essay on any topic concerning media and politics. Graduate students are required to write a 10-15 page paper. It can certainly be based the book you use in your book report. You need to choose a manageable topic (such as how international students use Facebook to keep in touch with friends back home) rather than a general topic such as mobile phones. A half page description of your assignment is due **FEB 12**. The paper is due **Friday, May 5th at 4:30 but I will not count it late as long as it comes in Tuesday, May 9th by 4:30**.

Discussion questions: To make sure that you are doing the readings and to try to generate discussion, I will ask you to turn in at the beginning of class on Thursdays the answer to discussion questions that I will give to you the class before.

GRADING:

First exam	100 points
Second exam	100 points
Third exam	100 points
Term Paper.....	100 points (125 point graduate papers)
Book report.....	50 points
Discussion questions	50 points
Participation	50 points

Class participation will be based on amount of participation in discussion during class. We also have a Facebook group J349T/J395 News Media and Politics, which is your place to ask questions or post things relevant material you find.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Dates for the exams and assignments may change depending on progress of the class. Readings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned.

Section #1: Introduction to the Study of News and Politics

WEEK 1 #1 (Jan. 17 & 19) Course Introduction & Overview

Seth Lewis (2012). The tension between professional control and open participation: Journalism and its boundaries. *Information, Communication & Society*.

WEEK #2 (Jan 24 & 26) Studying the News Media as a Political Institution

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 2

Danny Hayes, “The news anew? Political coverage in a transformed media age.” Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

Ryfe, *Can Journalism Survive?* Chapt 1

Section #2: Factors Influencing the News Process

WEEK #3 (Jan. 31, Feb. 2) **The Hierarchy of Influence: The Individual Journalist and journalistic Routines**

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 3 (71-85)

Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, Chapt.1

WEEK #4 (Feb 7 & 9): **Sources and Indexing the News**

Iyengar, Chapt 2 (pp. 85-86), Chapt 4

W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence & Steven Livingston (2006). None Dare Call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the Abu Ghraib scandal, *Journal of Communication*, 56, 467-485.

R. M Entman. (2003). Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication*

TOPIC FOR YOUR TERM PAPER IS DUE Feb 9

Section 3: Campaigns and Media

WEEK #5 (Feb. 14 & 16): **Media Election Coverage & Framing**

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 8 (pp. 254-260)

Regina G. Lawrence (2015). Campaign news in the time of Twitter. In Farrar-Myers and Vaughn, *Controlling the Message*.

Toril Aalberg, Jesper and Claes H. De Vreese (2012) The framing of politics as strategy and game: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism* 13(2): 162–178.

Sharon Meraz and Zizi Papacharissi. (2013). Networked Gatekeeping and Networked Framing on #Egypt. *The International Journal of Press Politics. The International Journal of Press/Politics* April 2013 18: 138-166.

FIRST EXAM, FEB. 16

WEEK #6 (Feb. 21 & 23): **New Media and the Elections**

Readings: Iyengar Chapt 5, (pp. 139-145)

Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha. (2015). Traditional media, social media, and different presidential campaign messages. In Farrar-Myers and Vaughn, *Controlling the Message*.

Lauren Copeland and Bruce Bimber, (2015). Variation in the Relationship Between Digital Media Use and Political Participation in U.S. Elections Over Time, 1996–2012: Does Obama’s Reelection Change the Picture? *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 13, 74-87

Week #7 (Feb. 28 & March 2) **Media and Social Media in the 2016 election**

Readings: Darren Lilleker, Daniel Jackson, Einar Thorsen and Anastasia Veneti (eds.) *U.S. election analysis: Media voters and the campaign*. See separate list in canvas for readings

Week #8: (March 7 & 9): **Media and Treatment of Race and Gender**

Guest speakers: Shannon McGregor and Bethany Albertson

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 3 (pp. 81-82)

Regina G. Lawrence, “Do the media give women candidates a fair shake? In Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

Dunaway, J., Lawrence, R. G., Rose, M., & Weber, C. R. (2013). Traits versus Issues How Female Candidates Shape Coverage of Senate and Gubernatorial Races. *Political Research Quarterly*, 66(3), 715-726.

Tali Mendelberg. (2001). *The race card: Campaign strategy, implicit messages, and the norm of equality*

Bethany L. Albertson, (2015). Dog-Whistle politics: Multivocal communication and religious appeals. *Political Behavior*, 37, 3-26.

Week #9 (March 14 & 16): **SPRING BREAK WOO HOO!!**

Section #3: The News Audience

WEEK #10 (March 21 & 23) Media Bias, Media Trust and Media Credibility

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 3 (pg. 61-65)

Jonathan M. Ladd, “The era of media distrust and its consequences for the perceptions of political reality.” Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

D’Alessio, D., & Allen, M. (2000). Media bias in presidential elections: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 50, 133-156.

Johnson, T. J., & Kaye, B. K. (2014). Credibility of social network sites for political information among politically interested Internet users. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 19(4), 957-974 (This is in here to show I DO do research relevant to this course)

WEEK #11 March 28 & 30th) Exam and Partisan Media, Selective Exposure and Polarization

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt. 5 (122-135)

Natalie (Talia) Jomini Stroud and Ashley Muddimen, “The American media system today: Is the public fragmenting?” In Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Joseph N. Capella. (2008). Echo chamber: Cause for concern or celebration? In *Echo Chamber*.

SECOND EXAM, MARCH 30TH

WEEK #12 (April 4 & 6) Third Person effect and Belief Gap

Readings: Iyengar, pp. 64-65

Richard M. Perloff (2015). A three-decade retrospective on hostile media effect. *Mass Communication & Society*.

Hindman, D. B. (2012). Knowledge gaps, belief gaps, and public opinion about health care reform. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*

WEEK #13 (April 11 & 13): Gatekeeping and Audience as Political Producer

Readings: Shoemaker, P. J. , Vos , T. P. , & Reese , S. D. (2009). Journalists as gatekeepers . In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *The handbook of journalism studies*

Sharon Meraz and Zizi Papacharissi. (2013). Networked Gatekeeping and Networked Framing on #Egypt. *The International Journal of Press Politics. The International Journal of Press/Politics* April 2013 18: 138-166,

Section 5: Campaigning Through the Media

WEEK #14 (April 18 & 20): Managing News Coverage: Spin and advertising

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 6.

Daniel Kreiss and Creighton Welch. (2015). “Strategic communication in a networked age.” Farrar-Myers and Vaughn, *Controlling the Message*.

Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha (2016) Presidential Agenda-Setting of Traditional and Nontraditional News Media, *Political Communication*,

Stephanie Edgerly, Leticia Bode, Young Mie Kim and Dhavan V. Shah (2015). Campaigns go social: Are Facebook, YouTube and Twitter changing elections? Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

Robert J. Klotz, “The competition to control messages on YouTube”

Section 6: Political Effects of the Media

WEEK #15: (April 25 & 27): Does Media Help or Hurt Democracy?: Media, Social Media and Civic Engagement

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt. 5 (pp.119-122)

Shelley Boulianne (2015) Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research, *Information, Communication & Society*,

Shelley Boulianne, S. (2009). Does Internet use affect engagement? A meta-analysis of research. *Political Communication*, 26(2), 193–211

WEEK #16 (May 2): Media, Social Media and Social Capital

Readings:

Robert Putnam, “Social capital: measurements and consequences”.

Nicole Ellison and Jessica Vitak (2015). Social network affordances and their relationship to social capital processes. In S. Shyam Sundar *The Handbook of the Psychology of Communication Technology*

Barbara B. Neves. (2013). “Social Capital and Internet Use: The Irrelevant, the Bad, and the Good”, *Sociology Compass*, 7/8

EXAM #3.

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY MAY 5 BUT ACCEPTED UNTIL TUESDAY , MAY 9 AT 4:30

Term paper assignment

Each undergrad student will write a 7-10 page essay on any topic on news and media. Graduate students will write a 10-15 page essay. Media includes traditional media, online media and social media. You need to choose a manageable topic (such as how college students use Twitter for news in a crisis) rather than a general topic such as college students and Twitter. Your paper can be based on your book from your book report and indeed that is often a logical way to go.

The paper should have an introduction similar to a newspaper lead where you identify the main point of the paper and hopefully do it in an interesting way. Your second paragraph should be a thesis statement where you set out exactly what you will be exploring. Think of organizing it like a news story where you keep the stuff that belongs together together. But this should differ from news story in at least three ways. First, you need to rely primarily on documentary sources. These can include articles from news magazines, trade journals, research organizations or research books and research articles. Using Google Scholar through UT is a good place to find sources as is the library website (both the book section and data base section). I won't prohibit interviews but they should be from experts, not just random students. Second, you need to use in-text citations rather than the normal attribution of a news article. I am less hung up on citation style, as long as I can look it up. Third, you need a conclusion to summarize the article.

Undergrads need to have at least five sources while graduate students require 10. Please include a cover page and do not put your name elsewhere on the paper. You need a bibliography with the sources you use. While I prefer APA style, as long as I can look up the source I am happy.