

J395 News Media & Politics (08070)

Instructor: Dr. Tom Johnson

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Office Hours: W, TH 1-2, by appointment and when you least expect it

Class time: Th 9:30-12 CMA 3.130

Course Description: This course examines central controversies and theories about the role the media in politics and 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 books are available at various on-line booksellers and are available through the UT bookstore.

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

Travis N. Ridout (2012). *New Directions in Media and Politics*

Victoria A. Farrar-Myers and Justin S. Vaughn. (2015) *Controlling the Message: New Media In American Political Campaigns* (Recommended)

Additional Readings 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 individuals and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom presentations • 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 paper is officially due by Thursday, May 5 at 4:30, but I accept it by Monday, May 9 at 4:30 without penalty. I will deduct 10 percent for every day the assignment is late except for the final draft of the AEJMC paper, which must be turned in by the deadline or it will not receive credit. 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

There are several components of your final grade in this course:

Final Paper:

This will be the main requirement for this class. This can be based on secondary analysis of existing data or from data gathered from one of your research groups. This cannot be the same paper you are submitting to AEJ, although it can be a related paper. The paper should grow out of one of the topical areas covered in the course, although I will allow you to explore digital media not simply traditional media. The final paper should be approximately 15-25 pages of text and include a cover, bibliography, tables, and figures. The expectation is that this paper represents a draft of a conference paper. Students are encouraged to submit their papers to MAPOR (June deadline for abstracts) or other appropriate conferences. The paper accounts for 50% of your total grade and will be submitted in stages. Each stage of the paper will be graded. The paper is officially due the final day of class (May 5), but I will accept it without late penalty on Monday, May 9 by 4:30.

Response papers:

You will have to write three 4-6-page response papers during the course of the semester based on the readings of that week. Typically, there will be four readings each week. In the response papers you will look for major themes in the week's readings and compare and contrast these themes. You are also asked to give a critique of the papers, discussing their strengths and weaknesses.

Response papers will be evaluated based upon their concision and clarity, demonstrated understanding of the readings, and on the quality of the points and questions you raise.

Class discussant:

Every student will be required to serve as a discussant for one class session. Normally there will be four readings a week to discuss. As a discussant, you will be responsible for bringing questions about the readings for that week that we should discuss in class and will also have the last 20 minutes of each session to give an oral presentation of an original reading that challenges or further develops the readings for that week. Choose to be discussant on a week that coincides with your broader interests.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

(1) Final Paper	50%
(2) Response papers	25%
(3) Role as class discussant	10%
4) Participation	15%

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 relevant material you find.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Journal articles and book chapters marked with “**” on the course reading schedule below will be **REQUIRED** readings available on the Canvas website for this course.

Journal articles and book chapters marked with “*” on the course reading schedule below will be **REQUIRED** readings for doctoral students but **RECOMMENDED** readings for undergrads available on the Canvas website for this course.

Readings without an asterisk are from one of your two required textbooks (Iyengar and Ridout) and are **required** readings for everyone.

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 (1/21) Course Introduction & Overview

WEEK #2 (1/28) Studying the News Media as a Political Institution

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 2 (pp. 19-28)

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

* Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini. (2011). Is there a difference between Tina Fey and Katie Couric? Policing the boundaries between news and entertainment. In *After broadcast news*.

Section #2: Factors Influencing the News Process

WEEK #3 (Feb. 4) The Hierarchy of Influence: The Individual Journalist and journalistic Routines

Readings: Iyengar, Chapt 2

**Cook, *Governing with the News*, Chapt 4.

*Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, Chapt.1 and 8

WEEK #4 (Feb 11): 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.

*Thomas E. Patterson, *Informing the News*, Chapt 2

Term Paper Topics Due Feb. 11

Section #3: The News Audience

WEEK #5 (Feb 18) 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*

*Miriam J. Metzger and Andrew J. Flanagin. (2015). Psychological approaches to credibility assessment online. In S. S. Sundar (Ed.), *The handbook of the psychology of communication technology*,

*Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Hajo G. Boomgaarden, Markus Wagner. (2015). “One Bias Fits All? Three Types of Media Bias and Their Effects on Party Preferences.” *Communication Research*.

*Tsfati, Y., & Ariely, G. (2014). Individual and contextual correlates of trust in media across 44 countries. *Communication Research*, 41(6), 760-782.

*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 #6 (Feb 25) 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*

**Brian R. Calfano. (2015). The political effect of Internet news and reader “comments”. In Farrar-Myers and Vaughn, *Controlling the Message*.

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

WEEK #7 (March 3): 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,

*Edison C. Tandoc Jr. and Tim P. Vos. (2015). The journalist is marketing the news: Social media in the gatekeeping process. *Journalism Practice*

Introduction and Problem Statement Due March 3

Week #8: (March 10): 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 : SPRING BREAK! WOO HOO!!

Section 4: Campaigns and Media

WEEK #10 (March 24): **Framing and Media Election Coverage**

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

Samar Klar, Joshua Robinson and James N. Druckman, “Political dynamics of framing” In Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

**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.

WEEK #11 (March 31): **New Media and the Elections**

Readings: Chapt 5, (pp139-145)

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*

**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

Section 5: Campaigning Through the Media

WEEK #12 (April 7): **Exam #2 and 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*.

**Robert J. Klotz, “The competition to control campaign messages in YouTube. In Farrar-Myers and Vaughn, *Controlling the Message*.

*Stephanie Farnsworth. (2008). “Modern Media Channels: Presidents and Presidential Candidates Spin the New Media,” from *Spinner In Chief: How Presidents Sell Their Policies and Themselves*

WEEK #13 (April 14): Social protests and grassroots movements: From the Seattle Protests to the Arab Spring

Iyengar, Chapt 5 (p. 137)

W. Lance Bennett, Alexandra Segerberg & Shawn Walker (2014) Organization in the crowd: peer production in large-scale networked protests, *Information, Communication & Society*, 17:2, 232-260

*W. Lance Bennett. (2012). The personalization of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *Annals of AAPSS*, 644.

* Summer Harlow and Thomas J. Johnson. (2011). Overthrowing the protest paradigm? How The New York Times, Global Voices and Twitter covered the Egyptian Revolution. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 1359-1374.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS, DUE APRIL 14

Section 7: Political Effects of the Media

WEEK #14(April 21): 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*, 18:5, 524-538

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

*Xenos, M., & Moy, P. (2007). Direct and differential effects of the Internet on

political and civic engagement. *Journal of Communication*, 57(4), 704–718.

ROUGH DRAFT (OPTIONAL) DUE APRIL 21

WEEK #15 (April 28): 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*

*Barry Wellman, Anabel Quan Haase, James Witte and Keith Hampton. (2001). Does the Internet increase, decrease or supplement social capital: social networks, participation and community. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45(3), 436-455

WEEK 16 (MAY 5): EXAM #3

FINAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY MAY 5 BUT ACCEPTED UNTIL MONDAY, MAY 9 AT 4:30

J 395 News Media and Politics

Term paper assignment

Spring 2016

Each of you will write a 15-25-page research paper involving either secondary analysis of data or data from your research group. The paper can involve any topic involving traditional media, online media or social media and politics and any empirical method. This can't be the paper you turn in for AEJ, but it CAN involve a related topic. The paper will be submitted in five stages 1) topic selection 2) introduction and problem statement 3) literature review and methods 4) rough draft (optional) 5) final draft

1. Topic: Please give me a brief (one page or less) description of what the focus of your term paper will be. Be as specific as you can about what your paper will examine. Give the specific topic, variables you might address, media you might want to look at. If you could link it to a specific theory that would be great.

The topic is due **Feb 11 at the beginning of class**

2. Introduction and problem statement: The introduction typically is a 1-3 paragraph that introduces the topic you will explore and tries to do so in an engaging manner. The problem statement explains what is missing from the literature, and how your work will address that "hole" in the literature. Then you explain what your paper will examine. This is like a thesis statement that clearly sets out what you plan to do. The introduction and problem statement is due **March 3 at the beginning of class**

3. Literature review and methods section: The literature review, as the name implies, reviews the relevant literature linked to your specific topic. The literature review ends with hypotheses or research questions. It is often better to begin with the hypotheses or research questions, then write the literature review based on what does the reader needs to understand to put the hypotheses and research questions in context. The literature review and methods is due **April 14, at the beginning of class**.

5. The rough draft of your paper with results and discussion (and ideally bibliography) is not required, but is strongly recommended. You can also choose to resubmit your literature review and methods. The rough draft is **due April 21, at the beginning of class.**

6. Your final paper: Your final paper will include all the previous stages as well as results, discussion and reference. Any of the standard footnote or bibliographical styles is acceptable. My suggestion is that you look at the journal you hope to send it to and adopt that style. The final draft of the paper is due **Thursday, May 5 at 4:30, but I accept it by Monday, May 9 at 4:30 without penalty.**