

political communication

PSCI 4028.003
SPRING 2007
M W F 11-11:50 A.M.
208 CLARE

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HOURS: W 1 P.M – 3 P.M.
& BY APPOINTMENT

In this course, we will examine the nature of the news media, and how media institutions shape the way citizens understand politics. We will begin by considering the routines and procedures of the news media, including the history of media in the United States and how the media decide what to cover. Next, we will consider the interaction of politicians and the news media, considering candidate media strategies during campaigns and how politicians use the media to achieve policy goals while governing. Finally, we will consider patterns of political communication, and how citizens understand and interpret the stories they see in the news. Here, we will consider media effects such as priming and framing as well as the use of new media like the internet.

CULEARN IS YOUR FRIEND

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class at culearn.colorado.edu. This syllabus will be posted there, as well as links to assignments and other exciting material.

READING MATERIAL

- Leighley, Jan E. 2004. *Mass Media and Politics: A Social Science Perspective*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- A set of journal articles and book chapters, which can be linked to from CULearn.
 - Some are available in the library's e-reserves: libraries.colorado.edu/screens/coursereerves.html
 - Some are articles from journals available online through the library's e-journal archives.
- *Note:* In some cases, you may be blocked from accessing online journals from off-campus computers. See information on the website of the University Library for instructions on remote access from off-site: ucblibraries.colorado.edu/research/remote.htm

EXPECTATIONS

You are encouraged to be an active participant in class. Please feel free to raise questions at any point during class, including matters of clarification, theoretical points, or topics to address in class discussion. You should also keep in touch by e-mail or by visiting office hours if you have any questions about course expectations or the material covered in class.

You are also expected to maintain proper classroom etiquette. This includes respecting the opinions of others even if you disagree, not talking out of turn, putting away newspapers and crossword puzzles during lecture, turning off cell phones before class, and not disrupting the class if arriving late.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the readings, you will be responsible for the following:

participation, short assignments, and quizzes *(worth 25% of your final grade)*

Because class attendance is an important prerequisite for participating in discussions and in-class activities, attendance will be taken each class session. Frequent absences will lower your participation grade. We will also have several in-class activities that contribute to this portion of your grade, and many weeks we will have short quizzes on the readings. We will have a few short homework assignments as well.

three papers *(each worth 15% of your final grade)*

You will prepare three papers during the semester, one for each of the three units we cover in class. Paper guidelines are detailed in a separate handout.

three exams *(each worth 10% of your final grade)*

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You can contact the Disability Services office for more information at www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

SOME IMPORTANT COMMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me or refer to the University Honor Code at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode. Additional information about avoiding plagiarism, citation style, and writing in political science is also posted on CULearn. Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council for additional non-academic sanctions.
- All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

HOW THE NEWS MEDIA COVER POLITICS

Wednesday, January 17 First class
Friday, January 19 About the media and the course

THEORIES OF THE MEDIA

History of the news media in the U.S.

Monday, January 22 – Friday, January 26

- Leighley, Chapter 1.
- Leighley, Chapter 2, pages 20-33.

MEDIA AS AN INSTITUTION

How do the media decide what to cover? News organizations, News routines.

Monday, January 29 – Friday, February 2

- Leighley, Chapter 3.
- Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (pages 21-45).

GATE-KEEPING AND AGENDA-SETTING

How journalists shape the news, professional norms, civic journalism

Monday, February 5 – Friday, February 9

- Leighley, Chapter 4, pages 91-103.
- Bennett, W. Lance. 1997. "Cracking the News Code: Some Rules that Journalists Live By." In Shanto Iyengar and Richard Reeves, eds., *Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters, and Reporters in America* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schudson, Michael. 2006. "Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press." In Timothy E. Cook, ed., *Freeing the Presses: The First Amendment in Action*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

MEDIA AS A COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

Corporate ownership, Formal and informal regulations, U.S. media versus other countries

Monday, February 12 – Wednesday, February 14

- Leighley, Chapter 2, pages 33-46.
- Leighley, Chapter 4, pages 70-91.

EXAM 1

Friday, February 16

THE INTERACTION OF POLITICIANS AND THE NEWS MEDIA

POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA: PART 1

The interaction between election officials and the press, Media coverage and the presidency

Monday, February 19 – Friday, February 23

- Leighley, Chapter 5, p. 104-118.
- Kumar, Martha Joynt. 2005. "Presidential Press Conferences: The Importance and Evolution of an Enduring Forum." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35:166-192.

POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA: PART 2

News coverage of national and subnational government, Local vs. national media

Monday, February 26 – Friday, March 2

- Leighley, Chapter 5, p. 119-141.
- Arnold, R. Douglas. 2004. *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3 (pages 64-91).

MEDIA AND PUBLIC POLICY

Coverage of domestic politics, Media coverage of race

Monday, March 5 – Friday, March 9

- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. 2000. *Everything You Think You Know About Politics...And Why You're Wrong*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 23 (p. 169-185).
- Gilliam, Franklin D., Jr., Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Oliver Wright. 1996. "Crime in Black and White: The Violent, Scary World of Local News." *Harvard International Journal for the Press and Politics* 1(3): 6-23.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Candidate campaign strategies, Campaign events, speeches, and debates

Monday, March 12 – Friday, March 16

- Leighley, Chapter 8, p. 199-215.
- Patterson, Thomas E. 1993. *Out of Order*. New York: Random House. Prologue and Chapter 1.

THE MASS MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

Campaign effects for voters, The consequences of negative advertising.

Monday, March 19 – Wednesday, March 21

- Leighley, Chapter 8, p. 215-242.
- West, Darrell M. 2005. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2004*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

EXAM 2

Friday, March 23

Monday, March 26 - Friday, March 30

Spring break. Class does not meet.

MEDIA EFFECTS FOR CITIZENS

MEDIA PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE

Media influence. How is learning from the media different than learning from personal experience?

Monday, April 2 – Friday, April 6

- Leighley, Chapter 6, p. 142-151.
- Zaller, John R. 1998. "Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31(2):182-189.

AGENDA SETTING, PRIMING, AND FRAMING

The effects of media interpretation

Monday, April 9 – Friday, April 13

- Leighley, Chapter 7.

LEARNING FROM THE NEWS MEDIA

Do people learn what they need to know? Which media are most informative?

Monday, April 16 – Friday, April 20

- Leighley, Chapter 6, p. 151-174.
- Graber, Doris A. 2001. *Processing Politics: Learning from Television in the Internet Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

ENTERTAINMENT, CABLE TELEVISION, AND THE INTERNET

Do people learn from soft news? How do increasing media choices affect citizens?

Monday, April 23 – Friday, April 27

- Prior, Markus. 2002. "Liberated Viewers, Polarized Voters. The Implications of Increased Media Choice for Democratic Politics." *The Good Society* 11(3):10-16.
- Baum, Matthew A. 2005. "Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2):213-234.

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

Media effects on trust and incivility. Do the media promote democracy?

Monday, April 30 – Friday, May 4

- Leighley, Chapter 9.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapter 13.

EXAM 3

Wednesday, May 9th, 1:30-4 pm