

# *political communication*

PSCI 4341  
SPRING 2012  
T TH 2-3:15 P.M.  
234 KETCHUM

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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.

## *d2l is your friend*

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class at [learn.colorado.edu](http://learn.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 the course website. (In some cases, you may be blocked from accessing online journals from off-campus computers. See information from the University Library for remote access from off-site: [ucblibraries.colorado.edu/research/remote.htm](http://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.

### **TWO PAPERS** *(each worth 15% of your final grade)*

For each of the three units we cover in class, there will be two paper topics provided. Over the course of the semester, you need to write papers on two of these six topics. Paper guidelines will be detailed in separate handouts.

### **THREE EXAMS** *(each worth 15% of your final grade)*

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam.

## ***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](http://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 [honorcode.colorado.edu](http://honorcode.colorado.edu). Additional information about avoiding plagiarism, citation style, and writing in political science is also posted on the course website. 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*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

*About the media and the course*

**Tuesday, January 17 – Thursday, January 19**

## THEORIES OF THE MEDIA

*History of the news media in the U.S.*

**Tuesday, January 24 – Thursday, 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.*

**Tuesday, January 31 – Thursday, 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*

**Tuesday, February 7 – Thursday, 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*

**Tuesday, February 14 – Thursday, February 16**

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

## EXAM 1

Thursday, February 16

# *interaction of politicians & the media*

## POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA: PART 1

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

### **Tuesday, February 21 – Thursday, 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*

### **Tuesday, February 28 – Thursday, March 1**

- 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*

### **Tuesday, March 6 – Thursday, March 8**

- 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).

## MEDIA COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

*Candidate campaign strategies, Campaign events, speeches, and debates*

### **Tuesday, March 13 – Thursday, March 15**

- 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.*

### **Tuesday, March 20 – Thursday, March 22**

- Leighley, Chapter 8, p. 215-242.
- West, Darrell M. 2010. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2008*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

## EXAM 2

Thursday, March 22

**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?*

**Tuesday, April 3 – Thursday, April 5**

- 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*

**Tuesday, April 10 – Thursday, April 12**

- Leighley, Chapter 7.

## LEARNING FROM THE NEWS MEDIA

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

**Tuesday, April 17 – Thursday, April 19**

- 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?*

**Tuesday, April 24 – Thursday, April 26**

- Prior, Markus. 2002. "Liberated Viewers, Polarized Voters. The Implications of Increased Media Choice for Democratic Politics." *The Good Society* 11(3):10-16.

## MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

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

**Tuesday, May 1 – Thursday, May 3**

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

## EXAM 3

Saturday, May 5, 1:30 - 4 p.m.