POLS W3921-002 MEDIA & AMERICAN POLITICS FALL 2013

Thursday 02:10P-04:00P
LEWISOHN HALL 308 (TBD)

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Note

I do not have advanced sign-ups. In the event of high demand, I will have an application process the first day of class and will apply the usual priorities. Students will be notified of acceptance by e-mail as quickly as possible.

The first day of class is Rosh Hashanah. If you are observing with your family and cannot attend class, get in touch with me IN ADVANCE by e-mail & I will send you an application. However, we should finish in plenty of time for you to get home if you live in the area.

Introduction

Both conventional wisdom and scholarly research about the role of the mass media in American politics have changed rapidly in a very short period of time. While the media have become pervasive, the question of actual influence remains controversial. This course investigates the role of the media in politics with attention to an array of media and persuasive techniques. We will consideration the classical role of the mass media, expectations about its behavior, and how these have changed. We will consider historical and current examples of how the media is influenced, and how it influences the government and the public.

General Ground Rules

I will use your official university e-mail address for announcements and communication. If you do not regularly use that account, make sure that messages are being forwarded. Because of the proliferation of viruses on-line I delete e-mails without opening them when I don't recognize the address. **If you must send something from another account, put your official university e-mail address in the subject line.**

I reserve the right to alter assignments depending upon final enrollment numbers, and in order to facilitate the smooth running of the class.
**Reading Assignments**

The readings in the syllabus have been chosen to drive discussion in the classroom, but also to serve as examples of varieties of good research. Consider them as you think about research topics. After the first week or two, students will be expected to present reading materials in class. Look ahead to volunteer for a topic that interests you. Recommended readings are almost as important as required ones. I will indicate more about their relevance in class.

**Books**

A number of books have been indicated as required or recommended for purchase. However, be judicious in your purchasing. All have been ordered for reserve. In some cases eBooks are available. As the detailed syllabus indicates, in many cases only a few chapters are assigned. You are most likely to need to buy the book if you are doing a presentation on it, or if it is on a topic you have chosen for research. Not everyone is expected to buy every book. In many cases recommended reading is included not because it will be discussed in class, but because those who choose that topic for term research should be aware of the literature. (These items will be distinguished better as class proceeds.)

**Presentations**

Students will be assigned to present parts of the reading material and lead discussion during class. I refer to these as "topical" presentations. The exact number of presentations that each student will be responsible for will be determined after a census of the class in the second week.

Volunteers for these assignments will be handled on a first come, first served basis. It is better to volunteer for something that looks interesting. Contact me by e-mail to volunteer for a reading assignment.

In general, presenters have 15-30 minutes, depending on the scope of the reading, to provide an overview of some part of the research, and to raise questions for discussion. Assume that the rest of the class has read the material and concentrate on reviewing and offering critique. In some circumstances debates will be assigned. You are encouraged to use Powerpoint but should also provide a one page handout summarizing your main points (bullet point organization is encouraged). The handout should include full bibliographic citation to the reading and can also include an illustration (chart, quote) from the material. It should also include one suggestion for further reading usually taken from the references of the original reading assignment. (Make sure that your name & the date appear on your handout.) Further information on presentations will be discussed in class. Provisionally, topical presentations are each worth 15% of the course grade, and each person is expected to do one presentation, although volunteers may do a second presentation to enhance their grade.

Students will also be expected to present to the class twice more - on their initial research proposal, and on their final research project. I refer to these as “research” presentations. These presentations are very important and will constitute no less than 15% of the final grade.
General Participation

General participation in the seminar is also very important, and presumes a carefully reading of the assigned material. Ten percent of the grade will be assigned for general participation in class discussion and effort in research.

Paper Proposal, Written Proposal and Final Research Paper

The major product of the course is a term research paper, with topic to be decided in consultation with the professor. The proposal for the research paper is due fairly late in the course in order to allow you time to think and consult - earlier proposals are encouraged. Late proposals are not expected. The written proposal is worth 15% of the grade and the final paper is worth 45% of the course grade.
Overview Calendar for Course

September 05, 2013  General Introduction, Sign-up (Rosh Hashanah)

September 12, 2013  Models of Media Influence

Journalistic Ideals (Elements of Journalism)

September 19, 2013  Press, Television and the Internet

September 26, 2013  Propaganda – Influencing the Media

McCarthyism

October 3-10, 2013  Influencing the Media -- Freedom of Information

Selling Fear, Pentagon Papers, WikiLeaks & National Security

October 17, 2013  NO CLASS MEETING

Oct. 24, 2013  Student Term Project Proposal Presentations

October 31, 2013  Media Bias

Written Term Research Proposals Due

November 7, 2013  Media & Elections

November 14, 2013  Entertaining Media

November 21, 2013  Individual Consultations in My Office

Note: these can be arranged any time during the week, but if you have no other time, this time should be available.

November 28, 2013  Thanksgiving -- NO CLASS MEETING

December 5, 2013  Student Presentations of Term Projects (Hanukah ends)

December 12, 2013  Student Presentations of Term Projects Continued, if necessary

December 16, 2013  (Monday) Term Research Paper Due - no class meeting
Detailed Syllabus

September 05, 2013  Introduction – Overview

September 12, 2013  Models of Media Influence

Required Reading:


Journalistic Ideals

Required Readings:


September 19, 2013  Journalism and the Internet

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


September 26, 2013  Propaganda – Influencing the Media - McCarthyism

Video, Discussion – selections from: CBS News. “McCarthy Years”

Required Readings:


McDaniel, Rodger. 2013. Dying for Joe McCarthy’s Sins. Cody, WY: Wordsworth. (Chapters 7, 8 – 10 (but start at p. 238 of previous chapter), 11- concentrate on “Lavender Scare”)


Recommended Readings:


October 3, 2013 - October 10, 2013  Influencing the Media – Freedom of Information

Selling Fear

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:

Bennett, W. Lance, Regina G. Lawrence and Steven Livingstone. 2007. When the Press Fails. Univ. of Chicago Press. (esp. Intro., Ch. 1-3, 5)

Pentagon Papers

**Recommended Readings:**


*Wikileaks & NSA*

Video, Discussion – selections from: 2013. *We Steal Secrets*

**Required Readings:**


**October 17, 2013**  
No Class Meeting

**Oct. 24, 2013 Student Presentations of Term Paper Proposals**

(Students are encouraged to arrange individual meetings with Prof. before this date.)

**October 31, 2013**  
Media Bias and Ideological Polarization

**Required Readings:**

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall and Joseph Cappella. 2008. *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. Oxford Univ. Press. : (esp. Ch. 1-5, 14, presentation also 8-13)

**Recommended Readings:**


November 7, 2013  Media and Elections

Strategy and Coverage

Required Readings:

Kenski, Kate, Bruce W. Hardy & Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2010. The Obama Victory: How Media, Money & Message Shaped the 2008 Campaign. Oxford University Press. (esp. Ch. 1-4, 10, 12, 13)


Recommended Readings:


Political Advertising

Required Readings:

Brader, Ted. 2006. Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work. Univ. of Chicago Press. (esp. Ch. 1, 7 (presentation also 4-6))


**Recommended Reading:**


**November 14, 2013  Journalism and Entertainment**

**Required Readings:**

Jones, Jeffrey P. 2010 *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*. Rowman & Littlefield (esp. Ch. 1, 2, 10, 11 (presentation also 8, 9))


**Recommended Readings:**


November 21, 2013  Individual Consultations

Individual meetings with students to talk about term paper projects at my office 736 IAB. (Please set a time with me by e-mail so you don't have to hang around waiting. If you have already consulted with me, and have no further questions, you don’t have to arrange a meeting.)

November 28, 2013

Thanksgiving -- NO CLASS MEETING

December 5, 2013

Student Presentations of Term Projects

December 12, 2013

Student Presentations of Term Projects

Monday – December 10, 2012

Term Research Paper Due - no class meeting