Course Description: We will examine the central role of mass communication (traditional media) and mass self-communication (internet/social media) in American politics and policy-making with special attention to the role of news, social, and entertainment media in presidential and other elections. While the primary focus is on the American setting, we will also look at the global context as it relates to media structures, ownership, freedom of expression/press, etc.

Requirements: Regular attendance of class sessions is required except for serious health problems or absences on religious holidays for observant students. If a student misses more than 2 classes without proof of sickness or other exceptional reasons, the final grade will be lowered by ½ point for each missed class; if a student misses five or more sessions without proof of serious sickness, he/she will fail the class.

Students must read the assigned material in preparation for each session and participate in class discussions. To make sure that everyone is well prepared, each student will compile for each class a short list (one page or less) of interesting points, issues, and questions concerning the assigned readings.

Each student selects one chapter in Gianpietro Mazzoleni et al., The Media and Neo-Populism or another past or present populist here or abroad (for example, Trump, Sanders, Le Pen, Farage) and reports about the chosen case in class, when we discuss populism and demagoguery.

Each student writes a research paper of about 25 pages (double spaced) on a topic related to media/communication and American politics/policies. I encourage you to select a topic related to this year’s primary season or general election campaign. You will report on your research findings in our last class meeting. Grades will be based on class participation (one third of final grade) and term paper (two thirds).

Topics and Readings:

Session 1  The Age of Information and Communication
(Sept. 7)  Introduction of seminar topics; discussion of class format; requirements.
Session 2  Political Role of the American Press: a Historical Perspective  
(Sept. 14)    Readings: 


Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media*, chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.


James Hamilton, *All the News That’s Fit to Print* (Princeton, 2004), chapter 1

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Session 3  Press Freedom, Human Rights, and Media Ethics  
(Sept. 21)    Readings: 

The American Society of News Editors’ Statement of Principles  
http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=24&sl=171&contentid=171

Graber and Dunaway, chapter 3.


http://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/resources/digital-media-ethics/

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Session 4  Effects of the Media  
(Sept. 28)    Readings: 


Graber and Dunaway, chapter 10


**Session 5  Media Biases**

(Oct. 5) Readings:


Graber and Dunaway, chapter 12


**Short (2-3 paragraphs) Proposal for Research Paper is due Today**

**Session 6: Mainstream and New Media in Election Campaigns**

(Oct. 12) Readings:


Graber and Dunaway, chapter 11

Johanna Dunaway and Regina G. Lawrence, “What Predicts the Game
Frame? Media Ownership, Electoral Context, and Campaign News.”


### Session 7: Paid Media in Election Campaigns
(Oct. 19)

Readings:


### Sessions 8/9: Communication, Populism, and Demagoguery
(Oct. 26, Nov.2)

Readings:


Students report on the case they have picked

**On November 2, the detailed Paper Outline with Sources is due**
Session 10: Public Relations, Propaganda, and Public Diplomacy
(Nov. 9) Readings:


Grabber and Dunaway, chapter 9

Session 11: Media, Participation, Socialization, Polarization
(Nov. 16) Readings:


Session 12: Media, Presidents, and Other Authoritative Actors and Institutions  
(Nov. 23) Readings:

Graber and Dunaway, chapters 7 and 8


Session 13: Media and Violence-as-Crime and Violence-as-Terrorism  
(Nov. 30) Readings:


Session 14: Last Class: Students report on their Research  
(Dec. 7) Research Papers are due

Doris A. Graber and Johanna Dunaway, 2015, Mass Media in American Politics, Ninth Edition (Sage/Congressional Quarterly Press) is the required textbook for this seminar; we will use it throughout the course. It is a good idea to read the whole book early one because it will give you an overall understanding of the role of mass media in American politics and policy making.

According to the publisher, “this text is available as an eBook through www.VitalSource.com, and many instructors have found it beneficial to include a link to the eBook on their syllabus so students have another option to purchase the text. Here is the VitalSource link for the above text: https://www.vitalsource.com/textbooks?term=9781452287287

Students save 50% off the retail price of the print text.
Books I have asked to be available at the reserve desk in Butler Library:


**Articles accessible via library reserve and CourseWorks**


Ward, Stephen J. “Digital Media Ethics.” (I will email file)