POSC 4371-101
Media and Politics in the United States
Fall Semester 2012
MWF 9:00 – 9:50

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Office Hours: MW: 1-3, T: 9-12, F: 10-12

Course Objectives:

This course will explore the role of the media in American politics, especially the influence of the media on Americans’ political attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between the media, the public, and government, including the formation of public policy. The course will also examine the historical evolution of the media’s role in politics and theories about its current practice and influence. Given that it is a presidential election year we will also focus on the use of media during the campaign.

Required Books:


Other readings will be available on D2L.

It is absolutely vital that students “consume” media daily to stay abreast of political issues and the media’s role in presenting political news.

The instructor will rely on email to communicate with students. This is also the best way to reach the instructor.

Course Requirements:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>news analysis</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>media research assignment</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>final take-home exam</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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Quizzes
There will be frequent quizzes on the reading material. The cumulative weight of quizzes is significant for the final grade, so staying current on class readings is worthwhile. Missed quizzes cannot be made up unless you have made arrangements PRIOR to the quiz date – no exceptions.
Media Research Assignment
Students will be responsible for completing a Media Research Packet that asks students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of important concepts. Students may work in pairs on this assignment. The packet is due Wednesday, October 17 in class. Assignments will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.

News Analysis
Each student will be conducting a news analysis on an issue of their choice. This involves following media coverage of the issue in a variety of sources over a period of time, and writing an essay summarizing the project and its findings. Specific requirements will be distributed in class. Also, in addition to the hard copy of the essay that is turned in to the instructor, students are required to electronically submit their essays to turnitin.com. To access the site, go to turnitin.com. If you haven’t used it before you will need to create an account. The class ID is 5368260; the password is media. The News Analysis is due Monday, November 19. Papers are marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.

Final Examination
Students must select two essay questions from a list of several. Essay questions will be comprehensive in addressing major issues and questions covering the entire semester. Any student who has an A grade at the end of the semester is exempt from the final exam. It cannot be borderline – it has to be a clear 93 or above.

Participation/Attendance
This class is small enough that regular class participation is expected. The instructor reserves the right to reward students whose participation is above and beyond the call of duty.

Attendance is expected at each class, and a sign-in sheet will be provided at each class meeting. Do NOT sign in for classmates if they are absent. Signing someone else’s name in their absence will be treated as academic dishonesty. Attendance will be treated as a pass/fail portion of the grade. If a student misses 6 or fewer classes during the semester they will receive full credit for participation/attendance. If a student misses more than 6 classes they will receive a WA (Withdrawal-Excessive Absences).

The Marquette University Undergraduate Attendance Policy (revised in June 2011) states the following:

“Students are responsible for attending all class meetings for courses in which they are registered. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents students from getting the full benefit of the course and as such, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences, with the following exceptions:

1. Absences resulting from legal obligations (such as jury duty).
2. Absences resulting from university sanctioned activities and related travel.”

The Policy also states “the Marquette University Student Health Service does not provide documentation of illness, or of a visit to the Student Health Service. Likewise, college and
other university offices (e.g., Office of the Dean, Counseling Center and Student Affairs) do not provide documentation of an absence on behalf of the student."

In cases of excessive absences, the Marquette Undergraduate Attendance Policy will be followed. "For courses in which attendance is regularly taken, an instructor or college office may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences and assign a grade of WA (Withdrawn-Excessive Absences)... Students who miss more than 6 classes in a 3 credit course that meets 50 minutes, 3 times per week, will be considered to have excessive absences and may be assigned a WA."

While the attendance/participation portion of the class grade is very small (5%), the consequences of missing 7 or more classes are enormous – you will receive a WA. Those who are involved in university sanctioned activities should submit a schedule of anticipated absences within the first 2 weeks of class, and also come talk to the instructor well in advance of any other university sanctioned activity that will result in a missed assignment/quiz/exam.

Academic Dishonesty

Any incidents of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, dishonest conduct, or plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent allowed by Marquette University policy.

Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-92</td>
<td>A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-82</td>
<td>B/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>C/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-68</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Schedule

Mon., Aug. 27 – Course Introduction

Wed., Aug. 29 – In-class media analysis
No assignment

Fri., Aug. 31 – NO CLASS – APSA CONFERENCE

Mon., Sept. 3 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY
Topic 1 – Newsmaking

Wed., Sept. 5 – Introduction
Bennett, Ch. 1, “The News about Democracy,” pp. 1-20
“Further Decline in Credibility Ratings for Most News Organizations,” Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 8/16/2012 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 7 – Gatekeeping
Bennett, Ch. 1, “The News about Democracy,” pp. 20-30
Quiz #1

Mon., Sept. 10 – Press Freedom
“Rethinking the Pentagon Papers,” Gabriel Schoenfeld, National Affairs, 2010 (D2L)
“Terrorism, Censorship, and the First Amendment,” ch. 34
“Julian Assange and the New Wave,” The Economist, July 9-15, 2011 (D2L)

Wed., Sept. 12 – History of the Media
“The Political Medium Shapes the Message,” Jeremy D. Mayer (D2L)
Newspapers of the Early Republic, The Richmond Enquirer and The Columbian Centinel, 1804 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 14 – Journalists and the News
Bennett, Ch. 5, “How Journalists Make the News”
Quiz #2

Mon., Sept. 17 – Objectivity in Journalism
Bennett, Ch. 6, “Inside the Profession: Objectivity and the Political Authority Bias”

Bennett, Ch. 7, “The Political Economy of News and the End of Journalism Era”
“Fewer Reporters means fewer Watchdogs,” Shelby Slazar, News and Tribune, 6/11 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 21 – The Political Economy of News

“The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth,” American Politics Research, Baumgartner and Morris, 2006, (D2L)
“How Soft News Brings Policy Issues to the Inattentive Public” ch. 9
Quiz #3
Topic 2 – Media Effects Theory and Research

Wed., Sept. 26 – The Public and Information Processing
        Bennett, Ch. 3, “Citizens and the News”

Fri., Sept. 28 – Hypodermic Needle Theory
        From The Phantom Public, Walter Lippman, 1925 (D2L)
        “Early History of Propaganda,” Noam Chomsky, 1991 (D2L)

Mon., Oct. 1 – Elites and the Media
        “Elite Domination of Public Opinion,” John Zaller (D2L)

Wed., Oct. 3 – Other Theories of Media Influence
        “Theories of Media Influence,” Mayer (D2L)
        “Setting the Agenda: Mass Media and the Discovery of Famine in Ethiopia,”
        Christopher Bosso, 1989 (D2L)
        Quiz #4

Fri., Oct. 5 – Framing and Priming
        “Wanted Dead or Alive: Media Frames...” Ch. 9
        “News Coverage Effects on Public Opinion about Crime” ch. 10
        “News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting,
        Priming, and Framing,” Shanto Iyengar, Communication Research, 6/93 (D2L)

Mon., Oct. 8 – Visual Persuasion
        “Say it With Pictures,” Annals AAPSS, Doris Graber, 1996 (D2L)
        “Guess Chris Christie's Weight” Timothy Noah, The New Republic, 9/30/2011 (D2L)
        “Competent, but Would you Vote for Her?” Bligh, et al. Journal of Applied Psychology,
        7/11 (D2L)

Topic 3 – Campaigns and Elections

Wed., Oct. 10 – Money
        “Transparent Elections after Citizens United,” Brennan Center for Justice, 2011 (D2L)
        “Recall Elections Awash in Outside Spending,” Journal Sentinel, Tim Tolan, July 11,
        2011 (D2L)
        “Two Cheers for Super PACs,” John Pitney, Christian Science Monitor, 2/14/2012
        (D2L)

Fri., Oct. 12 – Media’s Effect on Elections
        “The Mass Media and the Public’s Assessment of Presidential Candidates, 1952-
        Quiz #5
Mon., Oct. 15 – Campaign Ads
   No reading – videos in class

Wed., Oct. 17 – Winning the Picture
   “Appearance Matters: Candidates’ Faces May Predict Success,” ABC News, 10/22/2007 (D2L)
   **Media Research Assignment Due**

OCTOBER 18 – 21, NO CLASS FALL BREAK

Mon., Oct. 22 – Negative Campaign Ads
   Excerpt from In Defense of Negativity, John Geer, 2006 (D2L)

Wed., Oct. 24 – Elections before the Internet Age
   “McKinley’s Front Porch Campaign,” William Harpine (D2L)

**Topic 4 – The Media and Public Officials/Policymaking**

Fri., Oct. 26 – Politicians and the News
   Bennett, Ch. 4, “How Politicians Make the News,” pp. 111-137
   **Quiz #6**

Wed., Oct. 31 – The Presidency
   Bennett, Ch. 4, “How Politicians Make the News,” pp. 137-144
   “The Presidential Spectacle,” The Presidency and the Political System, Bruce Miroff, 2010 (D2L)

Fri., Nov. 2 – Foreign Policy
   Media Power in Politics, Ch. 30 “End of Television and Foreign Policy
   Media Power in Politics, Ch. 26 “Mediating the Public’s Influence on Foreign Policy”

Mon., Nov. 5 – Blurring the Line between Media and Policymakers
   “Beyond TV Analysts: Pentagon’s Hidden Hand,” David Barstow, NYT, 4/20/2008 (D2L)
   “One Man’s Military-Industrial-Media Complex,” David Barstow, NYT, 11/30/2008 (D2L)
   MediaMatters.org, 4/21/2009 (D2L)
   **Quiz #7**

Wed., Nov. 7 – Election Results
   Read about the election results in multiple sources.

Fri., Nov. 9 – Death Panels and other Curiosities
   Assignment – FEMA concentration camps, death panels, 9/11 conspiracy theories, birthers
Mon., Nov. 12 – Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

Wed., Nov. 14 – Coverage of Foreign Events
   *The Control Room* - documentary

Fri., Nov. 16 – Coverage of Foreign Events
   *The Control Room* - documentary

Mon., Nov. 19 – Coverage of Foreign Events
   *The Control Room* – discussion
   **News Analysis Due**

**NOVEMBER 21 – 25, NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Mon., Nov. 26 – War Coverage
   *Media Power in Politics*, Ch. 23 “The Al Jazeera Effect”
   *Media Power in Politics*, Ch. 27 “The Real War Will Never Get on Television”
   **Quiz #8**

Wed., Nov. 28 – Current Trends and Future Directions in Media Policy
   *Mass Media*, Ch. 12
   “Is Blogging Journalism?” Paul Andrews, *Nieman Reports*, Fall 2003 (D2L)
   **Quiz #8**

**Topic 5 – New Media**

Fri., Nov. 30 – Old and New Media Relationships
   *Media Power in Politics*, Ch. 4 “Political Communication: Old and New Media Relationships”
   “China Train Crash Censorship Scorned on Internet,” Reuters, 8/1/11 (D2L)
   “People Formerly Known as the Audience,” *The Economist*, July 9-15, 2011 (D2L)

Mon., Dec. 3 – Social Media
   TBA

Wed., Dec. 5 – The End of Mass Media?
   “Coming Full Circle,” *The Economist*, July 9-15, 2011 (D2L)
   “Foxification of the News,” *The Economist*, July 9-15, 2011 (D2L)
   **Quiz #9**

Fri., Dec. 7 – Summary/Catch-up

**FINAL EXAM DUE**
Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 3:00 in WWP 484