The 2020 election falls at time of when political hate speech remains unchecked and in the same year when our country will celebrate the centennial of the passage of the 19th amendment. With the democratic convention being held in Milwaukee, we have a unique opportunity to bring students together to explore pressing issues, while gathering data that will allow for important research on the use of racist, sexist, and fascist tropes, that are now routinely embedded in political messaging and which alter and shape our Identities, Power, and Politics.

Learning Objectives
The objectives of this course are to explore the social, cultural, and power dynamics of race and gender in the context of politics and more specifically political conventions. At the end of the course students will be able demonstrate four outcomes related to political communication, institutional history, social and cultural structures and critical thinking. A) Students will develop an understanding of political communication particularly in the context of social media and political conventions; and how race and gender are reflected in political communication message strategies. B) Students will gain an understanding of gender and race, allowing them to flesh out the social and cultural structures in relation to media, with specific attention on the impact of social media. C) Students will come to understand historical role of institutional structures in shaping society’s understandings of gender and race; and, thus, the impact on those who voices are prioritized or marginalized. D) Students will learn to think critically and independently; engaging in thoughtful, critical discussions, analysis and presentations. They will come to understand the impact of bias on various groups of people, within the context of a political campaign, specifically the Milwaukee, Democratic National Convention 2020.

Course Structure
The course looks at bias, privilege and oppression from three perspectives: A) social and cultural constructions in political communication; B) race and racism as political persuasive tools; C) gender as social construct with significant impact on women in politics. The course takes an inherently intersectional point of view. There are five main learning components: 1) interviews, 2) ethnographies, 3) social media engagement, 4) a final project, and 5) class participation. Professional speaker will also be brought in, as possible.

Course Content
Political Conventions: Examination of strategic communication in the context of political campaigns with a particular focus on conventions which serve to reaffirm our general commitment to the electoral process and provide legitimization for the party’s nominees. The course will teach students some basic political communication concepts and strategies, while digging deeper into the functions that conventions serve for political parties. Functions such as demonstrating party unity and introducing the electorate to the nominated candidate’s themes and how issues are framed by the strategies chosen by the political parties. There will also be discussion about how issues of race and gender impact the message strategies adopted.
Race: Examination of race and racism as political persuasive tools from the 1960s to the present day will utilize a critical race theory (CRT) analytical framework. In terms of content, the focus will progress from traditional advertising to social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. From the “southern strategy” deployed by Barry Goldwater in the 1960s, to George H.W. Bush’s infamous Willie Horton ads in the 1980s, to the abject othering of people of color done by Donald Trump in the run up to the 2016 presidential election (and well beyond). Course content will help students gain a keen understanding of how race and racism have long served as tools of persuasion in U.S. politics.

Gender: An exploration of the social and cultural constructs which define and constrain our understanding of gender will form the foundation. The broader context will address how these constructs impact women in the political realm. Specifically, we will explore how women candidates from Geraldine Ferraro, the first women Vice Presidential candidate, to Hillary Clinton, the first women presidential candidate, were depicted in advertising and in the case of Clinton across social media. Course content will expose students to feminist and gender-based political theories enhancing their understanding of gendered messaging, particularly advertising, in the context of the 2020 presidential race.

The team-taught course would be offered during Session 2, but will be structured around the DNC’s timeline and taught across four weeks.

Week 1) lays the theoretical and methodological foundation, which sets up students’ onsite research.

- Face-to-face, Tuesday (political/race) & Thursday gender/social tracking, 9-12:30: theoretical underpinnings

Week 2) is on-line & on site at the DNC, with students conducting ethnographies and interviews, while tracking social media—this may change depending upon opportunities we are seeking with the DNC.

- Offsite/online, Monday–Thursday: 6 hours of observations and online postings and/or collection each day

Week 3) is framed by debriefing and post-conference tracking.

- Face-to-face Tuesday 9-12:30: debriefing & online Thursday: tracking of post-convention digital messaging

Week 4) students work on summary analyzes and final presentations.

- Work on projects with face-to-face progress meetings on Thursday.

Week 5) students continue work on summary analyzes and final presentations.

- Work on projects with face-to-face progress reports on Tuesday and final project presentations Thursday.

Instructional Perspectives

We are not fans of lecturing and other forms of passive learning. Research demonstrates that active learning approaches increase levels of content comprehension and retention. As such, we expect students to be active participants in discussion, exercises and activities, as well as good team members. Further, we are seeking volunteer experiences with the DNC. If these are secured we expect robust and respectful participation in these activities.

Writing and presentation skills matter. Faculty in the Diederich College of Communication recognize the value of strong writing and presentation skills among students as they make their mark in the world, especially as they pursue upper division courses, apply for internships, and seek jobs in communication after graduation. To that end, we expect students to apply the writing and presentation skills they have learned in ENGL 1001 and COMM 1100 (or their equivalents) to all classes in communication. Thus, all work in this class will be graded not only for content but also for the ability to express ideas following the general conventions for writing and presentation.

What you’ll need

- An open, non-judgmental mind, the
- Willingness to explore, a brain like a sponge, and lots of curiosity.
- Required Readings
  - Political communication:
    - Presidential Campaign Communication," by Craig Allen Smith, 2nd edition (selected chapters)
  - Race:
    - Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic 2017 (selected chapters)
    - Dog Whistle Politics, Ian Haney López 2014 (selected chapters)
    - The Great Hack (Netflix Documentary)
Gender:

- *A Comparative Assessment of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 Presidential Race*, Jalalzai, 2018
- *See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents*, Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006

**Expectations**

**Honor Code**

“I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work. I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others. I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity. My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.”

**Academic Dishonesty**

Do not do it. End of story. However, should you choose otherwise, please review the following Academic Integrity notice: You are at Marquette because you have demonstrated that you have the ability to be here. Developing your knowledge and your unique voice can only be accomplished by doing original work and not taking shortcuts. Because we believe in your abilities to meet the challenge of course assignments, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. There are few, if any, contexts in your life in which not knowing the policies or rules works as a legitimate excuse. The same is true in this class – not knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is not an excuse. We will adhere to the university’s academic regulations on academic integrity. The policy can be found in the university bulletin: [http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/](http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/).

**Special Needs**

Please inform me during the first week of class if you have any conditions that may limit or affect your ability to participate in this course so that we can make necessary arrangements. You may also contact the Office of Student Educational Services (OSES), located in AMU 317 (288-3270) for additional information see [http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/index.shtml](http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/index.shtml).

**Emergency Plans**

Every Marquette University campus building has emergency shelter and evacuation plans. Please familiarize yourself with the plans of each building in which you take classes or attend meetings. Make sure to note the routes to the lowest level of the buildings for shelter during inclement weather, as well as exits from the buildings in the event of fire or other emergencies. Add these numbers to your cell phone: non-emergency 288-6800 and emergency 288-1911.

**About Life**

Sometimes personal or health issues, such as depression, anxiety, stress, career uncertainty, and/or relationship and/or family issues, can interfere with your ability to function as a student or simply make you feel badly. If you feel that this is happening to you, please contact the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center offers free, confidential counseling services for all full-time students. For more information or to make an appointment, call 414-288-7172, or visit [www.marquette.edu/counseling](http://www.marquette.edu/counseling).

**Course Policies**

**General**

We expect you to bring professionalism to all aspects of this class. During class, there will be a mix of lectures, exercises, discussions and presentations by us and your fellow students. We expect you to come to class prepared, having read all assigned readings (in advance of class), to pay respectful attention, and participate in discussions and activities.

**Technology**

We, generally, prefer a classroom without mobile devices in use. While in class, please put down your phone and stash other electronics unless you are using them for coursework—and then, use them wisely and respectfully. The folks in the Wakerly are available to offer tech support related to class assignments and your final project.

**Attendance**

Attendance matters, especially given the short duration of this course. It is mandatory for every class meeting.
**Professionalism/Us**
We strive to bring to this class the same professionalism we bring to all my teaching, scholarship and consulting work. We endeavor to respectfully bring you the best experience we can. We expect the same in return. Our goal is to teach you how to think, not what to think. We will strive to provide you the skills and to help you develop an understanding of concepts and theories in related to the topic at hand, which will enable you to make informed decisions and to communicate effectively. We will also strive to help you develop self-confidence in your decision-making, both professionally and personally. To that end we will endeavor to create a community of learners by providing a positive and intellectually stimulating learning environment both online and in the classroom.

**Professionalism/You**
You are here to learn. Philosophically, the best way to do this is to become a student of culture. Become a sponge. Put down your phone. Set aside assumptions. Work hard. And, remember the golden rule. Logistically, please be on time and respectful, and hand in work that is professionally executed (neat, clean, computer generated when required, spell-checked and thoroughly proofed). Please, also try your best to be a respectful, attentive listener. It will go a long way in the class and in life. Inappropriate use of electronic devices during class is NOT allowed (i.e. put down your phone). This means digitally communicating (in any way) with people outside of the classroom and/or perusing social media is not allowed during class – unless explicitly related to class. Adopting this behavior will also serve you well as a future professional.

**Technology**
We, generally, prefer a classroom without mobile devices in use. While in class, please put down your phone and stash other electronics unless you are using them for coursework—and then, use them wisely and respectfully. The folks in the Wakerly are available to offer tech support related to class assignments and your final project.

**Grading**

**Assignment Grading Breakdown**
ALL assignments are graded using letter grades. NOTE all graded calculations use the highest percentage score within the university’s grade range (e.g. B+: 87-89.99, my B+ is equivalent to 89.99). Conversely, if you hand in completely thoughtless and/or ridiculous work you will earn 0% - not an F (or 59%).

- **A=100%; A-=92.99%;**
  - **Definition of A Work:** Exceptional work that is insightful and nails every part of the assignment.
- **B+=89.99%; B=86.99%; B-=82.99%;**
  - **Definition of B Work:** Good work that meets all the requirements, but needs a few improvements to make it exceptional.
- **C+=79.99%; C=76.99%; C-=72.9%;**
  - **Definition of C Work:** Average work that minimally meets the requirements, but has little insight.
- **D+=69.99%; D=66.99%;**
  - **Definition of D Work:** Below average, thoughtless work.
- **F= 0% (shown as “none”)**
  - **Definition of F Work:** Incomplete or completely thoughtless and/or ridiculous.

**Late Assignments** are downgraded by one full letter grade for each day they are late, including weekends.

**Assignments & Percent of Final Grade**
- Interviews 10%
- Ethnographies 20%
- Social Media Engagement & Tracking 30%

**NOTE:** The above three assignments may change given the needs of the DNC.
- Final Project 20%
- Class Participation 20%