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Course description

This course provides an overview of political communication theories, modes, means and institutions and serves as an introduction to how communication scholars study politics and the media. We will cover prevalent political communication theories and trends, the relationship between political institutions and the press both in the US and in other countries, elections, debates, political campaigning and advertising, new media and politics, political socialization, education, politics and popular culture.

Course Objectives

- To become well-versed in the basics of political communication.
- To learn about the latest research and trends in political communication research.
- To practice and think about political communication theory and research critically.
- To prepare work that can be presented at a communication conference and subsequently published.
- To create and maintain a Temple affiliated political resource web site.

Reading materials

- Perloff, R. M. (1998). *Political communication: Politics, press and public in America*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- **Readings on reserve:** Several required readings have been placed on reserve at Blittman. You are to obtain those and make copies for your own use. All readings on reserve are **required** and should be completed as scheduled.

Requirements

Research critique

Select a journal article (better to select a study, qualitative or quantitative) on some aspect of political communication and critique it. The article should be no more than a couple of years old. Do not waste time summarizing the article in detail – the article summary should be no longer than a paragraph or two. Critique the theoretical soundness of the study, its contribution to the field and significance, the methodology, interpretation of results, writing, and organization. 5 pages, double-spaced. Be prepared to summarize your paper in class on the day this assignment is due. Worth 10% of total grade.

Book Report

Select a book on political communication from the list provided or on your own (if you are doing the latter, you need to get the book approved by me). Produce a critique of the book chosen, focusing less on summarizing and more on analyzing the author's approach, the book content, and whether the goals of the author were met. I expect you to address the validity of the author's approach, the significance of the topic, the soundness of organization and the arguments presented, whether the material is interesting, worthy of attention and relevant, quality of writing and style, where this books fits within the relevant body of literature, and whether it needs to be

updated and how. Summarizing the book should constitute about a third of this paper. 7 pages, double-spaced. Be prepared to summarize your paper in class on the day this assignment is due. Worth 15% of your total grade.

Digital Democracy Project

This is our attempt to understand and contribute to political uses of the Internet. The class will be divided into three groups, focusing on local, national, and global politics respectively. Your task will be to gather political resources that (a) provide political information, (b) suggest ways of becoming involved with a particular political cause or group, and (c) present or report on digital democracy experiments on the local, national, and global level and present them to the class in HTML format. The goal is to connect the efforts of all three groups and produce a political resources site, affiliated with Temple SCAT, and updated annually by this class. In doing so, you will update the work of the previous class, available at http://www.temple.edu/btmm_ma/digitaldemocracy/dd_page_1.htm. Worth 15% of your grade.

Research Paper

This is your final paper for the course, for which you can produce either a paper summarizing research you conducted over the semester, or a research prospectus, or a critical analysis. The **research proposal** for this is due April 4 . This needs to be written formally, following the research paper guidelines of the discipline. Use APA or MLA, depending on the conference/publication this is directed to. Approximately 20 pages, 40% of grade.

Participation

Your attendance and participation to class discussions is essential and expected. This is a graduate seminar, meant to inform you on this topic but to also teach you to articulate your own opinions with confidence. All readings should be completed before the assigned date, and you should come to class prepared to talk. You will also prepare discussion questions for a specific topic, to be determined later. Worth 20% of your grade.

Special Needs

It is our desire that all students participate fully in the curriculum of our department. If you have a disability or special condition that compromises your ability to successfully participate in this class, please notify me as soon as possible and make sure you register with the appropriate University office. All efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

Honor Code

All students are expected to read and observe Temple University's Honor Code Policy concerning academic integrity.

Plagiarizing

When facts or other material are obtained from an outside source, that source should be cited properly in the text and the bibliography/references section of your work. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of another person and presenting them as one's own without proper credit. Plagiarizing is considered cheating, and a student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course. If you are not certain that you are citing materials properly, feel free to double check your citations with me.

Grading scale:

A = 100-93	A- = 92-90		
B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80	
C+ = 79-77	C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	
D+ = 69-67	D = 66-63	D- = 62-60	59 and below = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments should be completed prior to the date for which they are assigned. You should come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. This schedule is tentative – you will be advised of changes. Readings other than Perloff have been placed on reserve at Blittman.

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
INTRODUCTION			
Jan. 23	Introduction to the course		
Jan. 30	Political Communication Theory: Overview Roots, development, current trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 1, 10 • Denton & Woodward ch. 1, 2 • Lippmann ch. 1 • Johnston – Trends in political communication 	
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES AND EFFECTS			
Feb. 6	Agenda Setting – 1 st level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 11, 13, 14 • McCombs & Shaw – The agenda setting function of mass media • Gandy – Beyond agenda setting • Burd – Critique of agenda setting research 	
Feb. 13	Agenda Setting – 2 nd level and Framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 12 • McCombs, Shaw & Weaver – The game is afoot • Ghanem – Filling in the tapestry • McCombs – New Frontiers • Reese – Framing Public Life • Ghanem & McCombs – The convergence of agenda setting and framing • Tankard – The empirical approach to framing • Entman – Framing 	Article Review due
Feb. 20	Political Communication and the Public Sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calhoun – Habermas and the Public Sphere • Habermas – Further reflections on the public sphere • Garnham – The media and the public sphere • Dewey – Search for the Public • Fraser – Rethinking the public sphere • Schudson – Was there ever a public sphere 	
Feb. 27	Civic Engagement Spiral of Silence Spiral of Cynicism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noelle-Neumann – The spiral of silence • Cappella & Jamieson – News frames, political cynicism and media cynicism • Patterson – Bad news, bad governance • Fallows – Why Americans hate the media • Putnam – The Strange Disappearance of Civic America • Lasch – Journalism, publicity and the lost art of the argument 	
DATES	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS

Mar. 6	Other perspectives on public opinion and politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbst & Beniger – The changing infrastructure of public opinion • Schudson – Why conversation is not the soul of democracy • Fallows – News and democracy • Carey – The press, public opinion and public discourse • Glasser – Communication and the cultivation of citizenship • Lang & Lang – The public as bystander • Hart & Downing – Is there an American Public? 	
Mar. 20	Digital Democracy: New media and politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hacker & van Dijk – What is digital democracy • Rogers & Malhotra – Computers as communication • Van Dijk – Models of Democracy • Hagen – Digital Democracy and Political Systems • Keane – Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere • Sassi – The controversies of the Internet... • Jankowski & van Selm – The promise and practice of public debate in cyberspace 	Book Report due
Mar. 27	Media and Politics outside the US – Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semetko et al, The formation of campaign agendas (book) 	
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION MODES, MEANS AND INSTITUTIONS			
Apr. 3	Political Institutions and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 	Research Proposal due
Apr. 10	Mass Media and Presidential Elections Campaigning Advertising Debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 	
Apr. 17	(cont.) Debates/ Political Communication and Rhetoric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perloff ch. 21, 22 • Kraus ch. 3 • Perloff ch. 6, 7 	
Apr. 24	Political Comm. /Rhetoric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Journeys with George” 	Digital Democracy Project due
May 1	Education, Political Socialization, Popular Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kraus – Mass communication and political socialization • TBA 	
Final Research Paper and Presentations due May 8 (during our scheduled exam time, May 8, 5:30-8:50)			

References

- Burd, G. (1991). A critique of two decades of agenda-setting research. In D. L. Protesse & M. McCombs (Eds.), Agenda setting: Readings on media, public opinion, and policymaking (pp. 291-294). Hillsdale, NJ: LEA.
- Calhoun, C. (1992). Introduction: Habermas and the public sphere. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), Habermas and the public sphere (pp. 1-47). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Carey, J. (1995). The press, public opinion, and public discourse. In T. Glasser & C. Salmon (Eds.), Public opinion & the communication of consent (pp. 373-402). New York: Guilford.
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- Fallows, J. (1996). Breaking the news. New York: Pantheon.
- Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), Habermas and the public sphere (pp. 109-142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
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- Glasser, T. (1991). Communication and the cultivation of citizenship. Communication, 12, 235-248.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Further reflections on the public sphere. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), Habermas and the public sphere (pp. 421-461). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
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- Hagen, M. (2000). Digital democracy and political systems. In K. L. Hacker & J. van Dijk (Eds.), Digital Democracy: Issues of Theory and Practice, (pp. 54-69).Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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- Herbst, S., & Beniger, J. R. (1994). The changing infrastructure of public opinion. In J. S. Ettema & D. Charles Whitney (Eds.), Audience-making: How the media create the audience (pp. 95-114).

- Jankowski, N. & van Selm, M. (2000). The promise and practice of public debate in cyberspace. In K. L. Hacker & J. van Dijk (Eds.), Digital Democracy: Issues of Theory and Practice, (pp. 149-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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Booklist for Book Review

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