
POLI333b Media and Politics

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10am-noon or by appointment

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Class time and place: T/TH, 9am-12pm, BUCH B213



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Mass media play an increasingly important role in politics, and are a central feature of modern representative democracy. Much of our exposure to politics, as well as other important information, comes not from direct experience, but from stories mediated by the press. This course provides an introduction to the themes in the study of mass media and politics, a thriving field of academic research at the time when the media landscape is undergoing immense changes driven by technological progress. In this course, we will examine the interactions between media and political institutions, actors and processes, primarily in the United States in light of theories of journalism, communication and political practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A major objective of this course is to learn to think in systematic and nuanced ways about the media's coverage of the political world instead of relying on grotesque simplifications that pervade public thinking about the media and their role in politics. We will carefully examine what the media do well and where they fail. The key objectives are:

1. Develop understanding of major theoretical approaches in political communications
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to current events
3. Synthesize academic literature into concise arguments
4. Evaluate the quality of evidence in empirical research (how do we know what we know about the media?)
5. Critique the quality of information in the news environment

COURSE FORMAT

Lectures

We'll meet twice a week for three hours. Each meeting, I will lecture about the relevant material for about an hour. I expect you to come prepared, having done the readings and completing anything else that was due on that day. You can also expect a discussion relating current events to the material we're covering. For that, I expect you to follow the news. We will also watch relevant videos as well as do active learning group exercises to process course content.

Participation

I expect you to show up prepared and be ready for class. Participation grade will be composed of a combination of very brief surveys you'll have to complete on-line, very brief "hot takes" written in response to specific questions I'll post, as well as suggesting an interesting news item that relates to course content for discussion. This course depends on your informed participation and therefore it is a large part of your grade.

In class, we will do a variety of exercises that will involve Learning Catalytics. It is an online learning platform that will require you to sign up. I will post more information about it on the course website.

Assignments

In addition to the brief weekly assignments discussed above, you will have to write two concise, one-page analyses on the topics that I will specify on the course website.

Exam

There will be a final exam in this course and it will feature a combination of true-false, multiple choice, and short answer questions. It will test your knowledge of the main theoretical approaches we cover in the course. Material covered will involve everything assigned plus content of the lectures.

Learning Catalytics

We'll use Learning Catalytics for in class activities and participation. The system is free for us to use. Please make sure to register for an account before first class. To do it, go to learningcatalytics.com and click on "Register" using the access code provided below:

Student Access Code: USLCSX-WAH00-BONNE-BIVVY-POTTO-SPIES

TurnItIn

In accordance with departmental policy, in this course you will be required to submit your research paper in electronic form to a service called TurnItIn. UBC subscribes to this service that checks written material for originality by searching for matching text. This service is in increasing use in universities as protection for students against the impact of academic fraud on scholarship competitions, graduate and law school admissions, and degree reputation. Students will submit their research papers to the TurnItIn website, where software scans the paper against a database which includes public websites, paper writing services, essays submitted to TurnItIn, and journal articles. The service then produces a report on the paper's originality. The instructor will review the reports, and where necessary, the papers themselves. Please note that TurnItIn

stores information on servers that reside in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your TurnItIn account, please use the first 5 digits of your student number as an alias instead. For more information on TurnItIn, reasons for its use, and general policies, see the UBC Vice President Academic and Provost web site, at <http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/turnitin/index.htm>

Students are required to e-mail one copy of their paper to the instructor and submit the same paper electronically to TurnItIn.

Still a little uncertain or paranoid about what constitutes plagiarism? For a quick refresher visit: <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Ewts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> and/or: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>

To submit your paper to TurnItIn, log on to the TurnItIn site, at: www.turnitin.com You will be asked to create a unique "user profile," consisting of an ID (e-mail address) and password (see upper right hand corner of the TurnItIn homepage). Once this ID is created, you will be able to add courses to your profile. To add a course, you will need:

Course ID: 15169135

Course Password: 333b

Once added to a course, you will be able to submit your one pagers to the service. You will be asked to provide your name and student number, as well as some details about your assignment. This information will be used only to identify your submission to your instructor. Please ensure that there is NO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION included in the text of your assignment, including headers. This is for your own privacy (if you do submit identifying information by mistake and you are not concerned, you can leave it as is). You will be asked to cut and paste (text only) the body of your assignment, and the bibliography into separate fields within the website. Simply confirm the submission, and TurnItIn will issue a receipt (via e-mail). If you encounter difficulties submitting your bibliography, do not be concerned. The important element is the body (text) of the paper.

Please note that TurnItIn stores information on servers that reside in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your TurnItIn account, please use the first 5 digits of your student number as an alias instead. Assignments are not accessible to the public once submitted to TurnItIn, and you, as the author, retain ownership of your original material. Your work will be added to TurnItIn's archive for comparison against subsequently submitted material, thus ensuring that your work is not plagiarized.

GRADING

There are a total of 1,000 points to earn in this course:

Weekly surveys (6*10 pts) = 60 points

Weekly hot takes (6*25 pts) = 150 points

Weekly news story suggestion (6*15 pts) = 90 points

In-class participation = 100 points

One pagers (2*100 pts) = 200 points

Final project = 200 points

Final exam = 200 points

SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	THINGS TO READ/LISTEN TO/WATCH
1	T MAY 16	Introductions; How people process information	 Patterson  Julia Galef's TED Talk  Hidden Brain Podcast Ep. 64  You are not so smart Podcast Ep. 94 Suggested:  Flynn, Nyhan & Reifler <u>Due Today (May 16 at 6pm):</u> Weekly survey #1
	TH MAY 18	History of media and politics in the U.S.	 Ladd, Ch.1-2 <u>Due Today (May 18 at 9am):</u> News story suggestion #1 Hot take #1
2			<u>Normally the survey and news story suggestion would be due today but it's a long weekend so it's due tomorrow.</u>

T MAY 23 Role of the media in a democracy

 [Zaller](#)
 [Bennett](#)

Suggested:

 [Schudson, Ch.10](#)

Due Today (May 23 at 6pm):

News story suggestion #2

Weekly survey #2

TH MAY 25 Soft news

 [Prior](#)

 [Baum & Jamieson](#)

 [Alisa Miller's TED Talk](#)

Due Today (May 25 at 9am):

Hot take #2

Due Tomorrow (May 26 at midnight):

One pager #1

3

Due Monday (May 29 at 11.59pm):

News story suggestion #3

Weekly survey #3

T MAY 30 Media effects

 [Roessler](#)

 [Gilens](#)

Suggested:

 [Chong & Druckman](#)

TH JUN 1 Media effects

 [Boydston & Russell](#)

 [Calmes](#)

Suggested:

 [Soroka et al](#)

Due Today (Jun 1 at 9am):

Hot take #3

4

T JUN 6 Media bias

Due Monday (June 5 at 11.59pm):
News story suggestion #4
Weekly survey #4

 [Bennett](#)
 [Groeling](#)
 [Freakonomics "How biased is your media" Podcast episode](#)

Suggested:
 [Soroka](#)

TH JUN 8 Echo chambers

 [Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic](#)
 [Barbera et al](#)
 [Eli Pariser's TED Talk](#)

Due Today (Jun 8 at 9am):
Hot take #4
Due Tomorrow (Jun 9 at midnight):
One pager #2

5

T JUN 13 Changing media landscape

Due Monday (June 12 at 11.59pm):
News story suggestion #5
Weekly survey #5

 [Iyengar & Bennett](#)
 [Thrall, Stecula & Moyer](#)
 [Radiolab "I don't have to answer that" episode](#)

TH JUN 15 Social media

 [Gladwell](#)
 [Millennials and Social Media](#)
 [Clay Shirky's TED Talk](#)

Due Today (Jun 15 at 9am):
Hot take #5

6

Due Monday (June 19 at 11.59pm):
News story suggestion #6
Weekly survey #6

T JUN 20 Misinformation & fake news  [Luskin, Sood, & Blank](#)
 [On the Media "Unreal" episode](#)
 [NYT "How Fake News Goes Viral: A Case Study"](#)

Suggested:

 [Thorson](#)

Due Today (Jun 20 at 9am):

Hot take #6

TH JUN 22 A comparative perspective  [Hallin](#)
 [Soroka et al](#)

Due Tomorrow (Jun 23 at midnight):

Final project

COURSE POLICIES

Email

Summer courses are intense. We'll see each other for 6 hours each week. I will also be available during the office hours. As a result, there should be plenty of opportunities for you to ask questions in person, so please refrain from emailing me questions about things that are not time sensitive. If you do end up emailing, do not expect an immediate answer. During the week, I will try to respond within 24 hours. I will answer all weekend emails on Monday.

Late submissions

For surveys, news story suggestions and hot takes, I will not accept late submissions. If they are not submitted on time, there are no make ups. No exceptions.

For other assignments, there will be a 10 point penalty for each 24 hours that your assignment is late.

Re-Grading

If you'd like anything re-graded, you must prepare a single-page memo outlining your case for re-grading. The memo needs to be serious and specific. I will then re-examine a particular item. Know, however, that a given grade can either increase or decrease.

Personal electronics

We all like our fancy electronics. But keep your cellphones away during class. You should also try to avoid using your laptop in class, unless we are using them for a specific purpose. Sadly, plenty of research shows that they do damage in the classroom setting by hindering learning not just for the people who use them but the students around them as well. Using a laptop in the classroom likely lowers your grade, too. In light of this, I highly suggest you take notes by hand in this course. That way, you process the information better, instead of just copying everything down verbatim, and you make the studying environment more productive for yourself and your fellow students.

STUDYING

Students often don't study in the most efficient way. Here is a good guide for developing better studying habits.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members' living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines, and attending class and engaging in class activities. If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor or TA before the deadline or before your absence.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor's prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

Illness and Absence

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Reach out and ask for help if you need it

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer students support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information about Early Alert, visit earlyalert.ubc.ca. For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit students.ubc.ca/livewell.

Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that "the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued." The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found at <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf>. Students should read

this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0>

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office (<http://equity.ubc.ca>), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students (<http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/contactus/>).

Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC's Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: "unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents." Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:

Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)
249M, Student Union Building, UBC
604-827-5180
sasc@ams.ubc.ca
<http://amssasc.ca>

Equity and Inclusion Office
2306 - 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)
604.822.6353
equity@equity.ubc.ca
<http://equity.ubc.ca>