I. Course Description
Nearly everything *The People* know about politics they learn through the media. This simple fact places the media in a unique position to inform us or misinform us, to hold the government accountable or serve as its mouthpiece. So...what effects do media have on American politics? This course answers this question by examining the history of media in the United States, comparing the U.S. media environment to that of other countries, and exploring the political science literature on media as an institution and media effects in modern America. By the end of this course students will:

(1.1) Obtain broad exposure to the political science literature on the media, including its origins and evolution, as well as the relationship between media, American political institutions, and the people of the United States.

(1.2) Understand the political economy of media and how market forces shape the information we receive as well as the way in which we receive it.

(1.3) Learn to think in a more nuanced and scientific way about media coverage of politics.

(1.4) Understand the ways in which media do, and do not, influence the attitudes individuals develop toward political objects.

(1.5) Develop an original research design testing a major theory in media politics in the United States or a theory of their own development.

II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

(2.1) **Required Texts**
We will be using two textbooks over the course of this class. They are available in the University Bookstore, but feel free to obtain these texts through alternative vendors.

ISBN: 9780393937794

ISBN: 9780226340524
(2.2) Graded Evaluations
Learning is an active exercise. Students at all levels of learning and accomplishment benefit when they are actively engaged with course material. Your grade in this class will be assessed through class participation, two writing assignments, and two exams.

Here are some important dates for these assignments and the rubric I will follow for you final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>September 27th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>April 26th @ 10:45am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2.4) Grading
All grades (including final grades) will be assigned following the system depicted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>≥ 98</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>= 78</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Course Schedule and Assignments

Week 1: Thinking like a Political Scientist  
Week of August 14th

***Students should buy textbooks immediately***

Pass out and review syllabus

Iyengar, Chapter 1
Purugganan, Mary and Jan Hewitt. 2004. “How to Read a Scientific Article.” Rice University

Week 2: The Media and Democracy  
Week of August 21st

Iyengar, Chapter 2
Bennett, Chapter 1
De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1835. Democracy in America, Volume 2, Part 2, Chapter 6

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1 The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.
Week 3: The News Americans Get

Iyengar, Chapter 3
Bennett, Chapter 2

Week 4: Journalism, a Profession

Iyengar, Chapter 4
Bennett, Chapter 6

***Monday, September 4th – No classes***

Week 5: When Choice Isn’t Necessarily a Good Thing

Iyengar, Chapter 5

Week 6: The Political Economy of Media

Bennett, Chapter 7

Week 7: Exam Week

Week 8: Citizen Competence


Week 9: Political Campaigns and Media

Iyengar, Chapter 6
**Week 10: Going Public**

Week of October 16th

Iyengar, Chapters 7 and 10

***Thursday, October 19th – Withdrawal Deadline***

**Week 11: Public Opinion and the Media**

Week of October 23rd

Iyengar, Chapter 8

***Friday, October 27th – Fall Break***

**Week 12: Media Effects I**

Week of October 30th

Iyengar, Chapter 8 (cont’d)

**Week 13: Media Effects II**

Week of November 6th


**Week 14: Entertainment Media and Politics**

Week of November 13th

Week 15: Week of November 20th

***No Classes – Thanksgiving Break***

Week 16: Fixing a Broken Media System? Week of November 27th

Iyengar, Chapter 11
Bennett, Chapter 8

***Last Week of Classes***

Week 17: Week of December 4th

Final Exam – Monday, December 11th @ 12noon.