

POLS 4550: Government and the Mass Media

Class Time: T/TH 12:45 – 2pm

Classroom: Baldwin 101D

Instructor: Jeffrey M. Glas, PhD

Contact Information:

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office Location: Baldwin 380A

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Course Prerequisites: None

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.

II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

(2.1) Required Texts

This class does not require you to purchase a textbook. All course readings are posted on the class eLC page in content folders corresponding to each week of the semester.

(2.2) Exams

There are three exams in this class. Each exam is worth 25% of your grade. These exams contain multiple choice and short answer item as well as one essay item (the essay prompt will be released a week in advance).

(2.3) Assignments, Discussion, and Attendance

Learning is an active exercise. Students at all levels of learning and accomplishment benefit when they are actively engaged with the course material. For most weeks of this class, you will have a short assignment to complete. These assignments will be posted to Assignment Folders in eLC.

(2.4) Assignment and Exam Schedule and Grade Distribution

Exam 1	20%	September 20 th
Reflection Paper 1	10%	September 20 th
Exam 2	20%	November 3 rd
Reflection Paper 2	10%	November 3 rd
Exam 3	20%	December 8 th
Reflection Paper 3	10%	December 8 th

(2.5) Grading

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

A	=	94-100	C+	=	77
A-	=	90	C	=	74
B+	=	87	C-	=	70
B	=	84	D	=	60 – 69
B-	=	80	F	≤	59

III. Class Policies

(3.1) Disability Disclosure Statement

Able-bodiedness should not impede your intellectual development. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about any accommodations you need in the classroom, your breakout sessions, and for exams. We have some amazing resources for you here at UGA. For testing accommodations please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. For more information please check out the DRC's website (www.uga.drc.edu). The DRC is located at 825 Lumpkin Street (Clark-Howell Hall) and can be contacted by phone at 706.542.8719.

(3.2) Student Athletes

Representing our university in athletics places some unusual scheduling obligations on you. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about your schedule so we can make sure you are able to achieve in the classroom as well as on the field or in the arena.

(3.3) Absences

John Lennon once said, "Life happens while you're busy making other plans." Attending class is critical for your success in this class. Participation is a significant portion of your grade and there is a significant amount of course content that we will cover in our class meetings and breakout sessions. Absences will be excused for legitimate reasons (and I am reasonable).

Please do not come to class if you are ill. The UGA Health Center (www.uhs.uga.edu) is located at 55 Carlton Street (across the street from Ramsey).

(3.4) Makeup Exams

If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero (which means passing the class will be unlikely). If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. Make-up exams are only given to students with legitimate excuses. All make-up exams are administered by the Department of Political Science, but require my permission.

(3.5) Missed/Late Assignments

Missed assignments are awarded a grade of zero. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of five points for each calendar day late.

(3.6) Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an “F” in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, please examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

(3.7) Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam or coming to class, you should contact me (Dr. Glas) as soon as possible.

(3.8) Policy on Disruptive Behavior

- 1) Turn communication devices to silent...or turn them off entirely.
- 2) Be polite during class discussion.

(3.9) Withdraw Policy

Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Monday, October 24th. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a “WF”.

IV. Course Schedule¹

Week 1 – August 18th – Introductions

Syllabus
Study Sheet

Week 2 – August 23rd and 25th – Some Normative Considerations, Part 1

Plato’s Republic Book VII sections 514a-520a (posted to eLC)
Siebert et al Chapters 2-5 (pick two of your choice)

Week 3 – August 30th and September 1st – The Importance of Political Economy

Selection from Bennett – News: The Politics of Illusion
Selection from Franklin – Politics and Film

Week 4 – September 6th and 8th – The American Media

De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1835. *Democracy in America, Volume 1, Part 2, Chapter 3: The Freedom of the Press in the United States.*
De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1835. *Democracy in America, Volume 2, Part 2, Chapter 6*
Schudson, Michael and Susan Tiff. 2005. “American Journalism in Historical Perspective.” in
Geneva Overholser and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (eds.), *The Press*. New York: Oxford
University Press

¹ The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Week 5 – September 13th and 15th – Citizen Competence

- DeCesare, T., 2012. The Lippmann-Dewey. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, 43, pp.106-116.
- Dahl, Robert Alan. "The problem of civic competence." *Journal of Democracy* 3.4 (1992): 45-59.
- Druckman, J.N., 2012. The politics of motivation. *Critical Review*, 24(2), pp.199-216.

Week 6 – September 20th – Exam 1

*****Reflection Paper 1 Due*****

Week 7 – September 27th and 29th – Media Effects Models

- Scheufele, Dietram and David Tewksbury. 2006. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of Communication* 57(1): 9-20.
- McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L., 1972. The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public opinion quarterly*, 36(2), pp.176-187.
- Chong, D. and Druckman, J.N., 2007. Framing theory. *Annual review of political science*, 10(1), pp.103-126.
- Van Duyn, E. and Collier, J., 2019. Priming and fake news: The effects of elite discourse on evaluations of news media. *Mass Communication and Society*, 22(1), pp.29-48.

Week 8 – October 4th and 6th – Selective Exposure

- Sears, D.O. and Freedman, J.L., 1967. Selective exposure to information: A critical review. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31(2), pp.194-213.
- Prior, M. (2005). News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 577-592.
- Stroud, Natalie Jomini. 2008. Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure." *Political Behavior* 30(3): 341-366.
- Glas and Taylor (np) "Counter-Attitudinal Selective Exposure."

Week 9 – October 11th and 13th – The Hostile Media Phenomenon

- Vallone, R.P., Ross, L. and Lepper, M.R., 1985. The hostile media phenomenon: biased perception and perceptions of media bias in coverage of the Beirut massacre. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 49(3), p.577.
- Feldman, Laura. 2014. "The Hostile Media Effect." (posted eLC)

Week 10 – October 18th and 20th – Trust in Media

- Tsfati, Y. and Cohen, J., 2012. Perceptions of media and media effects: The third person effect, trust in media and hostile media perceptions. *The international encyclopedia of media studies*.
- Lee, T.T., 2010. Why they don't trust the media: An examination of factors predicting trust. *American behavioral scientist*, 54(1), pp.8-21.
- Guess, A., Nyhan, B. and Reifler, J., 2018. All Media Trust Is Local. *Findings from the 2018 Poynter Media Trust Survey*.

Week 11 – October 25th and 27th –

- Chaffee, S. H., & Kanihan, S. F. (1997). Learning about politics from the mass media. *Political communication*, 14(4), 421-430.
- Druckman, James N. 2003. "The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate Revisited." *Journal of Politics* 65(2): 559-571.
- Mutz, Diana and Byron Reeves. 2005. "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 1-15.
- Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., Banks, A. J., & Davis, A. K. (2008). Is a worried citizen a good citizen? Emotions, political information seeking, and learning via the internet. *Political Psychology*, 29(2), 247-273.

Week 12 – November 1st – Exam 2

*****Reflection Paper 2 Due*****

Week 13 – November 8th and 10th – The Media and Misperceptions

- Nyhan, B. and Reifler, J., 2010. When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior*, 32(2), pp.303-330.
- Lazer, D.M., Baum, M.A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A.J., Greenhill, K.M., Menczer, F., Metzger, M.J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G., Rothschild, D. and Schudson, M., 2018. The science of fake news. *Science*, 359(6380), pp.1094-1096.
- Motta, M., Stecula, D. and Farhart, C., 2020. How right-leaning media coverage of COVID-19 facilitated the spread of misinformation in the early stages of the pandemic in the US. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 53(2), pp.335-342.
- Chen, E., Chang, H., Rao, A., Lerman, K., Cowan, G. and Ferrara, E., 2021. COVID-19 misinformation and the 2020 US presidential election. *The Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*.

Week 14 – November 15th and 17th – Social Media

- Bond, R.M., Fariss, C.J., Jones, J.J., Kramer, A.D., Marlow, C., Settle, J.E. and Fowler, J.H., 2012. A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), pp.295-298.
- Larson, H.J., 2018. The biggest pandemic risk? Viral misinformation. *Nature*, 562(7726), pp.309-310.
- Zhuravskaya, E., Petrova, M. and Enikolopov, R., 2020. Political effects of the internet and social media. *Annual Review of Economics*, 12, pp.415-438.

Week 15 – November 22nd – Thanksgiving Break

Week 16 – November 29th and December 1st – Entertainment Media

- Gierzynski, Anthony and Julie Seger. 2011. "Harry Potter and the Millennials: The Boy-Who-Lived and the Politics of a Muggle Generation." *Presented at the APSA 2011 Annual Meeting*.
- Pautz, M.C., 2015. Argo and zero dark thirty: Film, government, and audiences. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 48(1), pp.120-128.
- Glas, J.M. and Taylor, J.B., 2018. The silver screen and authoritarianism: How popular films activate latent personality dispositions and affect American political attitudes. *American Politics Research*, 46(2), pp.246-275.
- Selection from Gierzynski (2018)

Week 17 – No Class

Week 18 – December 8th - Exam 3

*****Reflection Paper 3 Due*****