

Syllabus
MMC 3614: Media and Politics (online)
Fall 2017

Instructor: Jordan Neil, doctoral candidate
Email: jneil@ufl.edu
Tel: 352-392-6729
Office: Weimer Hall 2040 (by appointment only)

Note: All dates and times listed are Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Course Objectives

This course examines the role of media in shaping American politics. By the end of the course you will be able to recognize the fundamental role of media in shaping the public's perception of politicians, the government, and the United States' socio-political structure. You will be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of certain media sources and develop ways to ascertain the validity of information from media sources. You will be able to identify how the media affects political figures, the ways in which political figures respond to, influence, or even manipulate news coverage.

Course Materials

- Iyengar, S. (2016). *Media politics: a citizen's guide*. (3rd ed.) New York: W.W. Norton.
- Additional materials will be provided on Canvas.
- Computer requirements needed for ProctorU (e.g., a working microphone and webcam).

Course structure

This course is web-only, using the Canvas e-learning tool (<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>). There is no virtual class time for this course. A learning module has been set up for each section of the class, with each module corresponding to one week of class. All Assignments, Quizzes, and Exams must be completed by the Sunday of each week at 6:00 p.m. It is your responsibility to follow and adhere to this schedule. Reading assignments will cover the required text and also supplemental readings posted to Canvas as and when required. The reading list may be supplemented throughout the semester. Lecture materials are intended to augment and reinforce concepts presented in the course readings, but will focus on specific elements of the Module rather than cover the entire readings for that week. You will be randomly assigned to a group to complete certain class assignments. There will be both a midterm and final exam, both of which will be proctored by ProctorU.

Course Requirements	Percentage
Quizzes	15
Discussion posts	5
Midterm exam	25
Final Exam	25
Group response paper	30
Total	100%

The following are brief summaries of Course Requirements – more detailed information, including grading rubrics, can be found on Canvas:

Quizzes

Quizzes (found under the “Quizzes” section on Canvas):

Quizzes. You will be expected to complete five quizzes throughout the course of this class. Quizzes will test your comprehension of the preceding two Modules. Each quiz will include 10 questions, and will have a total time limit of 10 minutes to complete the quiz. You will not have time to review your course materials during the quiz, so staying up to date with the course and studying the materials beforehand is essential. (5 quizzes at 3% each = 15% of grade). **Please see Course Schedule for quiz deadlines.**

Assignments

Discussion Posts (found under the “Discussion” section on Canvas):

Class Introduction. You must post a 100-word introduction about yourself, including what issues relevant to media and politics are of most interest to you and why. Please post in the discussion forum titled, “Class Introduction.” (1% of total grade). **Due August 26, 6:00 p.m.**

Group Discussion Post. You will be randomly assigned to a group in Module 2 of the course (approximately six students per group). As a group, you will be expected to choose a recent political story from a reputable online/print news source (such as The New York Times, Guardian, Politico, etc.), published no longer than one month prior to the assignment deadline. The article must relate to the Module topic for that week. One of your group members will post a 300-word discussion post that you have all contributed to the development of. The post must address its relevance to the Module’s weekly topic, why it is unique/interesting, and the pros and cons of how the article reports the information (e.g. sources used, how the data used in the article was collected and portrayed, important frames used, etc.). Please post in the discussion forum titled with your group number (e.g., “Group Discussion Post: Group 1”). (4% of total grade). **Please see Course Schedule below for the due date for your group.**

Group Response Paper (found under the “Assignments” section on Canvas):

Group Response Paper. In your group, you will be expected to write a 12-page, double-spaced response paper, excluding references. I will do my best to take the issues of interest you identified in the Class Introduction to help shape the response question(s); however, your response must clearly indicate that you have synthesized the core concepts discussed in one or more Modules of the course. Each individual group member must submit the final draft of the paper, which will include all group members’ names on the title page. I take this as confirmation that you have contributed to, reviewed, and approve of the final draft of this paper. Each individual group member will also be expected to complete and submit a peer evaluation form, which I will take into account when assigning individual grades. Failure to turn in the peer

evaluation form will result in an automatic deduction of 5% for the individual group member. (30% of total grade). **Due December 3, 6:00 p.m.**

Exams

Exams (will be proctored on the ProctorU website, with any supplementary materials found under “Assignments” in Canvas):

Midterm exam. Your midterm exam will test your knowledge on all readings and materials up to, and including, Module 8. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam. This is a closed book exam, so you will not be allowed any materials in front of you when you take the exam. **Exam must be started by October 22, 4:30 p.m.** (25% of grade)

Final exam. Your final exam will test your knowledge on all readings and materials up to, and including, Module 14. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam. This is a closed book exam, so you will not be allowed any materials in front of you when you take the exam. **Exam must be started by December 10, 4:30 p.m.** (25% of grade)

ProctorU overview:

ProctorU will be used by all students taking this course regardless of whether you are an on-campus student or not. You can access ProctorU at <http://www.proctoru.com/>

It is your duty to familiarize yourself with the requirements needed to successfully take the midterm and final exams on ProctorU. Detailed guidelines for this proctoring system are on the website, but below I have provided a short overview:

- Students are **required** to have a working microphone and webcam in place during the test-taking period.
- Students will **not** be allowed to take an exam without a webcam.
- Students must register for a time slot for their course examinations with ProctorU starting the second week of the semester and no later than 3 days prior to an exam.
- Examinations may be scheduled at any time during the 24 hours in which the examination is open; however, technical support will only be available from 8:00 am ET – 11:59 p.m. EST.
- Examinations will close 6:00 p.m. EST, so **do not** schedule an exam appointment with ProctorU that will run past that time on the last day of the examination, even if they allow it. I.e., **do not** sign up for an appointment at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the exam as your exam time will be limited to only 60 minutes.
- No one is allowed in the room with you while you take your exam, so be sure to make proper arrangements.
- The proctor will ask you for **two** forms of picture ID and may ask some public record questions to verify your identity.
- Please plan for at least two hours for completing the examination to allow time for interfacing with ProctorU.

- Proctoring fees are prepaid. For exams scheduled less than 3 days before an exam, you will be charged a \$5.00 late fee.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 73
D+	67 – 69
D	63 – 66
D-	60 – 63
E	59 and below

Class Policies

Deadlines. All student assessments are due by the date and time listed on the Course Schedule. All Assignments, Quizzes, and Exams must be completed by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday of the week they are listed. Canvas will turn off assignments after the due date, and you will not be able to submit them. If you are going to miss a deadline or an exam and have a University-approved excuse for doing so, it must be cleared with me in advance. Do not wait until after you have missed the deadline to contact me, or you won't be able to make up the work. You are responsible for managing due dates and times, so do not wait until the last minute to submit your work. I will assume if you waited until the last minute that you were aware a problem could occur and chose to take the chance. I expect you to treat this course as you would a job, and take responsibility for completing the work to a high standard and to meet the fixed deadlines. If a circumstance arises that will cause you to be unable to meet the deadline, contact me as soon as you are aware. I may agree to extend the deadline, but if I have not agreed to an extension prior to the deadline, your Assignment, Quiz, or Exam grade will be a zero. The University's policy on absences can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

If you have technical problems with Canvas, **you should first contact** the UF Help Desk at 392-HELP. If they cannot resolve your issue, please forward me a copy of the receipt they have emailed you and I will try and propose a solution. I will not accept assignments reporting technical problems unless you have a receipt from UF Help Desk showing you contacted them first to resolve your problem.

Communication. I will endeavor to respond to all students within a maximum of 48 hours upon receipt of his/her communication. Please contact me through Canvas with "MMC3614" in the subject line. My office is located in Weimer Hall room 2040. I am flexible to meet with students

on campus, or we can arrange to speak on the phone, but these will be by a prearranged appointment time only.

Evaluations. You are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but you will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Academic Integrity. You are bound by The UF Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Special Assistance. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. 352-392-8565 <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Counseling & Wellness. The University provides wellness resources and counseling. Students should take advantage of these if they are feeling overwhelmed academically, personally or socially. The Counseling & Wellness Center website is <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/> Students may also contact me if they need assistance taking advantage of the Counseling & Wellness resources.

Changes. The instructor reserves the right to alter the Syllabus or Course Schedule as the need arises.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE 1: Introduction

Opens: Mon. August 21, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 1 PowerPoint.

Assignment:

- **Post 100-word class introduction** on Canvas under thread entitled, "Class Introduction." (1% of grade). Due Sun. August 27, 6:00 p.m.

MODULE 2: The Press and the Democratic Process

Opens: Mon. August 28, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 2 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapters 1 & 2.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **No assignment**

MODULE 3: The Media Marketplace

Opens: Mon. September 4, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 3 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 3.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Quiz 1** on **all** readings and materials from Modules 2 and 3 on Canvas. Quiz must be completed by September 10, 6:00 p.m. (3% of grade)

MODULE 4: Reporters, Official Sources, and the Decline of Adversarial Journalism

Opens: Mon. September 11, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 4 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 4.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Group 1 discussion post** relevant to Module 4 on Canvas. Post must be completed by September 17, 6:00 p.m. (4% of grade)

MODULE 5: New Media, New Forms of Campaigning

Opens: Mon. September 18, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 5 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 5.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Quiz 2** on **all** readings and materials from Modules 4 and 5 on Canvas. Quiz must be completed by September 24, 6:00 p.m. (3% of grade)

MODULE 6: Campaigning through the Media

Opens: Mon. September 25, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 6 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 6.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Group 2 discussion post** relevant to Module 6 on Canvas. Post must be completed by October 1, 6:00 p.m. (4% of grade)

MODULE 7: Governing through the Media

Opens: Mon. October 2, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 7 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Quiz 3** on **all** readings and materials from Modules 6 and 7 on Canvas. Quiz must be completed by October 8, 6:00 p.m. (3% of grade)

MODULE 8: News and Public Opinion

Opens: Mon. October 9, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 8 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 8.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Group 3 discussion post** relevant to Module 8 on Canvas. Post must be completed by October 15, 6:00 p.m. (4% of grade)

Module 9: Midterm Exam

Opens: Mon. October 16, 6:00 a.m.

Closes: Sun. October 22, 6:00 p.m.

Online midterm exam will test students on **all readings and materials** up to this point in the course (i.e., up to, and including, Module 8) and will be proctored on ProctorU. Remember, students must register for time slot to take exam no later than 3 days prior to an exam. **Exam must be started by October 22, 4:30 p.m.** (25% of grade)

MODULE 10: Campaigns That Matter

Opens: Mon. October 23, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 10 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 10.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Group 4 discussion post** relevant to Module 10 on Canvas. Post must be completed by October 29, 6:00 p.m. (4% of grade)

MODULE 11: The Consequences of Going Public

Opens: Mon. October 30, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 11 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 10.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Quiz 4** on **all** readings and materials from Modules 10 and 11 on Canvas. Quiz must be completed by November 5, 6:00 p.m. (3% of grade)

MODULE 12: Evaluating Media Politics

Opens: Mon. November 6, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 12 PowerPoint(s).
- Iyengar, Chapter 11.
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Group 5 discussion post** relevant to Module 12 on Canvas. Post must be completed by November 12, 6:00 p.m. (4% of grade)

MODULE 13: Misinformation in Mainstream and Online Media.

Opens: Mon. November 13, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 13 PowerPoint(s).
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Quiz 5** on **all** readings and materials from Modules 12 and 13 on Canvas. Quiz must be completed by November 19, 6:00 p.m. (3% of grade)

MODULE 14: Fact-Checking Misinformation

Opens: Mon. November 20, 6:00 a.m.

Readings and Materials:

- Module 14 PowerPoint(s).
- Additional readings on Canvas.

Assignment:

- **Thanksgiving Break. No assignment.** If you have not already done so, take this time to finalize the structure of your response paper and assign group members a writing plan. Do not leave all writing until next week. Readings and materials from Module 14 can help shape your response paper.

MODULE 15: Group Response Paper

Opens: Mon. November 27, 6:00 a.m.

Assignment:

- **Submit group response paper** and **peer evaluation form** on Canvas by December 3, 6:00 p.m. (30% of grade)

Module 16: Final Exam

Opens: Mon. December 4, 6:00 a.m.

Closes: Sun. December 10, 6:00 p.m.

Online final exam will test students on **all readings and materials** up to this point in the course (i.e., up to, and including, Module 14) and will be proctored on ProctorU. Remember, students must register for time slot to take exam no later than 3 days prior to an exam. **Exam must be started by December 10, 4:30 p.m.** (25% of grade)