

MMC 3614: Media and Politics

Fall 2018

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About me: I'm a second-year Ph.D. student in the college of journalism & communication with research in health communication, message framing, visual communication, and health/science policy. I moved to Florida roughly a year ago from Lubbock, Texas, where I completed my undergraduate degree in Electronic Media & Communication, and my master's degree in Mass Communication. I have brief experience writing for print media, and have taught classes in public speaking and multimedia writing.

Course Objectives & Descriptions:

- 1.** To understand how politics intersects with media and how these institutions affect one another
- 2.** To understand challenges facing media professionals working in politics
- 3.** To analyze the changing climate of political expression in the online age

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize the fundamental role of the media in shaping the public's perceptions of politicians, the government and the political structure
- Understand the importance of the Internet and social media in the modern information age and the effect it has on media coverage, campaigns and privacy;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of certain media sources and develop ways to ascertain the validity of information from media sources;
- Identify how political figures are affected by the media and ways in which political figures respond to, influence or even manipulate news coverage.

Required Readings:

Iyengar, S. (2013). Media politics: A citizen's guide (3rd ed.). New York: W. Norton & Co.

You will be expected to read the assigned chapters/pages and be prepared to apply them to online discussions and assessments. These readings are crucial to understanding what you will be doing in this course. *Do NOT neglect to do the readings*

Final Grade Breakdown:

This is a web-only course. A learning module will be set up for each section containing a lecture, readings and activities/assignments for the week. You will be required to read the assigned chapters/pages, go through the lecture slides and do each week's assigned work. It is your responsibility to follow and adhere to the schedule. Three papers, two quizzes, a final exam, and discussion assignments will evaluate your knowledge and understanding of the material. **Modules will open at 12:00 am on the date scheduled to open, and close at 11:59 pm on the final day.** If you finish your work early, you will have to wait for the next module to open on the assigned date. Here are descriptions of each of the assessments in this course:

*Note: As the assignment approaches, more detailed instructions will be made available via canvas.

- **Short paper # 1:** This is a personal reflection paper of 2-3 pages, discussing which platforms you use to get the news (ex: news app on your iPhone, twitter, Facebook, newspapers, television, etc.), why you choose to get news this way, what outlets you may follow or prefer & why (ex: New York Times, CNN, Fox News, Vox, Washington Post, AP, NPR, PBS, etc.), and how you believe this affects your interpretation of the news.
The goal of this paper is to get you to reflect on your own experiences, potential biases, and information-seeking habits.
- **Short paper # 2:** This 2-3-page paper is a rhetorical analysis of presidential tweets. You will choose two presidents (past or present) and compare their twitter accounts. Don't know what a rhetorical analysis is? Don't worry! We will be going over this in class. You will look for things like word choice, length of tweet, grammar spelling punctuation used, if they use many pictures to accompany their tweets, what the person meant by the tweet, etc.
The goal of this paper is to examine different styles of governing and communicating with the public, and how those styles can be construed.

- **Theory paper:** Throughout the semester, we will be discussing the surface level of several theories applied to mass communication. You will typically have one reading a week on a certain theory. Toward the end of the class, you will choose a theory that we have discussed and apply it to either a.) explain how political issues, policies, or politicians have been covered by members of the press or b.) analyze a politician’s campaign using one of the theories (local, state or national). This paper should be 3-5 pages long.

The goal of this paper is for you to understand how to take a theory and apply to it a real-world scenario in the realm of politics & media.

Your papers must meet the following requirements:

- Use proper grammar, spelling and 12-point Times New Roman font.
 - Double space your paper with one-inch margins all around.
 - Have your name and date as well as an appropriate title in the header on the first page
 - Follow APA style with in-text citations if you choose to use any – more on this later (note: this is different than AP style). [This is a good website for basic APA guidelines](#). Note: You do not need a title page or running-head.
- **Exam:** There will be one cumulative exam in this course, a final, covering the reading in the course. The exam will be open book and you will have an entire day to complete it. It will consist of 50 multiple choice questions to be completed in Canvas.
 - **Quizzes x 2:** There will be two quizzes throughout the semester on materials covered up until that point.

There is a total of 100 possible points in this class. Your final grade in the course will be arrived at through the following combination:

Assignment	Points possible	Due date
Short paper # 1	10 pts	Sept. 16 by 11:59 pm
Quiz 1	10 pts	Sept. 23 by 11:59 pm
Short paper # 2	10 pts	Oct. 21 by 11:59 pm
Quiz 2	10 pts	Oct. 28 by 11:59 pm
Long paper	20 pts	Nov. 18 by 11:59 pm
Final exam	15 pts	Opens Dec. 3 – Due Dec. 5 by 11:59 pm
Discussion board posts	25 pts	Sundays by 11:59 pm
	= 100 points	

Grading Scale:

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

Class Policies:

1. *****Deadlines:** All of the deadlines are strict in this course. **You MUST turn everything in on time, or it will not be graded.** If for any reason you may miss a deadline or exam, please discuss it with me **at least 24 hours in advance.** Under legitimate extenuating circumstances, such as a documented/known illness, family emergency or if you have some other situation you think may constitute a reason for an extended deadline, like a legal or military obligation, athletic participation or religious holiday, I may agree to let you schedule a make-up exam or turn in an assignment late. However, if I have not agreed to an extension or make-up exam **before** the deadlines, your assignment or exam grade will be a zero if not turned in on time. Assignments must be turned in on time. Emailing me the next day to say that you had technical difficulties when you were trying to submit your assignment at 11:58 pm is NOT an excuse. Please plan accordingly for any unforeseen issues and turn assignment in ahead of time. If you experience any technical difficulties, your first line of defense will be to contact the UF HelpDesk at (352) 392-HELP. If they cannot resolve the problem, then please contact me directly. Any tickets from the HelpDesk stating that you experienced a technical error will count as an excused absence **ONLY** if the time stamp is before the due date and time for the assignment.
2. **Discussion Demeanor:** I want this class to be fun and energetic with great discussions, but we will be covering sensitive topics and ones about which some students may have strong feelings. Therefore, I expect you to be courteous and respectful to your fellow classmates. While some of you may have strong feelings about certain topics, try to be open minded about opposing points of view. Please be polite to others while both expressing

opinions and responding to them. Racism, ableism, and misogyny will not be tolerated.

- 3. Academic Integrity:** University of Florida students live by an honor code that prohibits academic dishonesty such as (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of sources or information from sources, reusing a paper from another class, writing a similar paper for two classes, drawing too heavily on another's work for your own and having someone else complete your work for you. If you're unsure of whether something constitutes a violation of academic integrity, ask me before turning in an assignment. Also, please refer to the University of Florida's guidelines regarding academic honesty at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/studentconduct-honor-code/>. Ignorance is not an excuse.

An academic integrity violation will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the entire course, and the instance will be reported to the university's office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

- 4. Disability Assistance:** Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the University of Florida's Disability Resource Center. The center will provide documentation, and then you must meet with me, so appropriate accommodations can be made. The center is in Reid Hall, and you can contact them by calling (352) 392-8565. For more information, visit <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.
- 5. Student Success and Seeking Help:** All of your instructors have high expectations of you, including myself. We are responsible for conveying those expectations to you. You are responsible for ensuring you meet your course obligations. Sometimes it will be draining and frustrating like it is in the communications field. But ultimately, it should also be enjoyable and purposeful. You are always encouraged to come to me both inside and outside of class with questions or concerns about this class and your assignments or the communications field in general.

Also, the UF Counseling and Wellness Center is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive afterhours assistance, call (352) 392-1575. For more information, visit

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>.

6. **Online Course Evaluation Process:** Just as I give feedback on your work throughout the semester, I would also like to get feedback from you on the quality of instruction in this course. Because of this, students are expected to complete online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Course Schedule:

*Subject to change

*All links to readings will also be available via canvas

Module/Week	Readings:	Due:
<p>Module 1</p> <p>Wednesday, Aug. 22nd – Sunday, Aug. 26th</p> <p>Introductions</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 1</i> (pp. 1-13)</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Aug. 26 by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 2</p> <p>Monday, Aug. 27th – Sunday, Sept. 2nd</p> <p>Media and American Politics: What are we doing here?</p> <p><u>Theory: Gatekeeping</u></p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar Ch. 2</i> (pp. 18-49)</p> <p>Read James Klurfeld, “Improving Media Capacity: Media Must Focus on Policy, Not Just Politics,” The Brookings Institution, 2015.</p> <p>Read Ch. 1 (pp. 9-22) of “Gatekeeping Theory,” Shoemaker & Vos, 2009</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Sept. 2 by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 3</p> <p>Tuesday, Sept. 4th – Sunday, Sept. 9th</p> <p>Media and the Three Branches of Government: How does it work?</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 7</i> (pp. 195-222)</p> <p>Read Articles 1 through 3 of the United States Constitution.</p> <p>Read James Madison, Federalist No. 10, “The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection,” November 23, 1787</p> <p>Read Alexander Hamilton or James Madison, Federalist No. 51, “The</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Sept. 9 by 11:59 pm</p>

	<p>Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments,” February 8, 1788.</p> <p>Read U.S Constitution Articles 1 through 10 (Bill of Rights) & Article 14</p>	
<p>Module 4</p> <p>Monday, Sept. 10th – Sunday, Sept. 16th</p> <p>Politics and the Internet: Interactivity and Social Media</p> <p><u>Theory</u>: Diffusion of innovation</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 5</i> (pp. 113-148)</p> <p>Read “The 2016 Presidential Campaign – A News Event That’s Hard to Miss,” Pew Research Center, 2016.</p> <p>Read “Twitter and the Campaign,” Pew Research Center, December 8, 2011.</p> <p>Read Aaron Smith, “The Internet and Campaign 2010,” Pew Research Center, March 17, 2011.</p> <p>Read Keith Hampton, et al., “Social Networking Sites and Our Lives,” Pew Research Center, June 16, 2011.</p> <p>Read Brendan Nyhan, “Get Off the Bus! Why Access-Based Campaign Coverage is a Dead End,” <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>, 2013.</p>	<p>Short paper #1 – Sept. 16 by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Personal essay – see canvas for instructions</p>
<p>Module 5</p> <p>Monday, Sept. 17th – Sunday, Sept. 23rd</p> <p>Media, Elections and Debates: What are the rules?</p> <p><u>Theory</u>: Message framing</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 9</i> (pp. 272-305), & <i>Ch. 6</i> (pp. 181-190)</p> <p>Read Gabriel S. Lenz, Chappell Lawson, “Looking the Part: Television Leads Less Informed Citizens to Vote Based on Candidates’ Appearance,” <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 2011.</p> <p>Watch highlights of the Nixon Kennedy debate & read Greg Bohtelho “The day politics & TV changed forever,” CNN, 2016</p>	<p>Quiz 1 – Sept. 23rd by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 6</p> <p>Monday, Sept. 24th –</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 3</i> (pp. 50-89)</p> <p>Read about Agenda-Setting</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Sept. 30 by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Sunday, Sept. 30th</p> <p>Television & Media regulations</p> <p>Theory: Agenda-setting</p>	<p>Read about Equal Time Act & Fairness Doctrine (*PDFs posted on canvas)</p>	
<p>Module 7</p> <p>Monday, Oct. 1st – Sunday, Oct. 7th</p> <p>Op-eds, polemics and news coverage</p> <p>Political Rhetoric</p>	<p>Read NYT's READERS' GUIDE</p> <p>Read NYT'S The Blur Between Analysis and Opinion</p> <p>Read A DEFENCE OF POLEMICS, Nick Cohen, 2014</p> <p>Read about Rhetorical Analysis & more here</p> <p>Read “Just how unique is the political rhetoric of the Donald Trump era?”, Janell Ross, Dec. 2015, The Washington Post</p> <p>Read “Have modern politicians lost the art of rhetoric?”, Mary Beard, Feb. 2015, BBC,</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Oct. 7th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 8</p> <p>Monday, Oct. 8th – Sunday, Oct. 14th</p> <p>Media & Public Opinion</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 8</i> (pp. 229-271)</p> <p>Read “What went wrong with the 2016 polls?” Vann R. Newkirk II, <i>The Atlantic</i>, 2015.</p> <p>Read Nate Silver, “How FiveThirtyEight Calculates Pollster Ratings,” FiveThirtyEight, 2014.</p> <p>Read “20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask about Poll Results,” National Council on Public Polls.</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Oct. 14th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 9</p> <p>Monday, Oct. 15th – Sunday, Oct. 21st</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar, Ch. 4</i> (pp. 92-112)</p> <p>Read Cultivation Theory</p>	<p>Short paper # 2 – Oct. 21st by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis of presidential tweets – See canvas for more instructions</p>

<p>Media Pundits and Ethics in Politics: Blurring the Lines</p> <p><u>Theory</u>: Cultivation</p>		
<p>Module 10</p> <p>Monday, Oct. 22nd to Sunday Oct. 28th</p> <p>Selling and Spinning: Political Advertising</p> <p>Persuasion</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar</i>, <i>Ch. 6</i> (pp. 149-181) & <i>Ch. 7</i> (pp. 222-225) & <i>Ch. 9</i> (pp. 270-273)</p> <p>Watch: Daisy advertisement</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Oct. 28th by 11: 59 pm</p>
<p>Module 11</p> <p>Monday, Oct. 29th – Sunday, Nov. 4th</p> <p>Politics and Money: Where does the buck stop and why?</p>	<p>Read Anthony Corrado, “Financing Presidential Nomination in the Post-Public Funding Era,” (pp. 22-58) <i>The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2012</i>.</p> <p>Read R. Sam Garrett, “State of Campaign Finance Policy: Recent Developments and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, July 18, 2011.</p> <p>Read “Use Center for Public Integrity resources for tracking money behind Election 2016,” Sophia Jabeen Qureshi, Nov. 1, 2016</p> <p>Read Kenneth T. Andrews, Neal Caren, “Making the News: Movement Organizations, Media Attention, and the Public Agenda,” <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 2010.</p> <p>Read Lee Drutman, “How Corporate Lobbyists Conquered American Democracy,” <i>The Atlantic</i>, 2015.</p> <p>Read “The Supreme Court Should Strike Down All Contribution Limits,” Ilya Shapiro, New York Times, Oct. 30, 2014</p>	<p>Quiz # 2 – Nov. 4th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Module 12</p>	<p>Read <i>Iyengar</i>, <i>Ch. 11</i> (pp. 334-357)</p>	<p>Discussion board post – Nov. 11th by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Monday, Oct. 5th – Sunday, Nov. 11th</p> <p>The future of political communication</p> <p>Journalists as watchdogs vs. lapdogs</p>	<p>Read “Watchdogs or Lapdogs? The Politics of Journalism” (pp. 145-146) John Street, 2001.</p> <p>Read “The Future of Journalism in the Internet Age: Watchdogs or Lapdogs?” Constance Bommelaer de Leusse, Internet Society, Dec. 20, 2017</p>	
<p>Module 13</p> <p>Tuesday, Nov. 13th – Sunday, Nov. 18th</p> <p>Work on long paper</p>	<p>No readings – Spend the week working on and finishing your theory paper (Note: this is worth 20% of your grade)</p>	<p>Long paper – Nov. 18th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Theory paper – see canvas for more instructions</p>
<p>Module 14</p> <p>Monday, Nov. 19th – Sunday, Nov. 25th</p> <p>Thanksgiving Break</p>	<p>Supplementary readings TBD</p>	<p>Nothing due – enjoy the break 😊</p>
<p>Module 15</p> <p>Monday, Nov. 26th – Sunday, Dec. 2nd</p> <p>Course wrap-up, review for final</p>	<p>No new readings – take this time to go back through any readings that you feel you need to re-read or re-watch any videos</p> <p>Study guide for exam will be posted</p>	<p>Nothing due – study for final exam</p>

Final exam: open Monday, Dec. 3 to Wednesday, Dec. 5 11:59 pm

