

MMC 3614 – Media and Politics*

Spring 2015: Online course	Mariam F. Alkazemi alkazemi@ufl.edu Office location: Weimer 2019	Office hours: Wednesdays 10:30-11:45 a.m.
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***This syllabus is based on the one designed by the MMC 3514 course taught in the spring 2014 semester by Dr. Cory Armstrong.**

Catalog Description:

Over the course of the semester, we will explore the role of the media in the U.S. political system. We will examine political advertising, political journalism and the role of social media and their role in this system.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be expected to:

- Develop an understanding of the role of the media in public opinion formation, as it applies to politicians and government.
- Understand the importance of social and online media and its effect media and politics.
- Critically examine media sources to evaluate the validity of the information they provide.
- Identify the ways that political figures are affected and influence the media.

Required Readings:

There is only one required textbook for this course, and it is listed below. However, students will be expected to read other material, which will be included on Canvas.

Iyengar, S. (2011). *Media politics: A citizen's guide* (2nd ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Course structure:

This web-only course was designed by Dr. Cory Armstrong in the spring 2014 semester. Since she did a wonderful job designing this course, we will continue to use the learning modules she created. Every week, a learning module will cover a topic relevant to this course. The module for each week will be available at 12:00 on Mondays until Sunday at 11:59 p.m. This includes any holidays, so students are responsible for adjusting to this somewhat flexible schedule. Almost every module contains a lecture, readings, discussion topics, and a quiz. You will also have two exams. Final grades will be developed from a mixture of quizzes, discussions, assignments and exams. See the grade breakdown later in this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to follow and adhere to this schedule.

Course Requirements:

Deadlines: The assignments in this class will all be turned in via Canvas. If you experience technical difficulties, you should contact the UF HelpDesk at 392-HELP. If they cannot resolve your issue, please contact your instructor regarding these issues. Please plan accordingly to minimize these potential interruptions, as it is your responsibility to turn in assignments by the deadlines

Assignments:

Media Analysis: Find a recent political article and write a 2-3 page paper discussing your take on the article and the issue being discussed.

Module Quizzes: Students will complete an online quiz for each learning module in the class, based on readings and lecture materials.

Midterm and Final Exams: Students will complete exams based on course material. Portions will be both objective and essay.

Peer Discussion Posts and Replies: Each student is required to post (roughly 200-300 words) discussing the reading and lecture content. Specifically, this will include responding to the specific discussion questions and thoughts put forth by the instructor within the learning module. *Then*, each student is required to respond to two group members' discussion posts (roughly 100 words each). These responses should also have a clear thesis and correct grammar to receive credit.

Discussion board policies: We will be covering sensitive topics in this class and students may have strong feelings about particular issues discussed in class. Everyone deserves a safe environment in which to participate in class discussions. Therefore, be respectful in all of your discussion posts and student interaction.

- Use attention-getting subject lines in all posts. DO NOT title each post with “Module 1, Module 2” etc. Instead, label the subject in a way that accurately describes its content.
- Responses should include a clear thesis statement and correct grammar within each post and cite any material (in lecture or readings) as appropriate.
- Proper grammar and word usage is expected.
- No derogatory language will be tolerated. If you have questions about the use of specific words or language that may be deemed derogatory, obscene, or biased in some way, you should speak with the instructor before including this language in your post.
- ONLY thoughtful posts that adhere to these policies (including due dates and times) will receive full credit.

Discussion Post Due Dates: To receive credit, all posts and replies will be due on Sunday nights by 11:59 p.m., which correspond to the end of the module. Any posts received after that time will not receive credit.

Discussion Groups: Students will be randomly assigned to groups of 8-11 for the discussion posts and these groups will be the same for the entire semester. The purpose of the groups is only to allow for small group discussion—no group work will be assigned. Each student will be evaluated individually on his/her posts.

Make-ups:

Assignments must be taken during the time specified in the syllabus, unless you have an absence excused under university policy, outlined at the following link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Make-up assignments and exams are not permitted. In emergency situations, an exception may be made if you have an excused absence and the professor was notified in advance.

Extra Credit:

There will be no extra credit opportunities for this course.

Grading:

To review graded assignments, please contact the instructor during office hours.

A	92.00 - 100.00	C	72.00 - 76.99
A-	90.00 - 91.99	C-	70.00 - 71.99
B+	87.00 - 89.99	D+	67.00 - 69.99
B	82.00 - 86.99	D	62.00 - 66.99
B-	80.00 - 81.99	D-	60.00 - 61.99
C+	77.00 - 79.99	F	0 - 59.99

Reading Assignments:

All readings are to be completed before the start of lecture on the assigned day. You are responsible for the assigned reading material, even if it is not discussed in class.

The readings from your textbook are included in the schedule below. Additional readings will be sent to you as the semester progresses.

In addition to some academic articles, students will be expected to follow the news media regularly.

Technology in the classroom:

Students may bring their laptops to class. The fact that you are permitted to bring your computer to class does not mean that you should use class time to browse the internet, check e-mail or participate in any other activities that do not relate to the course. If your laptop use is disruptive, you may be asked not to use your privilege may be limited.

Further, students are expected to check email and Canvas regularly as part of the course.

Academic Integrity:

All students are expected to abide by the University of Florida rules for academic integrity. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand plagiarism. You may use the following tutorial to familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism:

<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/whatisplag.php>

Academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment, and could lead to failure in the course. The professor will report any violations of the Honor Code to the Dean of Students Office, in accordance to the University of Florida policy. Please take time to review the University of Florida's Student Conduct and Honor Code:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

To avoid plagiarism, the University of Florida has some resources that students may find useful, such as: <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/grad/forms/Plagiarism-Guideline.pdf>

Students with Disabilities:

All students with disabilities will be accommodated, after the professor receives a letter from the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>).

All Other Accommodations:

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 an accommodation. In addition to alerting the Dean of Students Office, please inform the professor when such additional accommodations are necessary.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones should be turned off at the start of class. Students should not be texting or using their cell phones in other ways during class. Cell phones may be confiscated should their use be distracting.

Classroom Behavior and Disruptions:

Students are expected to be respectful of other students' right to hear and participate in classroom discussion. If you repeatedly disrupt classroom discussion, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

Any electronic communications with the professor are considered professional. Please make sure your electronic communication style is consistent with your professional goals. See: <https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20121203004159-33236097-your-digital-body-language-don-t-ignore-it>

Especially respectful behavior is expected in the presence of guest lecturers. Some guest lecturers, who will share experience and knowledge for your benefit, will be expected over the course of the semester.

Syllabus Changes:

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus or course schedule as the need arises. This includes the possibility of extra credit, pop quizzes, guest speakers and special presentations, some of which may be scheduled outside of class time.

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on class instruction during the last two weeks of class each semester. This can be found at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/>

Tentative Schedule

Week	Date	Readings and Assignments
1	Tues., Jan. 6, 2015 <i>Module 1: Introduction and Class Requirements</i>	Reading: Syllabus Assignments: Quiz 1, Discussion post 1

2	Tues., Jan. 13, 2015 <i>Module 2: Media and American Politics: What are we doing here?</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 2 (pp. 18-49). Assignments: Quiz 2, Discussion post 2
3	Tues., Jan. 20, 2015 <i>Module 3a: Media and Elections: What are the rules?</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 9 (pp. 272-305); Ch. 6, pp. 181-187) Assignments: None.
4	Tues., Jan. 27, 2015 <i>Module 3b: Media and Debates: Talking Through the Issues</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 3 (pp. 50-89); Ch. 6, pp. 187-190) Assignments: Quiz 3, Discussion post 3
5	Tues., Feb. 3, 2015 <i>Module 4a: Media and the Presidency: The main focus</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 7 (pp. 195-217); Ch. 9 (pp. 306-333) Assignment: Media analysis
6	Tues., Feb. 10, 2015 <i>Module 4b: Media, Congress and the Supreme Court: The other folks</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 7 (pp. 195-217); 2 readings on Canvas. Assignments: Quiz 4, Discussion post 4
7	Tues., Feb. 17, 2015 <i>Module 5: Media and Public Opinion: More polling required?</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 8, (pp. 229-271) Assignments: Quiz 5, Discussion post 5
8	Tues., Feb. 24, 2015	Exam I.
9	Tues., Mar. 3, 2015	Spring break, no modules.
10	Tues., Mar. 10, 2015 <i>Module 6a: Politics and Internet: Interactivity</i>	Reading: Iyengar, Ch. 5 (pp. 113-148) Assignments: None.
11	Tues., Mar. 17, 2015 <i>Module 6b: Politics and the Internet: Social Media</i>	Readings: on Canvas. Assignments: Quiz 6, Discussion post 6
12	Tues., Mar. 24, 2015 <i>Module 7: Selling and Spinning: Political Advertising</i>	Readings: Iyengar, Ch. 6 (pp. 149-181); Ch. 7 (pp. 222-225) Assignments: Quiz 7, Discussion post 7
13	Tues., Mar. 31, 2015 <i>Module 8: Global Media and Foreign Policy: Nationcentric?</i>	Readings: on Canvas. Assignments: Quiz 8, Discussion post 8
14	Tues., Apr. 7, 2015 <i>Module 9: Media pundits and ethics in politics: Blurring the lines</i>	Readings: Iyengar, Ch. 4 (pp. 92-112) Assignments: Quiz 9, Discussion post 9
15	Tues., Apr. 14, 2015 <i>Module 10: The future of political communication: savvy or sketchy?</i>	Readings: Iyengar, Ch. 11 (pp. 334-357) Assignments: Quiz 10, Discussion post 10
16	Tues., Apr. 21, 2015	Exam II.