

## **POL 326-01: Media and Politics, Fall 2016**

Prerequisites Required: POL101 or Permission from Instructor  
Mon/Wed/Fri 11am-11:50 am, Robert Scott Small Bldg Room 235

Professor: Karyn Amira

Office: Poli Sci. Dept. Room 301, Office Hours: M/W 2-4

Contact: [amiraka@cofc.edu](mailto:amiraka@cofc.edu)

**Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes:** This course is designed to familiarize students with the history, function and impact of media in American politics. The objectives of this course are for students to be able to (1) analyze the influence of mass media on political institutions and the public (2) critically examine the concepts of objectivity and bias (3) demonstrate the ability to assess diverse perspectives on the importance of media and its role in democracies. **These learning outcomes will be assessed in Test I, Test II, Test III and the Compare and Contrast Election paper (see below).** We will also have a specific focus on coverage of the 2016 presidential election and how it relates to the course material. Students must follow the campaign for their term paper.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance and participation counts towards 10% of your grade. Attendance will be taken towards the beginning of the semester, per the school's policy. This is 10 points out of 100- this is not a trivial amount of points. Please come to class!

**Readings:** Most readings are due on Wed. and Friday although there are a few readings due on Mondays at the end of the semester (noted below with an asterisk\*) Readings (posted to Oaks) will come from a mix of online articles, book chapters and scholarly journals. There is no textbook because citizens in the real world don't get their news and information from textbooks. It is crucial that you come to class having read the assigned materials and prepared to discuss them. *Before reading anything, note the date it was published and who wrote it. Google the author and media outlet it came from. This will get you into the habit of critically examining sources.*

**Exams:** There are three exams instead of two due to our 50-minute time blocks. This means there will be less material on each.

**Quizzes:** There will be 6 pop quizzes that will assess reading comprehension of the week's material. Any student who misses a quiz will receive a zero. There are no makeup quizzes but I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Each quiz will have 1 music and politics related "bonus" question. Since these bonus questions are not related to the readings, they will not be for extra points...just respect.

**Term Paper:** Students will write term paper in which they compare and contrast two different news sources (to be cleared by me in advance) and their coverage of the 2016 general election. You will follow these sources throughout the semester. More detailed instructions will be presented in the first few weeks of class. This final paper is due IN CLASS on the last day we meet.

**Grading Breakdown:**

5 points - 5 Quizzes (lowest one dropped)  
10 points - Participation and Attendance  
20 points - Test I

20 points - Test II  
20 points - Test III  
25 points - Compare and Contrast Election Paper

**Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades**

|          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 100-94 A | 79-77 C+ | 63-60 D- |
| 93-90 A- | 76-74 C  | 59-0 F   |
| 89-87 B+ | 73-70 C- |          |
| 86-84 B  | 69-67 D+ |          |
| 83-80 B- | 67-64 D  |          |

**Late Assignments, Incompletes, Extensions and Make-Up Exams:** Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends). There will be no make-up exams and I will not grant incompletes in the course, except in cases of emergency or where university policy applies. Doctor's notes are expected for medical excuses. If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive a zero.

**Office Hours:** Having trouble? Have questions? Come on by. I promise it will be helpful. Email me to schedule a time to meet.

**Laptop Policy:** No laptops in class. **\*Groooooannnnn\***. Trust me, you will learn more.

**Syllabus Policy:** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary.

**Course Evaluation Statement:** You will have the opportunity to evaluate the course towards the end of the semester through an online evaluation system. I will remind you to bring laptops that day so they can be done during the final class.

**ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

Wed. Aug 24 **Introduction**

Friday Aug 26 **Understanding the American Political System and the 2016 Election**

- *Frankfurt, "On Bullshit"*
- *The Onion: Let Me Explain why Miley Cyrus was our Top News Story This Morning:*  
<http://www.theonion.com/blogpost/let-me-explain-why-miley-cyrus-vm-a-performance-was-33632>

Monday Aug 29 **History of the Media, Modes of Communication I**

Wednesday Aug 31 **Modes of Communication II and Ownership/Regulation I**

- *Call-In Political Talk Radio: A Report from the Annenberg Public Policy Center.*
  - *Read the Executive Summary, Political Talk Radio and its Audiences.*
  - *Skim the Content and Audiences of Political Talk Radio, Mainstream Print Media's Portrayal of Political Talk Radio*
- *Listen to the first 25 minutes of the Rush Limbaugh Show:*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NzZqs6\\_bRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NzZqs6_bRA)
- *Joshua Green, "The Air America Plan"*  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2005/04/the-air-america-plan/303834/>

Friday Sept. 2 **Ownership/Regulation I**

- *"Freedom of the Press"*
- *Mathew Ingram, "Freedom of the Press Applies to Everyone-Yes, Even Bloggers"*  
<http://gigaom.com/2011/09/15/freedom-of-the-press-applies-to-everyone-yes-even-bloggers/>

Monday Sept 5: **Ownership/Regulation II, Models of the Media I**

Wednesday Sept 7: **Models of the Media II, Gatekeeping I**

- *Herman and Chomsky, "Manufacturing Consent" Preface and Chapter 1*

Friday Sept 9: **Gatekeeping II**

- *Stuart Soroka, "Gatekeeping Function", The Journal of Politics*

Monday Sept 12 **Informational Bias I \*\*\*THERE IS READING TODAY\*\***

- *W. Lance Bennett, "Four Information Biases that Matter"*

Wednesday Sept 14 **Informational Bias II and Ideological Bias I: How We Study It**

- *The Case Against the Media By the Media: <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/07/case-against-media.html>*

Friday Sept 16: **NO CLASS- PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN**

Monday Sept 19 **Ideological and Partisan Bias II**

Wed. Sept 21 **Ideological and Partisan Bias III**

- *Wolf, "Power of the Press: Can the Media Influence the Voting Behavior of Legislators?"*  
<http://news.vanderbilt.edu/2013/02/media-voting-behavior-legislators/>
- *Jonathan Chait, "The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy Is On Your Screen"*  
<http://nymag.com/news/features/chait-liberal-movies-tv-2012-8/index2.html>

Friday Sept 23 **The Other Side of Bias: False Balance**

- *The Danger of Fair and Balanced:*  
[http://www.cjr.org/essay/the\\_danger\\_of\\_fair\\_and\\_balance.php](http://www.cjr.org/essay/the_danger_of_fair_and_balance.php)
- *He Said, She Said and the Truth:* <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/16/public-editor/16pubed.html>
- *Balance, Fairness and a Proudly Provocative Presidential Campaign:*  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/business/balance-fairness-and-a-proudly-provocative-presidential-candidate.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share>
- *The Media vs. Donald Trump:* <http://www.vox.com/2016/8/16/12484644/media-donald-trump>

Monday Sept 26: **\*\*\*TEST 1\*\*\***

Wednesday Sept 28 **Language and the Media I**

- *Frank Lutz, "Political Case Studies"*
- *NPR: Illegal Immigrant vs. Undocumented Worker:*  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2013/01/30/170677880/in-immigration-debate-undocumented-vs-illegal-is-more-than-just-semantic>

Friday Sept 30 **Punditry**

- *Nate Silver, Chapter on Political Pundits (From his book "The Signal and the Noise")*

Monday Oct 3 **Media Effects: Agenda Setting**

Wednesday Oct 5: **Media Effects: Priming**

- *Iyengar, "News and Public Opinion" (from Media Politics: A Citizens Guide)*

Friday Oct 7: **Media Effects: Framing**

- *Nelson, Clawson, Oxley, "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict"*

Monday Oct 10 **Elections I: Primaries \*\*\*THERE IS READING TODAY\*\***

- *The Gamble- Chapters 1 and 3*

Wednesday Oct 12 **Elections II: Primaries**

- *The Gamble- Chapter 5 (listed as 2 parts in OAKS. Read both of them)*
- *How the Media Covered the 2012 Primary Campaign*  
[http://www.journalism.org/analysis\\_report/frames\\_campaign\\_coverage](http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/frames_campaign_coverage)
- *How the Media Covered the 2016 Presidential Primary:* <http://shorensteincenter.org/pre-primary-news-coverage-2016-trump-clinton-sanders/>

Friday Oct 14 **Elections III: General Elections**

- *The Gamble- Chapter 7*

Monday Oct. 17 **Elections IV: General Elections \*\*\*THERE IS READING TODAY\*\***

- *The Media is Going to Lift Trump Up and Tear Clinton Down:*

<http://www.vox.com/2016/5/5/11589262/2016-general-election-is-going-to-suck>

Wednesday Oct 19 **Political Advertisements I**

- *Goldstein and Ridout: Measuring the Effect of Political Ads in the United States (up to page 215)*

Friday Oct 21 **Political Advertisements II**

- *Stephen Ansolabehere et al, "Do TV Attack Ads Subvert the Political Process?"*
- *Dan Hopkins, "Political Ads: Not as Powerful as You (or Politicians) Think":*  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/01/20/political-ads-not-as-powerful-as-you-or-politicians-think/>

Monday Oct 24 **Institutions I: The Presidency**

Wednesday October 26 **Institutions: The Presidency II and Congress**

- *McClellan, "Deniability" (McClellan was G.W.Bush's White House Press Secretary)*

Friday Oct 28 **Institutions: Congress II and the Supreme Court**

- *Watch the first 45 minutes of the CSPAN Panel on how journalists cover the Supreme Court:*  
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?314458-2/journalists-discuss-supreme-court-digital-age>

Monday Oct 31: **\*\*\*\*\*TEST 2\*\*\*\*\***

Wednesday Nov 2 **Reporting Extraordinary Events I:**

- *Listen to the Breaking News Consumer Handbook report:*  
<http://www.wnyc.org/story/breakingnews-consumers-handbook/>
- *The Media Fall Into a Pattern with Coverage of Mass Shootings:*  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/media-fall-into-pattern-with-coverage-of-mass-shootings/2015/12/03/ab5001e6-9a09-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/media-fall-into-pattern-with-coverage-of-mass-shootings/2015/12/03/ab5001e6-9a09-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html)

Friday Nov 4 **Reporting Extraordinary Events II:**

- *The Media Don't Care About Gun Control Anymore*  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2013/12/13/the-media-dont-care-about-gun-control-anymore/>
- *Gun Control and the Media:* <http://www.journalism.org/2013/04/25/spikes-attention-and-shifts-opinion-gun-control-debate/>

Monday Nov 7: **NO CLASS. FALL BREAK. YOU SHOULD BE VOTING TOMORROW.**

Wednesday Nov 9: **ELECTION HANGOVER DAY.**

- *We will hold a class discussion today about what happened last night and over the last couple of months. You should come in prepared to discuss the sources you've been following.*

Friday Nov 11 **Muckraking**

- Appuzo & Goldman, “With CIA Help, NYPD Moves Covertly In Muslim Areas”  
<http://www.ap.org/Content/AP-In-The-News/2011/With-CIA-help-NYPD-moves-covertly-in-Muslim-areas>

Monday Nov 14 **Foreign Policy I**

Wednesday Nov 16 **Foreign Policy II/Iraq War Case Study**

- McClellan, “Selling the War”

Friday Nov 18 **Media Systems in Other Countries /Censorship**

- Gary King, Pan and Roberts, “Censored”

Monday Nov 21 **Social Media I: Facebook and Twitter **\*\*THERE IS READING TODAY\*\*****

- Juliet Eileperin: “Here’s how the First President of the Social Media Age...”  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2015/05/26/heres-how-the-first-president-of-the-social-media-age-has-chosen-to-connect-with-americans/>
- Former Facebook Workers: We Routinely Suppressed Conservative News:  
<http://gizmodo.com/former-facebook-workers-we-routinely-suppressed-conser-1775461006>

Wednesday Nov 23 & Friday Nov 25: **NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Monday Nov 28 **Social Media II: Wikipedia **\*\*THERE IS READING TODAY\*\*****

- Watch: Wikipedia TED TALK:  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/jimmy\\_wales\\_on\\_the\\_birth\\_of\\_wikipedia?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/jimmy_wales_on_the_birth_of_wikipedia?language=en)

Wednesday Nov 30 **Social Media III, Political Scandals I**

- **TBD**

Friday Dec. 2 **Political Scandals II, Humor and Politics I**

- Baym, “The Daily Show and the Reinvention of Political Journalism”
- Charlie Hebdo’s Defiant Muhammad Cover Fuels Debate on Free Speech:  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/14/world/europe/new-charlie-hebdo-has-muhammad-cartoon.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/14/world/europe/new-charlie-hebdo-has-muhammad-cartoon.html?_r=0)

Monday Dec 5: **Humor and Politics II and End of Class Wrap-Up**

- *Papers are due today!*

*The final exam will be on the day that the school assigns us. This date and time cannot be changed. This final exam covers the material since the previous exam. Therefore, it is NOT cumulative since you’ve already been tested on the other material.*

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*Disabilities Accommodation Statement:*

1. Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged.
2. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.
3. This College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or me so that such accommodation may be arranged.

*Academic Honesty Statement:*

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honorsystem/studenthandbook/index.php>

### *Center for Student Learning*

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843)953-5635.