SPEECH 454 -- POLITICAL COMMUNICATION  
Fall 2004  
W 1:30-4:00 p.m., BUSAD D104

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Office hours: Wed. 12:30 – 1:20 p.m., and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of political communication theories, modes, means and institutions. It is meant to serve as an introduction to how scholars study interpersonal and mass communication in the political context. Key areas that are covered by the course include prevalent political communication theories and trends, the role and impact of communication in public opinion process, elections, debates, political campaigning and advertising, political socialization, education, politics and popular culture.

The objectives for the course are:

• To become well-versed in the basics of political communication.
• To learn about the latest research and trends in political communication research.
• To practice and think about political communication theory and research critically.

Grades

Final grades will be determined by a weighting system: mid-term examination (30%); final examination (30%); performance on the class survey project (20%); class participation (8%); weekly news summary (8%); and research participation (4%).

To get credit for the course, you have to fulfill all of the course requirements including two examinations, class project participation, and weekly news summary. A failure to fulfill any of the course requirements will results in a grade of F.

There will be a class survey project. The class project is an integral part of the course and your active participation in the class project is required. You should expect to spend at least 20 hours outside of class to work on the class project. Details for the class project which include a group report will be distributed separately.

Those who wish to appeal their grades should do so by submitting an appeal letter to the course instructor within 72 hours from the time of grade distribution. The letter should describe the nature of the dispute, justification for the dispute and proposed actions. Instructor will review individual appeals carefully and respond in writing. However, students should be aware of the fact that a review can results in lowering of the grade as well as improving it.

Weekly News Summary

Given that this is a political communication course, you should expect to follow politics pretty closely during this semester. Make sure that you either read a daily newspaper (paper version or online) or watch the national television news everyday. You are required to submit a typed news summary (1 to 2 pages, double spaced), that lists the top three political news stories each week and provides a brief discussion of how this news affected Bush and Kerry’s candidacy, using the concepts and ideas learned in class. The summary is due on the day of class on every Wednesday starting from September 8th.
Required Text and Reading Materials

Students are required to buy one textbook:

Additional reading materials for the course will be on reserve at the Sinclair Library. Each student is responsible for completing these readings by the date assigned. Discussion on each of the reading materials will take place on the assigned date.

Reference Text


This book provides the writing style for most of the social science journals you will consult as majors. **All papers submitted in this class will be assessed in part on correct use of APA format.**

Attendance and Participation

Your attendance and participation to class discussions is essential and expected. All readings should be completed before the assigned date, and you should come to class prepared to talk.

Class attendance will be taken. I will deduct 5% from your final grade for each additional absence beyond four times during the semester. Being late for more than 10 minutes for a class will be treated the same as an absence.

A word about cellular phones

Students are expected to observe basic courtesy out of respect for fellow students and the professor. Cellular phones are very disruptive for class. Remember to turn off your cellular phones before coming into the classroom.

A word about honesty

It is students’ responsibility to complete their own work as best as they can in the time provided. Cheating, plagiarism and falsification of data are serious offenses. Anyone found guilty of academic misconduct should expect to fail the entire course and have a record of the matter forwarded to the Dean of Students.

Assignments and examinations

Assignments are due on or before the regularly scheduled class time on the date due. All assignments should be typed and double spaced. ABSOLUTELY NO late assignments will be accepted.

In principle, no make up examinations will allowed. In case of **an extraordinary and urgent conflict that is verifiable**, instructor may allow a make-up exam. However, arrangements have to be made prior to the exam date with the instructor.
### COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week 1 | Aug. 25 | INTRODUCTION: Course Overview  
• Graber Chapter 1: The Influence and Effects of Mass Media (*McQuail*) |
| Week 2 | Sep. 1 | MEDIA EFFECTS AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN PERSPECTIVE  
• Graber Chapter 2: Political Communication Systems and Democratic Values (*Gurevitch & Blumer*)  
• Chaffee & Hernandez-Ramos  
• Graber Chapter 3: Newspapers (*Lippman*)  
• Graber Chapter 5: Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science (*Zaller*) |
| Week 3 | Sep. 8 | SHAPING THE POLITICAL AGENDA AND PUBLIC OPINION  
• Graber Chapter 7: Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has It Been, Where Is It Going? (*Rogers & Dearing*)  
• Graber Chapter 8: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Media: Child Abuse (*Nelson*)  
• Graber Chapter 9: News Source Use in the Crash of 1987: A Study of Four National Media (*Lasorsa & Reese*)  
• Graber Chapter 10: What Moves Public Opinion? (*Page, Shapiro, & Dempsey*)  
• Graber Chapter 12: Constructing Public Opinion: The Uses of Fictional and Nonfictional Television in Conversations about the Environment (*Delli Carpini & Williams*) |
| Week 4 | Sep. 15 | PRIMING/FRAMING PUBLIC ISSUES  
CLASS PROJECT DISCUSSION |
| Week 5 | Sep. 22 | CAMPAIGNS AND THE MEDIA  
• Graber Chapter 16: The Miscast Institution (*Patterson*)  
• Graber Chapter 17: Trout or Hamburger: Politics and Telemythology (*Schudson*)  
• Graber Chapter 14: Open Season: How the News Media Cover Presidential Campaigns in the Age of Attack Journalism (*Sabato*) |
| Week 6 | Sep. 29 | CAMPAIGNS: Primaries, Polls  
| Week 7 | Oct. 6 | CAMPAIGNS: Advertising, Debates, Internet  
• Graber Chapter 13: The Craft of Political Advertising: A Progress Report (*Ansolabehere & Iyengar*)  
• Graber Chapter 15: Mainstream Candidates on the Internet (*Selnow*) |
| Week 8 | Oct. 13 | MID-TERM EXAMINATION |
| Week 9 | Oct 20 | MEDIA AND INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES  
• Chaffee (1982), Mass media and interpersonal channels: Competitive, convergent, or complementary? In Gumpert & Cathcart (Eds.), *Inter/Media*, pp. 57-77. |
| Week 10 | Oct. 27 | OTHER POLITICAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTS: Political Socialization & Knowledge  
| Week 11 | Nov. 3 | OTHER POLITICAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTS: Political Orientation.  
| Week 12 | Nov. 10 | POLITICAL ACTORS, POLICY AND THE PRESS  
- Graber Chapter 19: The Uses of News: Theory and (Presidential) Practice  
  *Cook*  
- Graber Chapter 20: Surrogate State Department? Times Coverage of Palestine, 1948  
  *Evenson*  
- Graber Chapter 21: How Members of Congress Use the Media to Influence Public Policy  
  *Kedrowski*  
- Graber Chapter 22: I Am on TV Therefore I Am  
  *Hess*  
- Graber Chapter 23: The Media and Watergate  
  *Lang & Lang*  
- Graber Chapter 26: Mass Media Roles in Foreign Policy  
  *O’Heffernan*  
  *Jamieson & Capella* |
| Week 13 | Nov. 17 | POLITICAL REPORTING  
- Graber Chapter 27: Reporting the Gulf War  
  *Hachten & Hachten* |
| Week 14 | Nov. 24 | POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE  
COMPARATIVE AND NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES  
| Week 15 | Dec. 1 | PRESENTATION OF CLASS PROJECT |
| Week 16 | Dec. 8 | PRESENTATION OF CLASS PROJECT |
|    |    | FINAL EXAMINATION: December 15, 1:30 P.M. |