

## COMM 7841: MASS COMMUNICATION AND THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

AU 2015

Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:55-5:15 p.m.

Location: Derby 3116

Dr. Gerald Kosicki

Office: 3138 Derby Hall

Phone: (614) 292-9237

Email: kosicki.1@osu.edu

Office Hours: noon to 1 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, and by appointment

### Course Description

Our course is a graduate-level seminar dealing with mass communication theory at the macro or sociological level. We will be exploring the relationships among media and social systems, with a focus on understanding the structure of media systems, news production, media content and media linkages to other political, economic and social institutions.

The readings for the class are listed later in this syllabus. We will talk about the priorities and order of importance of the readings each week. I expect that everyone will read these articles and chapters prior to class and be prepared to discuss them. Discussion leaders will be expected to read more deeply in the topic area they are discussing so that they may bring more to the table than the average student.

### Class materials

I have ordered one book for the class:

McGinnis, J.O. (2013). *Accelerating democracy: Transforming governance through technology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

We will have a number of other readings available on Carmen.

### Requirements & grading

Evaluations of student performance will be based on several criteria: in-class discussion leader duties, general in-class participation (on non-discussion leader days), the seminar paper. The weighting of these evaluation criteria will be the following:

Discussion leader duties	15%
General class participation	15%
One-page papers (4)	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final paper	<u>25%</u>
Total:	100%

### Exam

The midterm exam will be in a take-home format.

### **One-page response papers**

Each of you will complete four one-page papers over the course of the term. You will pick weeks and do one paper about each week's readings. Each paper should be one single-spaced page long (500 words) and printable on a single sheet of paper. These papers should discern a main theme across all of the readings and discuss something related to this. The papers should *not* be a summary of the main points. I am more interested in your reaction to the information. This might involve the usefulness of the information, the level of interest you have in it, anything that you found particularly surprising or disappointing, etc. The best essays of this type will articulate a *point of view* with respect to the main theme(s) of the materials and then use facts from all the readings to support this argument. You will sign up for due dates for these essays, but in general they will be due Mondays by the start of class of the week that you are writing about. Note that some of you could be asked in class to provide a brief discussion of your essay.

### **Discussion leading**

Beginning the second week, two or three students will be assigned to jointly prepare a series of discussion questions and to lead class discussion on the assigned readings for that day and any appropriate background information that might help put those readings in context. Each set of students should post 7-8 discussion questions that address individual readings/chapters as well as how the readings might relate to each other, or to previous readings.

The discussion questions should be emailed to the group the night before each class by about 8 p.m.

Discussion leaders will be evaluated based on the quality of their questions, depth of understanding of the material, amount of recommended readings they are able to bring into the discussion, and their performance in leading the discussion.

### **General in-class participation**

Students not serving as a discussion leader for a given class will be evaluated on their participation in debate and ability to intelligently discuss the assigned readings. The first, minimum component of this is class attendance. However, ALL students will be expected to participate fully in the seminar by both asking questions and answering them during each and every class period. While a reasonable quantity of verbal participation is a necessary condition for a positive evaluation, it is not sufficient. The quality of questions and answers will be considered when evaluating student participation.

### **Personal technology**

Your laptop computer, iPad or similar devices are welcome in class as long as they are used to enhance your ability to participate in an informed and constructive manner. You should not be using personal technology in the classroom to email, chat, check social media or otherwise distract yourself from the classroom discussion. I reserve the right to ban the use of technology from the room in general, or for specific individuals if these rules are abused.

### **Seminar paper**

The final paper will be about a 20-page proposal in which you design an original research study, using any method (e.g., experiment, survey, content analysis, case study, mixed-modes, etc.). The proposal should be inspired by, but not constrained, by the course material. Please prepare your paper using the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). If students enroll from other disciplines in which other reference systems are customary, they should talk to me about this.

The proposal should include 1) substantive literature review that discusses your theoretical approach and develops your hypotheses (12-15 pages); and 2) a detailed methods section that describes how you would carry out the proposed study and test your hypotheses (e.g., sampling and data collection, questionnaire design, coding sheets, data analysis, etc.). This section might be 3-5 pages.

Alternatively, if you already have access to previously collected data, you might consider preparing a full original research/conference paper that includes a literature review, methods, results and discussion.

Towards the middle of the semester, if not sooner, each of you should schedule an appointment with me to discuss your topic and approach to the final paper. If you wish to share early drafts with me, that can be arranged.

### **Some Words about Academic Honesty**

It is your responsibility to complete your own work as best you can in the time provided. Cheating, plagiarism, submission of the same work for two different classes, and falsification of laboratory or other data are serious offenses, and it is my responsibility to make sure they do not occur. Anyone suspected of academic misconduct should expect to have a record of the matter forwarded to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, in accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-23-04. Academic misconduct will be punished to the fullest extent possible. For more information on definitions of plagiarism and academic misconduct more generally, please consult the Code of Student Conduct at <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/>

### **Special Accommodations**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## **COURSE OUTLINE & READINGS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED)**

### **Week 1, August 26**

Introduction and overview

### **Week 2: August 31, September 2**

The macro perspective on communication research

McLeod, J.M. & Blumler, J.G. (1987). The macrosocial level of communication science. In C.R. Berger and S.H. Chaffee (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Science* (pp. 271-322). Beverly Hills: Sage.

McLeod, J.M., Kosicki, G.M. & McLeod, D.M. (2009). Levels of analysis and communication science (pp. 183-200). In C.R. Berger, M.E. Roloff & D.R. Ewoldsen (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Science*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

### **Week 3, September 7, 9**

Communication, democracy and survey research

Can aggregating individual survey responses create public opinion?

Bourdieu, P. (1973/1993). Public opinion does not exist. In P. Bourdieu. *Sociology in question* (pp. 149-157. London: Sage Publications.

Tilly, C. (1983). Speaking your mind without elections, surveys or social movements. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47, 461-478.

Blumer, H. (1948). Public opinion and public opinion polling. *American Sociological Review* 13, 542-554.

Converse, P.E. (1987). Changing conceptions of public opinion in the political process. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, Supplement: 12-24.

Sanders, L.M. (1999). Democratic politics and survey research. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 29, 248-80.

Herbst, S. (1991). Classical democracy, polls and public opinion: Theoretical frameworks for studying the development of public sentiment. *Communication Theory* 1,3, 225-238.

Lynd, R.S. (1940). Democracy in reverse. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 4,2, 218-220.

September 7 is Labor Day. No classes. University is closed.

#### **Week 4, September 14, 16**

##### Linking micro and macro

Pan, Z. & McLeod, J.M. (1991). Multi-level analysis in mass communication research. *Communication Research*, 18, 138-171.

Slater, M., Snyder, L. & Hayes, A. (2006). Thinking and modeling at multiple levels: The potential contribution of multi-level modeling to communication theory and research. *Human Communication Research*, 32, 4, 375-384.

Nass, C. & Reeves, B. (1991). Combining, distinguishing and generating theories in communication: A domains of analysis framework. *Communication Research* 18, 2, 240-261.

Abroms, L.C. & Maibach, E.W. (2008). The effectiveness of communication to change behavior. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 29, 219-234.

Grier, S.A. & Kumanyika, S. (2010). Targeted marketing and public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 31, 349-69.

#### **Week 5, September 21, 23**

##### Communication and social movements

McCarthy, J.D. (1994). Activists, authorities and media framing of drunk driving. In Larana, E., Johnston, H., & Gusfield, J.R. *New social movements* (pp. 133-167). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Brown, T.M. & Fee, E. (2014). Social movements in health. *Annual Review of Public Health* 35, 385-98.

Graetz, M.J. & Shapiro, I. (2005). *Death by a thousand cuts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bail, C. (2015). *Terrified: How anti-Muslim fringe organizations became mainstream*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Andrews, K.T. & Caren, N. (2010). Making the news: Movement organizations, media attention, and the public agenda. *American Sociological Review*, 75,6, 841-866.

Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611-39.

## **Week 6, September 28, 30**

Moral panics, panics and bubbles

David, M., Rohloff, Petley & Hughes (2011). The idea of moral panic – ten dimensions of dispute. *Crime Media Culture*, 7,3, 215-228.

Critcher, C. (2011). For a political economy of moral panics. *Crime Media Culture*, 7,3, 259-275.

McCarty, N. et al. *Political bubbles: Financial crises and the failure of American democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Shiller, R.J. (2015). *Irrational exuberance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, The stock market in historical perspective. Chapter 6, The news media.

Hamel, L. et al. (2014). *Kaiser Health Policy News Index: Special Focus on Ebola*. Retrieved from <http://kff.org/global-health-policy/poll-finding/kaiser-health-policy-news-index-special-focus-on-ebola/>

Gonsalves, G. & Staley, P. (2014). Panic, paranoia and public health – The AIDS epidemic's lessons for Ebola. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 371, 125.

Gottschalk, M. (2015). *Caught: The prison state and the lockdown of American politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## **Week 7, October 5, 7**

News work

Donsbach, W. (2004). Psychology of news decisions: Factors behind journalists' world view. *Journalism*, 5,2, 131-157.

Gurevitch, M. & Blumler, J.G. (1990). In J. Lichtenberg, (Ed.), *Democracy and the mass media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blumler, J.G. & Coleman, S. (2010). Political communication in freefall: The British case – and others? *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 15, 139-154.

Molotch, H. & Lester, M. (1974). News as purposive behavior: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents and scandals. *American Sociological Review*, 39,1, 101-112.

Lester, M. (1980). Generating newsworthiness: The interpretive construction of public events. *American Sociological Review*, 45,6, 984-994.

**Week 8, October 12, 14**

Media and community

Logan, J.R. & Molotch, H.L. (1987). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 3, The city as a growth machine, pp. 50-98.

McLeod, J.M., et al.(1996). Community integration, local media use and democratic processes. *Communication Research*, 23,2, 179-209.

Shah, D.V., McLeod, J.M. & Yoon, S.H. (2001). Communication, context and community: An exploration of print, broadcast and Internet influences. *Communication Research*, 28,4, 464-506.

Yamamoto, M. (2011). Mass media as a macrolevel source of social control: A new direction in the community structure model. *Mass Communication and Society*, 14,6, 820-837.

Friedland, L. (2001). Communication, community and democracy. Towards a theory of the communicatively-integrated community. *Communication Research*, 28, 4, 358-391.

Ball-Rokeach, S., Kim, Y.C. & Matei, S. (2001). Storytelling neighborhood: Paths to belonging in diverse urban environments. *Communication Research*, 28,4, 392-428.

Matei, S. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (2003). The Internet in the communication infrastructure of urban residential communities: Macro or mesolinkage? *Communication Research*.

### **Week 9, October 19, 21**

Defining and framing public issues and bringing them to public attention

Hilgartner, S. & Bosk, C.L. (1988). The rise and fall of social problems: A public arenas model. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 53-78.

Downs, A. (1972). Up and down with ecology: The issue-attention cycle. *Public Interest*, 28, 38-51.

Kosicki, G.M. (1993). Problems and opportunities in agenda-setting research. *Journal of Communication*, 43,2, 100-127.

Pan, Z. & Kosicki, G.M. (2001). Framing as a strategic action in public deliberation. In S.D. Reese, O.H. Gandy & A.E. Grant, (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 35-65). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Scheufele, D.A. & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda-setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 9-20.

Sniderman, P.M. & Theriault, S.M. (2004). The structure of political argument and the logic of issue framing. In W.E. Saris & P.M. Sniderman (Eds.), *Studies in public opinion: Attitudes, nonattitudes, measurement error and change* (pp. 133-165). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### **Week 10, October 26, 28**

Knowledge Gap and related problems

McLeod, J.M. (1979). Equivalence of informed political participation: The 1976 presidential debates as a source of influence. *Communication Research*, 6, 4, 463-487.

Slater, M. et al. (2009). Newspaper coverage of cancer prevention: Multilevel evidence for knowledge gap effects. *Journal of Communication*, 59, 514-533.

Hindman, D.B. (2012). Knowledge gaps, belief gaps, and public opinion about health care reform. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89,4, 585-605.

Hindman, D.B. (2009). Mass media flow and differential distribution of politically disputed beliefs. The belief gap hypothesis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86,4, 790-808.



### **Week 11, November 2, 4**

Communication and opinion about the Affordable Care Act

Nyhan, B. (2010). Why the death panel myth wouldn't die: Misinformation in the health care reform debate. *The Forum*, 8,1, Article 5, 1-24.

Nyhan, B. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior*, 32, 303-330.

Pasek, J., Sood, G. & Krosnick, J.A. (2015). Misinformed about the Affordable Care Act? Leveraging uncertainty to assess the prevalence of misperceptions. *Journal of Communication*, 65, 660-673.

Kaiser Family Foundation (2012). *Data note on Affordable Care Act*.

Midterm Exam distributed November 4. Exam is due November 9 at noon.

### **Week 12, November 9, 11**

Distortion, misunderstandings, and lies in public discourse and their effects

Weeks, B.E., & Garrett, R.K. (2014). Electoral Consequences of Political Rumors: Motivated Reasoning, Candidate Rumors, and Vote Choice during the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26(4), 401-422.

Kull, S., Ramsay, C., & Lewis, E. (2003). Misperceptions, the media, and the Iraq war. *Political Science Quarterly*, 118(4), 569-598.

Meirick, P. C. (2013). Motivated misperception? Party, education, partisan news, and belief in "death panels". *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 90(1), 39-57.

Krosnick, J. A., Malhotra, N., & Mittal, U. (2014). Public misunderstanding of political facts: How question wording affected estimates of partisan differences in birtherism. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 78(1), 147-165.

Jerit, J., & Barabas, J. (2006). Bankrupt rhetoric: How misleading information affects knowledge about Social Security. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70(3), 278.

Groeling, T. (2013). Media bias by the numbers: Challenges and opportunities in the empirical study of partisan news. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 129-51.

Prior, M. (2013). Media and political polarization. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 101-27.

November 11 is Veterans Day. No classes. University is closed.

**Week 13, November 16, 18**

Evolving information systems: Technology, democracy, and governance  
McGinnis, pp. 1-93.

**Week 14, November 23**

Evolving information systems: Technology, democracy, and governance  
McGinnis, pp. 94-160.

**Week 15, November 30, December 2**

Censorship and surveillance

King, G., Pan, J. & Roberts, M.E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107, 2, 1-15.

King, G., Pan, J. & Roberts, M.E. (2014). Reverse-engineering censorship in China: Randomized experimentation and participant observation. *Science*, 345, 6199.

**Week 16, Dec. 7, 9**

Newer forms of data and analysis: Computational social science and spatial data

King, G. (In Press). Preface: Big data is not about the data. In R. M. Alvarez, (Ed.), *Computational social science: Discovery and prediction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

King, G. (2011). Ensuring the data-rich future of the social sciences. *Science*, 331, 719-721.

Abrahamson, M., et al. Preserving quantitative research-elicited data for longitudinal analysis: New developments in archiving survey data in the United States. *Historical social research*, 34, 3, 51-59.

Lazar, D. et al. (2009). Computational social science. *Science*, 323, pp. 721-723.

Last class day is December 9.

**Week 17, December 17**

Final paper due no later than Dec. 17, 4 p.m.