

## **COMM 7713: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

SP 2016

Class Time: Wednesdays 5:30-8:10 p.m.

Location: Derby 3116

Dr. Gerald Kosicki

Office: 3138 Derby Hall

Phone: (614) 292-9237

Email: kosicki.1@osu.edu

Office Hours: 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, and by appointment

### **Course Description**

Our course is a graduate-level seminar dealing with theories and research relevant to the study of political communication. We will be focusing 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**

We will have a number of 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	25%
Total:	100%

### **Exam**

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

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

Each of you will complete five 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 Wednesdays by noon 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 volunteer 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 prepare about 15 minutes of introduction to the topic for the week (PowerPoints are encouraged as needed) and 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.

If you have additional paper ideas, you are welcome to discuss them with me.

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, January 13**

Introduction and overview

Pew Research Center. (2014). Political polarization and media habits: From Fox News to Facebook, how liberals and conservatives keep up with politics.

Suran, M. & Kilgo, D. (2015). Freedom from the press? How anonymous gatekeepers on Reddit covered the Boston Marathon bombing. *Journalism Studies*.

### **Week 2: January 20**

News, attention and (mis)information in the Internet era

World Economic Forum. Digital wildfires in a hyperconnected world.

Del Vicario, M. et al. (2015). The spreading of misinformation online. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*.

Mocanu, D. et al. (2015). Collective attention in the age of (mis)information. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 51, 1198-1204.

Bessi, A. et al. (2014). The economy of attention in the age of (mis)information. *Journal of Trust Management*, 1, 12.

### **Week 3, January 27**

Entertainment media and popular culture as sources of news and insight

Delli Carpini, M.X. (2012). Entertainment media and the political engagement of citizens. In H. Semetko & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 9-21). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Street, J. (2012). Popular culture and political communication. In H. Semetko & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 75-84). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Van Zoonen, L. (2005). Entertaining the citizen: When politics and popular culture converge. Boulder: Rowan and Littlefield. Chapter 8, Presentations. Popular resources for citizens, pp. 123-141.

Baym, G. (2005). The Daily Show: Discursive integration and the reinvention of political journalism. *Political Communication*, 22,3, 259-276.

### **Week 4, February 3**

Fact checking, ad-watches: Their effects and limitations

Fridkin, K., Kenney, P.J., & Wintersieck, A. (2015). Liar, liar, pants on fire: How fact checking influences citizens' reactions to negative advertising. *Political Communication*, 32,1, 127-151.

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

Brooks, D.J. & Murov, M. (2012). Assessing accountability in a post-Citizens United era: The effects of attack ad sponsorship by unknown independent groups. *American Politics Research*, 40, 3, 383-418.

### **Week 5, February 10**

News and social movements

Vliegthart, R. & Walgrave, S. (2012). The interdependency of mass media and social movements. . In H. Semetko & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 387-397). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Blumer, H. (1971). Social problems as collective behavior. *Social Problems*, 18, 298–306.

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

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

### **Week 6, February 17**

Political campaigns: Historical non-election campaigns

Kelly, S. Jr. (1956). *Professional public relations and political power*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. Ch. III, Medical economics and doctor politics, pp. 67-106.

Haydu, J. (1999). Counter action frames Employer repertoires and the union menace in the late Nineteenth Century. *Social Problems*, 46, 3, 313-331.

## **Week 7, February 24**

### Non-traditional campaigns

Martin, I.W. (2010). Redistributing towards the rich: Strategic policy crafting in the campaign to repeal the Sixteenth Amendment, 1938-1958. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116, 1, 1-52.

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

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

### Recommended:

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

## **Week 8, March 2**

### Astroturf and the political communication of firms and industries

Walker, E.T. & Rea, C. (2014). The political mobilization of firms and industries. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40, 281-304.

McNutt, J. & Boland, K. (2007). *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 34,3, 165-178.

Williamson, V., Skocol, T. & Coggin, J. (2011). The Tea Party and the remaking of Republican conservatism. *Perspectives on Politics*, 9, 1, 25-43.

Klotz, R.J. (2007). Internet campaigning for grassroots and Astroturf support. *Social Science Computer Review*, 25, 1, 3-12.

Lyon, T.P. Maxwell, J.W. (2004). Astroturf: Interest group lobbying and corporate strategy. *Journal of Economics & Management Strategy*, 13, 4, 561-597.

### Recommended:

Saladoff, S. (2011). *Hot Coffee*. HBO.

### **Week 9, March 9**

Conspiracy theories and conspiracy

Oliver, J.E. & Wood, T.J. (2014). Conspiracy theories and the paranoid style(s) of mass opinion. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58, 4, 952-966.

Sanchez, S. (1996). How the west is won: Astroturf lobbying and the “wise use” movement. *The American Prospect*. March-April.

Egan, T. (1996). Look who’s hugging trees now. *New York Times*.

Feuer, A. (2016). The ideological roots of the Oregon standoff. *New York Times*, January 9.

Cawley, R.M. (2016). Behind the Oregon standoff, you’ll find big questions about democracy. *New York Times Magazine*. January 8.

### **Week 10, March 16**

Spring Break. No class.

### **Week 11, March 23**

Defining and framing public issues and bringing them to public attention

Caddiatore, M.A., Scheufele, D.A. & Iyengar, S. (2016). The end of framing as we know it...and the future of media effects. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19, 1, 7-23

Chong, D. & Druckman, J.N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 103-126.

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.

Other readings TBD

### **Week 12, March 30**

Deliberation and opinion quality

Fishkin, J., et al. (2015) Deliberative agenda-setting: Piloting reform of direct democracy in California. *Perspectives on Politics*, 13, 4, 1030-1042.

Lazer, D.M et al. (2015). Expanding the conversation: Multiplier effects from a deliberative field experiment. *Political Communication*, 32, 552-573.

Price, V. & Neijens, P. (1997). Opinion quality in public opinion research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 9, 4, 336-360.

Price, V. & Neijens, P. (1998). Deliberative Polls: Toward improved measures of informed public opinion? *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 10, 2, 145-176.

Wojcieszak, M. & Price, V. (2012). Fact vs. perceptions: Who reports disagreement during deliberation and are the reports accurate? *Political Communication*, 29,3, 299-318.

### **Week 13, April 6**

Other issues in news coverage

Boydston, A.E., et al. (2014). Two faces of media attention: Media storm versus non-storm coverage. *Political Communication*, 41, 509-531.

Dunaway, J. & Stein, R.M. (2013). Early voting and campaign news coverage. *Political Communication*, 30,2, 278-296.

Dunaway, J. & Lawrence, R.G. (2015). What predicts the game frame? Media ownership, electoral context, and campaign news. *Political Communication*, 32, 43-60.

Van Dalen, A., deVreese, C. & Albaek, E. (2015). Economic news through the magnifying glass: How the media cover economic boom and bust. *Journalism Studies*.

Ostfeld M. & Mutz, D. (2014). Revisiting the effects of case reports in the news. *Political Communication*, 31, 53-72.

Midterm Exam distributed.

### **Week 14, April 13**

(Mis)Understanding the Affordable Care Act

TBD



**Week 15, April 20**

**Analytics**

Nickerson, D.W. (2014). Political campaigns and big data. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28, 2, 51-73.

Hefetz, O. & Ligett, K. (2014). Privacy and data-based research. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28, 2, 75-98.

Ohm, P. (2010). Broken promises of privacy: Responding to the surprising failure of anonymization. *57 UCLA Law Review* 1701.

**Week 16, April 29**

Final paper due no later than Friday, April 29, at 6 p.m.