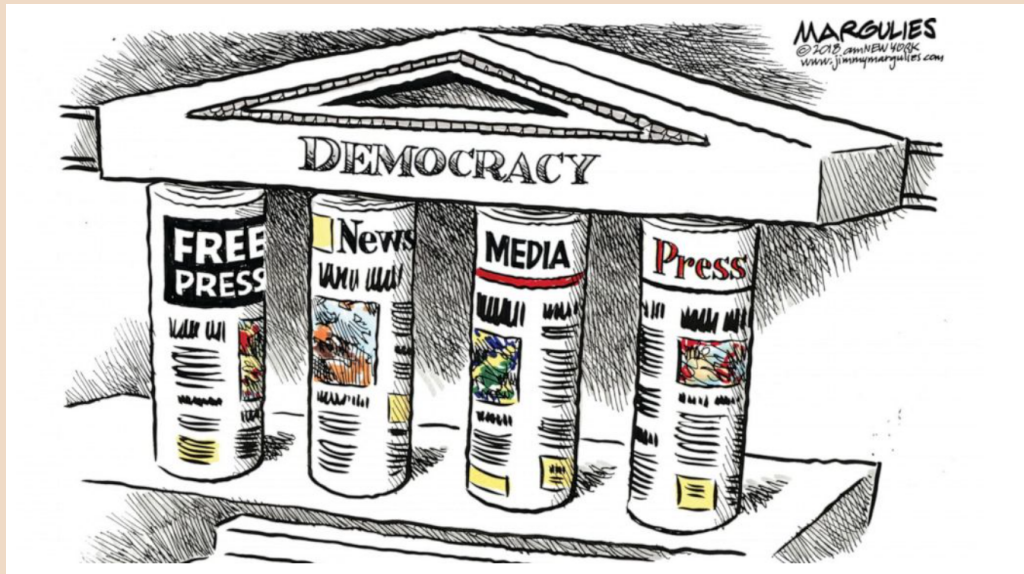


MEDIA AND POLITICS

2020



*Professor Amber
Lusvardi*



My pronouns:
She/her/hers



Find me
Shilling
415

Email me
alusvardi@
millikin.edu

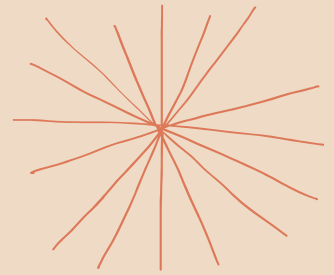


About Office Hours

My office hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science or women, gender, and sexuality studies. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

OH: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays.

"The voice of the people is but an echo." - V.O. Key



About this Course

Can the newest TikTok trend change voting behavior? Can choosing *MSNBC* over *Fox News* shift our perception of political issues? This course explores political behavior as it relates to the intersections of the news industry and American politics.

We will study theories of how the news operates and also of how the news changes (or does not change) the public's perception of political realities. As a class, we will critically analyze news sources, the content of news, and the impact of various platforms and news algorithms.

LEARNING RESOURCES & TEXTS

Mass Media and American Politics, 10th ed.
Graber & Dunaway (on reserve)



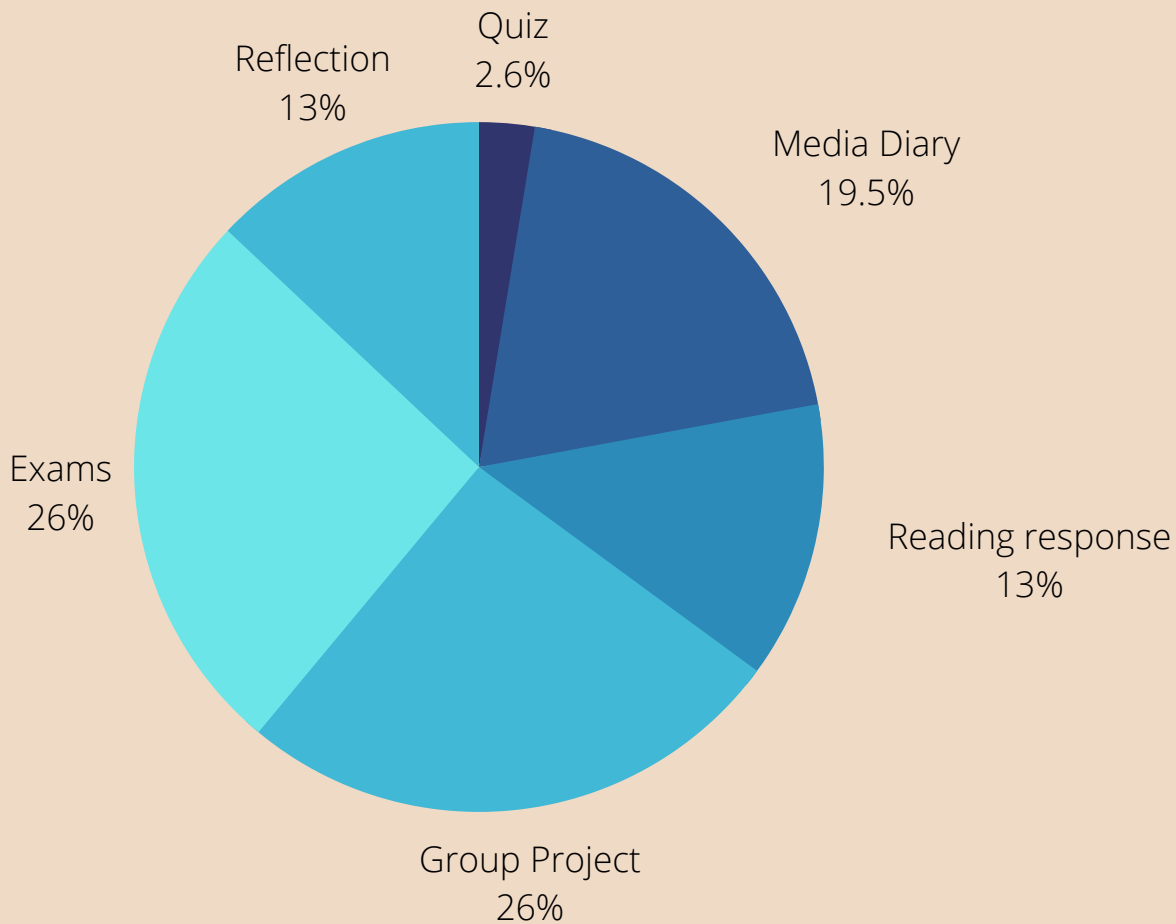
All Weekly Readings available on Moodle

Learning outcomes

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world
2. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics, political behavior, and political communication
3. Communicate effectively political knowledge related to political communication to your peers and your professor
4. Reflect on your responsibilities as a democratic citizen in the United States

Assessment

Assignments



Assignments



Syllabus quiz (10 points) – Take the Moodle quiz on your syllabus.

Media diary (75 points) – You will keep a detailed one-week diary of all the news content you consume and tie that to our conversations on media consolidation and agenda setting. Full details and rubric on Moodle.

Reading response (50 points) – You will choose one week's readings to respond to in the form of a two-page essay. You need to answer: What is the main purpose of these readings? What main question or questions are being addressed? What is the most important information? What are the main inferences/conclusions? What key concepts do you need to understand for this to make sense? What are the implications for this information?

Group project (100 points, graded individually) – This can be done entirely remotely and each member of the group will be graded separately for your work. I will be breaking you up into groups of 5. As a group, decide what platform you want to use to disseminate information taking a critical look at popular media (this could be – A Facebook page, a Twitter account, a TikTok account, a blog, a webpage, a podcast, etc. Play to your strengths). You will use this forum to talk about a topic in modern media using the media theory we learn in class (i.e. How is Fox News framing the minimum wage debate; How do social media algorithms reinforce ideological bias, How does legacy media like NYT cover the administration?). Each member of the group will be responsible for at least five posts and those posts must include specific media examples and theory from class. I will check in on your group regularly.

Exams (100) – You will have a 50 point take-home midterm and final exam,

Participation reflection (50) – You will write a one to two-page reflection in which you grade yourself on your course participation this semester. Barring outside circumstances, did you attend class? Did you participate in discussions on course readings? What were your strengths? In what ways could you have better prepared or participated?



Weekly schedule

Part one: The Fourth Estate – Media’s centrality in American Politics

Week 1: Introductions and Media as Gatekeepers

Graber & Dunaway Ch. 1

Week 2: News as a business

Graber & Dunaway Ch. 2

Week 3: Regulation and libel

Graber & Dunaway Ch. 3

Listen: The Debate over Objectivity in Journalism:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/09/873172499/the-debate-over-objectivity-in-journalism>

Listen: Revisiting NYT v. Sullivan:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/02/24/697481372/revisiting-new-york-times-co-v-sullivan>

Week 4: Guest speaker - Jeremy Pelzer – Statehouse reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer

Week 5: Local News and News Deserts

Graber & Dunaway, Ch. 9

M. Sullivan, Ghosting News: News Deserts, Ghost Papers, and Beacons of Hope

Part two: Media Effects

Week 6: Agenda setting

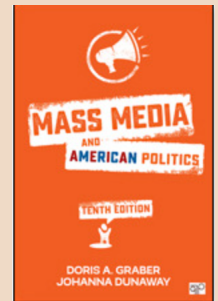
Graber & Dunaway Ch. 5

Iyengar, S., & Simon, A. (1993). News coverage of the Gulf crisis and public opinion: A study of agenda-setting, priming, and framing. *Communication Research* 20(3): 365-383.

Week 7: Framing

Graber & Dunaway Ch 6

Nelson, Thomas E. Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. “Media Framing on a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance.” *American Political Science Review* 91: 567-583.



Weekly schedule

Guest Speaker: Beth Heldebrandt – Researcher and Analyst for the Media Bias Chart

Week 8: Priming/ Uses and Grats

Graber & Dunaway Ch. 11

Week 9: Selective exposure/ideological media selectivity

Iyengar, S., and K.S. Hahn 2009. "Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use." *Journal of Communication* 59(1): 19-39.

Week 10: The Echoing Press

Graber and Dunaway, Ch. 7

Domke, D. S. 2004. *God willing?: Political fundamentalism in the White House, the "War on Terror", and the echoing press.* Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

Part three: Consuming Media

Week 11: Incivility and Bias

Graber and Dunaway, Ch. 13

Sides et al. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America.* Ch. 4

Week 12: Echo Chambers

Graber & Dunaway Ch. 4; Hall Jamieson and Cappella, *Echo Chamber*, Ch. 5

Week 13: Misinformation and Distortion

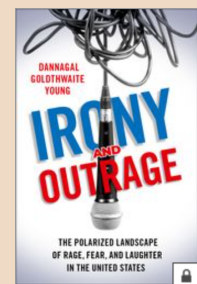
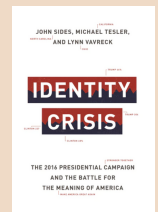
Bode, L, and E.K. Vraga. 2015. "In Other News, That was Wrong: The Correction of Misinformation through Related Stories" *Journal of Communication* 65(4)

Week 14: Media and Political Psychology

Young, D. 2019. *Irony and Outrage.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Week 15: Social Media

Kreiss, D. & McGregor, S. C. 2019. "The 'Arbiters of What Our Voters See': Facebook and Google's struggle with policy, process, and enforcement around political advertising. *Political Communication.*



All About

- You have the right to be called by whatever name and pronouns you prefer. Please let me know your preferred name/pronouns at the start of the semester.
- You are a valued member of this class. Your experience as part of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers to your success in this course, please reach out to me so I can assist you or can help you find the correct resources.

Disability Statement

This course is for all students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that could negatively impact one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space or content of this course, please contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to discuss how to best accommodate you. You are also encouraged to contact the Center for Academic and Professional Performance at: capp@millikin.edu or by phone: 217-362-6424. More details are available on our course Moodle under Accessibility Information.