

Case Western Reserve University
News Media and Politics
POSC 321: (9863) – Fall 2012
Class Meeting: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30am – 12:45pm, Sears #350
Instructor: Mark Major
Email: **Mark.Major@case.edu**
Office Hours: Mather House #9, Tuesday and Thursday
10am – 11:15am and 1:15pm – 2:15pm and By Appointment
(It is best if you email me before your visit)

Objective: This course is designed to introduce students to the interactive dynamics of the news media and the political system. We focus primarily on the news media as it is the dominant medium for political communication. Theoretical concerns include the type of information systems necessary for a healthy and vibrant democratic culture. We also examine the relationship between the historical development of mass media and its impact on democratic communication. Other topics addressed include media bias, framing, journalistic norms and routines, and government regulation. Finally, we are in the midst of a profound transformation of the news media – largely influenced by the Internet – and understanding the implications of the changing nature of the news provide insight for the future of American democracy.

Required Course Readings: (Purchase paperback versions)

- 1) W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion* 9th ed (Longman, 2012)
- 2) Elliot King and Jane L. Chapman, *Key Readings in Journalism* (Routledge, 2012)
- 3) Additional readings are found on Blackboard: blackboard.case.edu

Highly Recommended: Daily reading (with the exception of Sunday- too expensive) of one of the following: *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*. Also highly recommended is *The Onion*.

Course Requirements:

A. Class participation – 20 pts.

It is extremely important to be prepared for class. The quality of the course is dependent on the quality of your preparation and engagement. You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and take part in class discussions. You will be responsible for leading class discussion periodically throughout the semester. Please note: Much of the class discussions will be informal and heated as we will be engaging topics that affect our daily lives. However, this exempts no one (instructor included) from civility. Finally, please turn off your cell phones and other electronic devices before entering class and please refrain from texting. If you use a computer then please refrain from browsing the Internet as it is distracting to your classmates.

B. Two Exams – 50 pts. (Each exam worth 25 pts.)

Exams will consist of short answer questions. The first exam is Thursday, October 11th and exam #2 is Wednesday, December 13th. Please plan accordingly.

C. Content Analysis Research Paper – 30 pts.

Detailed instructions are forthcoming.

Schedule

Tuesday, August 28th

Thursday, Aug. 30th

1) Introduction and Syllabus

News Media and Definitions

Tuesday, September 4th

Thursday, Sept. 6th

1) Paul Starr, “Democratic Theory and the History of Communications”

2) *KRIJ, Ch. 26 (Walter Lippmann)

3) *W. Lance Bennett, “Ch. 1: The News About Democracy: Information Crisis in American Politics”

4) *King and Chapman (hereafter: KRIJ), “Introduction: What We Should Know”

5) Robert M. Entman, “The Nature and Sources of News”

News Media and Historical Development

Tuesday, Sept. 11th

Thursday, Sept. 13th

1) *KRIJ, Ch. 25 (Alexis De Tocqueville)

2) Michael Schudson and Susan E. Tift, “American Journalism in Historical Perspective”

3) *KRIJ, Ch. 1 (Michael Schudson)

4) Kevin Barnhurst and Diana Mutz, “American Journalism and the Decline in Event-Centered Reporting”

5) *KRIJ, Ch. 2 (Kay Mills)

6) *KRIJ, Ch. 4 (Pat Washburn)

Recommended: *KRIJ, Ch. 3 (James W. Carey)

News Media and Comparative Politics

Tuesday, Sept. 18th

Thursday, Sept. 20th

1) Daniel Hallin and Robert Giles, “Presses and Democracies”

2) Michael Schudson, “The Political Culture of News”

3) *KRIJ, Ch. 5 (Jane Chapman)

4) Timothy Cook, “Public Policy toward the Press: What the Government Does *For* the Media”

5) Robert McChesney, “The Battle for US Airwaves, 1928 – 1935”

News Media, Political Economy, and Ownership

Tuesday, Sept. 25th

Thursday, Sept. 27th

1) *KRIJ, Ch. 27 (Upton Sinclair)

2) *KRIJ, Ch. 28 (Robert D. Leigh)

3) *KRIJ, Ch. 29 (A.J. Liebling)

4) *KRIJ, Ch. 13 (James McGrath Morris)

5) *Bennett, “Ch. 7: The Political Economy of the News and the End of a Journalism Era”

6) Martin Gilens and Craig Hertzman, “Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act”

7) Ben Compaine, “Domination Fantasies: Does Rupert Murdoch Control the Media? Does Anyone?”

available online at <http://reason.com/archives/2004/01/01/domination-fantasies/>

Recommended: Tim Dickinson, “How Roger Ailes Built the Fox News Fear Factory” available online at

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/how-roger-ailes-built-the-fox-news-fear-factory-20110525>

Political Economy (cont'd)

Tuesday, October 2nd

Thursday, Oct. 4th

- 1) James T. Hamilton, "The Market and the Media"
- 2) *KRIJ, Ch. 6 (Elliot King)
- 3) Markus Prior, "News v. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout"
- 4) Paul Starr, "Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption)"
- 5) Norman Nie, Darwin Miller, Saar Golde, Daniel Butler, "The World Wide Web and the US Political News Market"
- 6) Matthew Hindman, "Blogs: The New Media Elite"

Exam #1

Tuesday, Oct. 9th – Review session

Thursday, Oct. 11th – Exam #1

News Media, Norms of Reporting, and Framing the News

Tuesday, Oct. 16th – Content analysis research topic due today

Thursday, Oct. 18th – No class

- 1) *KRIJ, Ch. 7 (Herbert Gans)
- 2) *Bennett, "Ch. 2: News Stories: Four Information Biases That Matter"
- 3) Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm"
- 4) Daniel Hallin, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media"

News Media and the Political System

Tuesday, Oct. 23rd – No class

Thursday, Oct. 25th

- 1) *Bennett, "Ch. 4: How Politicians Make the News"
- 2) *Bennett, "Ch. 5: How Journalists Report the News"

Political System (cont'd)

Tuesday, Oct. 30th

Thursday, November 1st

- 1) Jeffrey Cohen, "If the News is So Bad, Why Are Presidential Polls So High? Presidents, the News Media, and the Mass Public in an Era of New Media"
- 2) *KRIJ, Ch. 11 (Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward)
- 3) *Bennett, "Ch. 6: Inside the Profession: Objectivity and the Political Authority Bias"
- 4) *KRIJ, Ch. 24 (Timothy Crouse)
- 5) *KRIJ, Ch. 17 (Carl Rowan)

Political System (cont'd)

Tuesday, Nov. 6th

Thursday, Nov. 8th

- 1) Sean Aday and James Devitt, "Style over Substance: Newspaper Coverage of Elizabeth Dole's Presidential Bid"
- 2) Regina Lawrence and Melody Rose, "A Gendered Game: Themes in Media Coverage of Clinton's Campaign"
- 3) John Geer, "The News Media and the Rise of Negativity in Presidential Campaigns"
- 4) Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Bruce Hardy, "Civil Engaged Argument and Why It Matters"

News Media, Race, and Labor

Tuesday, Nov. 13th

Thursday, Nov. 15th

- 1) *KRIJ, Ch. 9 (Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff)
- 2) *KRIJ, Ch. 12 (Nan Robertson)
- 3) *KRIJ, Ch. 19 (Ida Wells-Barnett)
- 4) Christopher Martin, "The 1997 United Parcel Service Strike: Framing the Story for Popular Consumption"
- 5) Frank Baumgartner, Suzanna Linn, and Amber E. Boydston, "The Decline of the Death Penalty: How Media Framing Changed Capital Punishment in America"
- 6) Martin Gilens, "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media"

News Media and Foreign Policy

Tuesday, Nov. 20th

Thursday, Nov. 22nd – No class

- 1) *KRIJ, Ch. 30 (Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky)
- 2) Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Judith Miller, *The New York Times*, and the Propaganda Model"
- 3) Robert Entman, "Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame After 9/11"
- 4) Eric Herring and Piers Robinson, "Too Polemical or Too Critical? Chomsky on the study of the news media and US foreign policy"
- 5) *KRIJ, Ch. 10 (M. Phillip Knightley)
- 6) Movie: *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land*

Foreign Policy (cont'd)

Tuesday, Nov. 27th

Thursday, Nov. 29th

- 1) Piers Robinson, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy"
- 2) Jonathan Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy"
- 3) Brian Michael Goss, "'Deeply Concerned about the Welfare of the Iraqi People': The Sanctions Regime Against Iraq in the *New York Times* (1996-98)"
- 4) W. Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence, and Steven Livingstone, "None Dare Call It Torture"
- 5) *KRIJ, Ch. 8 (Martha Gellhorn)
- 6) *KRIJ, Ch. 21 (David Nichols)
- 7) Movie: *War Made Easy*

News Media and the Future of the News

Tuesday, December 4th

Thursday, Dec. 6th

- 1) *Bennett, "Ch. 8: All the News That Fits Democracy: Solutions for Citizens, Politicians, and Journalists"
- 2) John Zaller, "A New Standard for the News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen"
- 3) W. Lance Bennett, "The Burglar Alarm that Just Keeps Ringing: A Response to Zaller"
- 4) Brent Cunningham, "Rethinking Objectivity"
- 5) John Nichols and Robert McChesney, "The Death and Life of Great American Newspapers" available online at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090406/nichols_mcchesney?rel=hp_picks

Exam #2 and Content analysis paper

Tuesday, Dec. 11th – Review session

Wednesday, Dec. 13th (4pm – 7pm) – Exam #2 and Content analysis research paper due today