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)  
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.

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”

*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”
7) Ben Compaine, “Domination Fantasies: Does Rupert Murdoch Control the Media? Does Anyone?”
Political Economy (cont’d)
Tuesday, October 2nd
Thursday, Oct. 4th
2) *KRIJ, Ch. 6 (Elliot King)
4) Paul Starr, “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption)”
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”
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. Boydstun, “The Decline of the Death Penalty: How Media Framing Changed Capital Punishment in America”

News Media and Foreign Policy
Tuesday, Nov. 20th
Thursday, Nov. 22nd – No class
1) *KRIJ, Ch. 30 (Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky)
3) Robert Entman, “Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House’s Frame After 9/11”
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”
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”
3) W. Lance Bennett, “The Burglar Alarm that Just Keeps Ringing: A Response to Zaller”
4) Brent Cunningham, “Rethinking Objectivity”

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