

GVPT 878B - Political Communication
Thursdays 12:30 to 3:15
Fall 2007

Professor Karen Kaufmann

Office Hours: Tuesdays; 1:00 to 2:00
Thursdays 3:30 to 4:30, or by appointment

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The purpose of the course is to explore the role of the media in contemporary U.S. politics. While we cover a variety of research areas, our particular focus is on how the mass media influences public opinion and political choices. We begin the course with a review of a seminal perspective on opinion formation and change, highlighting the important intermediary role the media play as a conduit of political information. We follow with an examination of the news media as an institution, exploring the professional and economic incentives that shape modern day newsmaking. Having established an understanding of how the news media operate, we move to a review of some of the media effects literature, paying particular attention to how varying forms of media coverage influence policy opinion and the evaluation of political candidates. The final weeks of the course comprise a more focused study of contemporary political campaigns and the various tools and strategies that they use to persuade and mobilize (or demobilize) the public.

Assigned Books:

- W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Stephen Livingston. (2007) *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina*. University of Chicago Press.
- John Geer (2006) *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago Press.
- Martin Gilens (1999) *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media and the Politics of Anti-Poverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder (1987) *News That Matters*. University of Chicago Press.
- Daron Shaw (2006) *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of the 2000 and 2004 elections*. University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas Patterson (1993) *Out of Order*. Vintage Press.
- John Zaller (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press.
- Assigned articles are available on JSTOR or other university-accessible data bases unless otherwise noted. Readings *not* accessible online will be made available for you to copy at least one week prior to class.

Course Requirements:

- (1) Prepare for class by reading and evaluating the assigned materials. Prepare a weekly reaction paper. (Note: there is NO reaction paper due on the first day of class.) The papers should be short but thoughtful responses to the week's readings. You may focus on questions of theory; data; research design; statistical methods; the relationship among the week's various assigned readings; or how a particular work relates to other research, etc. Please do not summarize the reading; this is an analytical exercise. Also, please confine your reaction papers to 2 double spaced pages (1 inch margins and 12 point font).
- (2) Two short papers (approximately 7 to 10 pages each) on specific topics that will be assigned over the course of the semester. Your grades will be based upon the quality of your insights and on your ability to make and support your arguments. All else being equal, one or two well-articulated arguments are much better than a laundry list of under-developed thoughts. All papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day. One of the paper topics will likely relate to the methodological challenges associated with media and campaign research. The other will pertain to political sophistication and how it conditions various media and campaign effects. You may want to keep these two topics in mind as you do your reading over the course of the semester.
- (3) A 15 to 20 page literature review and research design. The first part of this paper should critically review the literature in some specific sub-area of political communication research. In the context of summarizing and critiquing the extant research on this topic, you should identify an interesting research question that lends itself to social scientific inquiry. The second part of the paper should include the following: a set of theory driven expectations/ hypotheses that flow from the literature review; the identification of an appropriate data set for this project (even if it doesn't yet exist); and the description of an appropriate research design. In essence, I am asking you to write the front end of a conference paper/journal article with the hope that you may go on to conduct the actual research and produce a publishable paper.

The topic for the paper should be tied in some way to one of the major themes in the course, and the literature review should extend well beyond the course readings. *A one page description of your paper topic and a preliminary bibliography will be due in class on November 8th.* I highly recommend that you make time to meet with me to discuss your research design sometime during the first half of the semester.

(4) Grades will be assigned according to the following:

Reaction Papers	20% (check+, check, check-)
Short Papers	30%
Research Design (Final Paper)	30%
Class Readiness and Participation	20%

(5) Due Dates:

Short Paper I:	October 18
Paper Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography:	November 8
Short Paper II:	November 15
Final Paper/Research Design:	December 14

WEEK 1: (August 30) – Mass Media and Public Opinion

- John Zaller (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9.
- Vincent Price and John Zaller (1993) Who Gets the News? Alternative Measures of News Reception and Their Implications for Research: *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Volume 57: 133-164.
- P.J. Tichenor, G.A. Donohue; and C.N. Olien (1970) *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge. Volume 34:2:159-170.

WEEK 2: (September 6) – The News: Who makes it? Who owns it?

- W. Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence and Stephen Livingston. *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina*.

WEEK 3: (September 13) – No Class (Rosh Hashanah)

WEEK 4: (September 20) – Not so Minimal Effects: The Mass Media and Agenda Setting

- Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw (1972) The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35:2:176-187.
- Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder (1987) *News That Matters*. Intro and Chapters 1-3, 6.

- Erbring, Lutz, Edie N. Goldenberg, and Arthur H. Miller. (1980) Front-Page News and Real World Cues: A New Look at Agenda Setting by the Media. *American Journal of Political Science*, 24:1:16-49.

WEEK 5: (September 27 – Mass Media and Priming)

- Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder (1987) *News That Matters*. Chapters 7-11.
- Krosnick, Jon A. and Donald R. Kinder. (1990) Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming. *American Political Science Review* 48:2:497-512.
- Valentino, Nicholas. (1999) Crime News and the Priming of Racial Attitudes during the Evaluation of the President. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63:3:293-320.
- Miller, Joanne and Jon Krosnick. (2000) News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens are Guided by a Trusted Source. *American Journal of Political Science* 44:2:301-315.

WEEK 6: (October 4) – Framing and Public Opinion

- Shanto Iyengar. (1991) *Is Anyone Responsible?* Chapters 1-5 (COPY)
- Nelson, Thomas, Rosalee Clawson and Zoe M. Oxley. (1997) Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance. *American Political Science Review* 91:3:567-583.
- Nelson, Thomas E. and Zoe M. Oxley. (1999) Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion.
- Druckman, James N. (2001) On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? *The Journal of Politics* 63:4:1041-1066.
- Druckman, James N. and Kjersten R. Nelson. (2003) Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence. *American Journal of Political Science* 47:4:729-745.

WEEK 7: (October 11) – Mass Media, Race and Politics

- Martin Gilens (1999) *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media and the Politics of Anti-Poverty Policy*.
- Gilliam, Franklin D., and Shanto Iyengar. (2000) Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public. *American Journal of Political Science* 44:3:560-573.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings and Ismail K. White. (2002) Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns. *American Political Science Review* 96:1:75-90.

WEEK 8: (October 18) – Political Reforms and the Rise of Media Politics

- Patterson, Thomas. (1993) *Out of Order*.
- John Zaller. (1999) *A Theory of Media Politics* (Chapters TBA)

WEEK 9: (October 25) – Are We Amusing Ourselves to Death? : Perspectives on Infotainment.

- Thomas E. Patterson. (2000). Doing Well and Doing Good: How Soft News and Critical Journalism are Shrinking the News Audience and Weakening Democracy.
http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/research_publications/reports/softnews.pdf
- John Zaller. (2003) A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen. *Political Communication* 20:109-130.
- W. Lance Bennett. (2003) The Burglar Alarm That Just Keeps Ringing: A Response to Zaller. *Political Communication* 20:131-138.
- Markus Prior. (2005) News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge. *American Journal of Political Science* 49:3:577-592.
- Matthew A. Baum. (2002) Sex, Lies and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public. *American Political Science Review* 96:1:91-109.

WEEK 10: (November 1) – Presidential Campaigns: Communication Strategies

- Daron Shaw (2006) *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of the 2000 and 2004 elections*.
- Karen M. Kaufmann, John R. Petrocik, and Daron R. Shaw. Campaign Effects in the 21st Century. *Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths about American Voters*. Chapter 5. (forthcoming, Oxford University Press)

WEEK 11: (November 8) – Campaign Communication: Issues, Advertising and Campaigns

- James G. Gimpel, Karen M. Kaufmann, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. (2007) Battleground States versus Blackout States: The Behavioral Implications of Modern Presidential Campaigns. (2007) *Journal of Politics* 69:3:786-797. (COPY)
- John R. Petrocik. (1996) Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study. *American Journal of Political Science* 40:3:825-850.
- Paul Freedman, Michael Franz, and Kenneth Goldstein. (2004) Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship. *American Journal of Political Science* 48:4:723-741.
- Matthew A. Baum. (2005) Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit. *American Journal of Political Science* 49:2:213-234.

- Ted Brader. (2005) Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions. *American Journal of Political Science* 49:2:388-405.
- Allyson L. Holbrook, Jon A. Krosnick, Penny S. Visser, Wendi L. Gardner, and John T. Cacioppo. 2001. Attitudes toward Presidential Candidates and Political Parties: Initial Optimism, Inertial First Impressions, and a Focus on Flaws. *American Journal of Political Science* 45:4:930-950.

WEEK 12: (November 15) - Going Negative: The Implications of Negative Campaigns

- John Geer. 2006. *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*
- Richard Lau, Lee Sigelman, Caroline Heldman and Paul Babbitt. (1999) The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta Analytic Assessment. *American Political Science Review* 93:4:851-876.

WEEK 13: (November 22) - Happy Thanksgiving!

WEEK 14: (November 29) - RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE

Students will make short presentations of their research designs. Class discussion of each project will follow.

WEEK 15: (December 6) - RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE

Students will make short presentations of their research designs. Class discussion of each project will follow.

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE IN MY OFFICE BY NOON, DECEMBER 14.