

GVPT399D Politics and the Media – Winter 2008

Version 1.0 – please check online for updates!

This course provides an opportunity to critically evaluate something we consume every day: the media. We will discuss what the role of the media should be in a democracy. Where do they fail, succeed, need reforming, or revolutionizing? Students will also analyze and debate some of the newest trends in news-making and political campaign media strategy.

Instructor Details

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“Office”

Please contact me through Blackboard exclusively. My regular email is reserved for urgent messages or when Blackboard is down.

You may also call me during office hours (which will be announced online). In urgent cases or when we have arranged to talk in advance, you may also call me *during the day*. If you get my answering machine, please leave your name, number, and a good time to call.

Readings

All readings and links to other sources are available on Blackboard at <http://elms.umd.edu>

Course Schedule

Please note: though this is an online class, our schedule assumes that we ‘meet’ 4 days a week. This does not mean you have to be online at any specific time, only that you have to post your contributions within the time allotted for each topic. Discussion topics will be open for posting for between 24-96 hours. See detailed specifications and reading/discussion questions on Blackboard.

Wednesday 1/2 – Introduction

- Post biography & expectations
- Post first discussion contribution
- Make sure you can access all sections on Blackboard

No Readings

Thursday 1/3 – The media and democracy – the basics

Sources:

- W. Lance Bennett “The News about Democracy”
- The Hutchins Commission Report
- David Mindich – Excerpts from *Tuned Out – Why Americans Under 40 Don’t Follow the News*
- Michael Schudson “Why democracies need an unlovable press”
- “Jürgen Habermas and the Public Sphere” available at <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~soules/media301/habermas.htm>
- Executive summary State of the Media Report <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/execsummary.pdf>

Optional:

- Short interview with Habermas <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBl6ALNh18Q>

Monday 1/7 – The political economy of the media

- Open bloglines account at www.bloglines.com

Sources:

- W. Lance Bennett, “Chapter 7: The Political Economy of News”
- Interview with Robert McChesney
<http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Feb2006/barsamian0206.html>
- Ben Bagdikian “The Growing Gap”

Tuesday 1/8 – Media ownership and diversity in the media

- Post what you will do for final assignment

Sources:

- Out of the Picture <http://www.freepress.net/docs/otp2007.pdf>
- Parity Project Brown Out Report (Read the executive summary)
<http://www.nahj.org/resources/2006Brownout.pdf>
- <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/11022007/watch.html>
- Video of Geena Davies speech <http://www.freepress.net/ncmr07/=video07>

Optional:

- Senator Byron Dorgan on C-SPAN <http://www.c-span.org/videoarchives.asp?CatCodePairs=Series.COM&ArchiveDays=365>

Wednesday 1/9 – Journalism in a changing newsroom

- Quiz 1

Readings:

- Thomas E. Patterson “Political Roles of the Journalist”
- “The Effectiveness of the Press in Serving the Needs of American Democracy” in *A Republic Divided*
- Interview with Eric Boehlert (first 12 minutes of TV show)
http://www.democracynow.org/2006/6/7/how_the_press_rolled_over_for
- Interview with journalist Helen Thomas on Democracy Now radio – start at minute 22
http://www.democracynow.org/2004/4/8/veteran_white_house_correspondent_helen_thomas
- Lou Dobbs on news and tabloidization
<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/opinion/articles/040223/23dobbs.htm>

Thursday 1/10 – Propaganda

Sources:

- Jamieson & Hardy “Unmasking Deception: The Functions and Failures of the Press”
- Watch Bill Moyers’ Journal “Buying the War”
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/btw/watch.html>
- Manufacturing Consent (1-17 to 17-17 – next episode is available on site of previous) available at
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHJHGOE8MIs&feature=related>

Optional:

- Outfoxed – Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism – watch parts 1-6 on Youtube
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w39FnpuMRfo>

Monday 1/14 – Partisanship and Bias

Sources:

- Robert McChesney “Understanding US Journalism II”

- Brent Cunningham “Rethinking Objectivity”
- “The Myth of the Liberal Media: The Propaganda Model of News” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYIyb1Bx9Ic>
- Lewis Black on the Liberal Bias on Youtube and Wikipedia: Liberal Bias <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJEeyLeqJHc>
- Keith Olberman interviewed by Bill Moyers <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12142007/profile.html>
- Brent Bozell “Liberal Media Bias Rages, But More Americans Wary” *The Watchdog* March 2007
- Media Bias Is Real, Finds UCLA Political Scientist <http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/Media-Bias-Is-Real-Finds-UCLA-6664.aspx>

Tuesday 1/15 – Presidential campaigns

- Quiz 2

Sources:

- “The Invisible Primary—Invisible No Longer. A First Look At Coverage Of The 2008 Presidential Campaign” <http://www.journalism.org/node/8187>
- <http://www.youtube.com/youchoose>
- *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2007, “Public questions inspire combative GOP debate” http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-debate29nov29_0,181755.story?page=2
- *Los Angeles Times* Op Ed, December 1, 2007 “CNN: Corrupt News Network” http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-et-ruten1dec01_0,4122002.column?coll=la-home-center
- Media's Role in Elections: Telling the People "What's Going On" – An Interview with CNN Correspondent John King <http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2004/May/21-615317.html>
- Daily Show “Even Stevphen - Negative Campaigning” http://www.comedycentral.com/motherload/?lnk=v&ml_video=125364

Wednesday 1/16 – American news and the world

Sources:

- Doris Graber “Foreign Affairs Coverage”
- “Demise of the Foreign Correspondent” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/16/AR2007021601713.html>
- “US media can't cover the news if they don't cover the world” <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0207/p09s01-cojh.html>
- W Russell Neuman “Globalization and the New Media”

Thursday 1/17 – New media as a solution?

Sources:

- “Will New Media Save Democracy?” <http://www.commondreams.org/views07/0222-29.htm>
- Bill Moyers’ interview with Kathleen Hall Jamieson on “Politics 2.0” <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12072007/profile.html>
- Think Again: The New, New, New Journalism (By Eric Alterman) http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/12/think_again_new_journalism.html
- The Public Sphere and The Internet w/ host Karl Marx <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHixAB3Nko8&feature=related>

- Is the Internet the antidote to media consolidation? by Rick Karr
http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/blog/2007/11/is_the_internet_the_antidote_t_1.html
- Bill Moyers' on low power radio
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/08242007/profile2.html>

Monday 1/21 – Comedy as news and critique?

- Quiz 3

Sources:

- Geoffrey Baym “The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism” *Political Communication* 22:259-276 (2005)
- Moyers on the Yes Men
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07202007/profile.html>
- Yes Men web site <http://www.theyesmen.org/>
- Jon Stewart interview “What's so funny about the media's cozy relationship with Washington today?” (view at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/archives/index.html>)
- Jon Stewart on Crossfire watch at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFQFB5YpDZE>
- Watch some Bill Maher at <http://www.hbo.com/billmaher/video/>

Tuesday 1/22 – Media reform?

- Wrap-up
- Submit final assignment

Sources:

- <http://www.freepress.net/guide/>
- http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2534&Itemid=141

Requirements

- Participate in online discussion forum – 25%
- Three quizzes – 30%
- Homework assignments – 15%
- Final (essay format) – 30%

Academic honesty

The University of Maryland, College Park operates according to a Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, go to <http://www.shc.umd.edu>

“Classroom” policy

Although and because we will not meet each other in person, all participants in this seminar should treat each other with respect. Every opinion is valuable and should be discussed in a

non-aggressive and non-offensive manner. If you feel there is a problem with the atmosphere in the online classroom, please talk to me.

Special needs

If you have a disability or other problem I can help you with, let me know. If you need special accommodations due to what is for you a religious holiday, we can make arrangements. You must tell me in advance.