

MEDIA AND POLITICS

POS 4931

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How powerful is the American media and what forms does its power take? How has the media evolved over time? How do newspapers, TV, talk radio, and the Internet influence the political opinions and political behavior of citizens and the actions of the government? Is the media biased in a liberal or a conservative direction? How does the media cover political institutions, campaigns, domestic politics, and foreign policy? How do journalists write about the president, Congress, the Supreme Court, and American military interventions in places like Afghanistan and Iraq? Why is the media criticized for the way it covers politics, and what might be done differently?

This course aims to address these questions. The focus of the course is on the mainstream media (e.g. the New York Times, ABC News, NBC News, CBS News), but attention will also be paid to newer and non-mainstream forms of media such as talk radio, political comedy shows, and “soft news”. Roughly the first half of the course will focus on media coverage of domestic politics. The second half will focus on the media and foreign policy, particularly with regard to coverage of war. Films, and possibly outside speakers, will supplement course readings.

Required Texts: on sale at UF bookstores

1. Doris Graber, ed., Media Power in Politics, 6th edition, CQ Press: 2010
2. Bernard Goldberg, Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How The Media Distort the News, Perennial Publishers: 2003
3. Robert Entman, Projections of Power, University of Chicago, 2004
4. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent, Pantheon Books, 2002

There is also a coursepack containing required readings that are not in the required texts. This will be available for purchase at Bookit, 1250 West University Avenue (ph 371-9588).

The assignments for the course include two writing assignments, one quiz and one exam.

The first written assignment, on media bias, is due on Feb 16. The second, on media coverage of foreign affairs, is due on April 19 (the last day of class). Each paper should be approximately 10 pages long. I will not accept email versions of your paper. You must hand in a hard copy. Details on the topics and an explanation of how to write the papers will be emailed to the class list serve.

The quiz will be a combination of multiple choice/true-false questions and one short essay. The exam will be all multiple choice/true-false, with no essays. A study guide will be emailed to the class list serve roughly 2 weeks before the quiz and the exam.

To write each paper, you will need to do the course readings for a particular topic and also read at least three newspaper articles. The aim of the papers is two-fold: 1) to show that you understand the academic literature on a particular topic--such as media bias--and 2) to apply the literature to actual media coverage. Thus we will be not only studying what scholars say about the media, but also looking for ourselves to evaluate what the media says about politics.

The breakdown of points for the course is:

Papers (2, worth 28 points each)	=	56%	=	56 points
Quiz	=	12%	=	12 points
Exam	=	22%	=	22 points
Attendance	=	10%	=	10 points

GRADES:

A 90	B 80-84.1	C 69.7-73.8	D 60-64.1
A- 86.6-89.9	B- 77-79.9	C- 66.7-69.8	D- 57-59.9
B+ 84.2-86.5	C+ 73.9-76.9	D+ 64.2-66.6	E Below 57

In writing the essays, you should pay attention both to the content of the paper--the points you are making, the evidence you use--and to spelling, grammar, and punctuation. When writing papers, make sure to use the spell-check function on your computer and PROOFREAD the entire document. Spell-checking alone will not catch all mistakes, e.g. "their" instead of "there", "to" instead of "too". These will not be identified as wrong because they are words spelled properly but misused. If you are unsure about decisions such as whether and how to use an apostrophe, colon, or semi-colon, there are numerous sources available, e.g. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers or Student's Guide for Writing College Papers (I recommend buying one of these for your personal library while at UF). Papers that contain numerous spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors will receive a lower grade than they would have otherwise. Late

papers will be penalized unless the student has a valid reason for handing a given paper in after the deadline. Medical and other excuses will require documentation.

You should come to class having done the readings and be prepared to discuss what you think of them. Are the arguments compelling? Or are they not convincing? What is missing from the authors' accounts, if anything? What else might they consider? The success of the class will depend on your willingness to engage the readings, to think about them critically, and to come ready to share your thoughts with your fellow students. The class will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. We will do some work in small groups in which students will discuss the course readings and what you found while writing your papers. The groups will present their conclusions to the class, but a "spokesperson" will be chosen by each group so nobody will be forced to do public speaking if you do not want to. However, I strongly encourage students to speak up all times – ask questions, make comments, share your reactions and ideas. This will make class more interesting for you and for everyone else.

Plagiarism (using someone else's ideas without assigning credit to the source) is a serious offense. Students must abide by the University of Florida's Student Code of Conduct. Cheating on exams and plagiarism violate the standards of the university and will be addressed seriously.

January 5

Introduction and Course Overview

January 7, 12, 14

History of the Media

Required Readings

By January 7: Read West (see below)

By January 12: Read Sabato and Patterson (see below)

By January 14: Read Streitmatter (see below)

*Darrell West reading, The Rise and Fall of the Media Establishment, pp. 8-23, 26-38, 42-55 (Item #1 in coursepack)

* Larry Sabato reading, Feeding Frenzy (Lanahan: 2000), pp. 18-31 (Item #2 in coursepack)

*Thomas E. Patterson reading, "Political Roles of the Journalist," in The Politics of News: The News of Politics, ed. Doris Graber, Denis McQuail and Pippa Norris (Congressional Quarterly Press, 1998), pp. 17-32 (Item #3 in coursepack)

*Rodger Streitmatter, Mightier Than The Sword (Westview Press, 2012), chapters 3, 4, and Ch. 11 up to p. 167 (To be emailed to class list serve)

January 19, 21

Agenda-setting, priming and framing: What influence does the media have on the public and on policy-makers?

Required Readings

By January 19: Read Iyengar and Kinder, Graber

By January 21: Read Neumann, Just and Crigler

* Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder, News That Matters (University of Chicago Press: 2010), pp. 16-33 (to be emailed to list serve)

*Graber, Media Power in Politics, Chs. 7, 10, required text

*W. Russell Neumann, Marion R. Just and Ann N. Crigler reading, Common Knowledge, pp. 60-77 (Item #4 in coursepack).

January 26: QUIZ ON ALL MATERIAL UP TO NOW

January 28, February 2, February 4

Media Bias: Is the media biased in a liberal way, a conservative way, a mix of both, or something else?

Required Readings

By January 28: Read Herman and Chomsky, Alterman

By February 2: Read Goldberg

By February 4: Read Kuypers and Niven TO NEXT PAGE

- *Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent, pp. 1-35, required text
- *Eric Alterman reading, What Liberal Media?, p. 14-44 (Items #5 and 6 in coursepack)
- TO NEXT PAGE
- *Bernard Goldberg, Bias, chs. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, required textbook
- *Jim Kuypers reading, Press Bias and Politics, pp.27-52, 119-46 (Items #7 and 8 in coursepack).
- *David Niven, "Bias in the News: Partisanship and Negativity in Media Coverage of Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton," International Journal of Press/Politics, July 2001, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 31-46 (available through UF library website)

February 9, 11

The Media and Political Institutions: How Does the Media Cover Domestic Politics and Policy?

Required Readings

By February 9: Read Rozell and Mayer

By February 11: Read Graber

* Rozell and Mayer, Media Power, Media Politics, chapters 1 and 2 (Item #7 in coursepack)

* Graber , Media Power in Politics, Chapters 20, 21, required text

FEBRUARY 16: Papers on bias due and class discussion of papers and what you found

February 18, 23

Media Coverage of Scandal: Beating a Dead Horse or Conveying Information the Public Needs To Know?

Required Readings

By Feb. 18: Read Kalb and Isikoff

By Feb. 23: Read Entman

*Kalb, "I Mean the Man is Just a Pervert," pp. 18-35 of One Scandalous Story (Item #8 in coursepack).

*Isikoff reading, pp. 260-275 of Uncovering Clinton (Item #9 in coursepack).

* Robert Entman, Scandal and Silence, two chapters (Item #10 in coursepack)

February 25, March 8 (Spring Break in between)

The Media and Elections: How Does the Media Cover Political Campaigns, and What's Wrong With This Coverage?

Required Readings

By Feb. 25: Read Graber and Farnsworth and Lichter

By March 8: Read Graber chapters 14, 13 TO NEXT PAGE

- *Graber required text: Chs 15, 18,
- * Farnsworth and Lichter reading, Nightly News Nightmare (Item #11 in coursepack).
- * Graber chapters 14, 13 (**read in that order**)

March 10, 15

New Media: The Internet, Blogs, Talk Radio and Other Non-Mainstream Media

Required Readings

By March 10; Read Streitmatter, Baumgartner and Morris

By March 15: Read Graber, Issues in Media

* Rodger Streitmatter, Mightier Than The Sword (Westview: 2012), reading on Rush Limbaugh (to be emailed to list serve)

*Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan Morris, “The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth,” American Politics Research, May 2006, 34: 341-367 (Available through UF library website)

* Graber, Media Power in Politics, Chapter 9, required text

*Issues in Media, Second Edition (CQ Press, 2010), reading on blogs, pp. 91-116 (to be emailed to list serve)

March 17 EXAM (on all material from 1/26 Quiz to now, EXCEPT for material on media bias, which will not be on the exam)

March 22, 24, 29

Media Coverage of Foreign Policy and War

Required Readings

By March 22: Read Herman and Chomsky, Entman

By March 24: Read Graber chapters 6 and 34

By March 29: Read Graber chapter 27, Haigh

*Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Chapter 2 and 3 of Manufacturing Consent, required text

*Robert Entman, Projections of Power, pp. 1-17 and Chapter 2, required text

* Graber, Media Power in Politics, Chapter 6 (amateur journalism), chapter 34 (censorship in war), chapter 27 (sanitization of war coverage), required text

*Michel M. Haigh, “A Comparison of Embedded and Nonembedded Print Coverage of the U.S. Invasion and Occupation of Iraq,” International Journal of Press and Politics, April 2006, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 139-153 (Available through UF Library Website)

March 31, April 5, 7

Case Studies of Military Endeavors Abroad: Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Libya, Iraq

Required Readings

By March 31: Herman and Chomsky chapter 5, Streitmatter

By April 5: Read Entman, chapter 3, 4

By April 7: Entman chapter 5

* Herman and Chomsky, Ch. 5, Required text

* Rodger Streitmatter, Mightier Than The Sword (Westview: 2012), reading on Vietnam (to be emailed to list serve)

Required Readings

Entman book, chapters 3-5, Required text

April 12, 14

Comparing News Coverage of War and Terrorism By Different Outlets:

Required Readings

By April 12: Read Aday et al. and Narasimhan

By April 14: Read Jasperson and Papacharissi

*Sean Aday, Steven Livingston, and Maeve Hebert, "Embedding the Truth: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Objectivity and Television Coverage of the Iraq War,"

The International Journal of Press/Politics, January 2005, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 3-21 (Available through UF Library Website) TO NEXT PAGE

* Ravi Narasimhan, "Looking beyond Flawed Journalism: How National Interests, Patriotism, and Cultural Values Shaped the Coverage of the Iraq War," The International Journal of Press and Politics, January 2005, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 45-62 N

*Amy E. Jasperson and Mansour O. El-Kikhia, "CNN and al Jazeera's Media Coverage of America's War in Afghanistan," in Pippa Norris et al., Framing Terrorism (Routledge, 2003), pp. 113-132 (Coursepack)

*Graber, required text, Ch 23

*Zizi Papacharissi and Maria de Fatima Oliveira, News Frames Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis of Frames Employed in Terrorism Coverage in U.S. and U.K. Newspapers, The International Journal of Press/Politics, January 2008, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 52-74 (Available through UF Library Website)

APRIL 19: SECOND PAPER DUE AND DISCUSS PAPERS IN CLASS