

MC 7004: News Media & Governance

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Fall 2024

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Office Hours: T 3 - 5 pm Class Hours: M 1:30 - 4:20 pm
Office: Hodges 255 Classroom: Hodges 225

Overview

The goal of this class is to examine interactions between media, politics, and citizens. We will take an in-depth look at the role of the media in the political process and its effects on the behavior of politicians and the public. We will put American media in perspective, investigate the role of the market, and explore the symbiotic relationship between media and politicians. We will take into consideration both classic works in political communication and cutting-edge research. We will also emphasize the importance of appropriate methods and approaches to understanding media politics; this skill set benefits students regardless of your chosen profession.

Readings

For each week's readings, you should be prepared to discuss the following questions in class:

1. In your view, what are some of the major *theoretical* perspectives that structure research in a given area, what are their major strengths and weaknesses, and how do they compare with other perspectives you're familiar with (encountered in the course or elsewhere)?
2. In your view, what do you see as some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the *methods* used to investigate the subject? What methodologies, broadly conceived (e.g., basic issues of design, measurement, etc.) do you feel are most appropriate, given the subject of inquiry, and to what degree do you think the substantive conclusions drawn are dependent on the particular methods employed?
3. Do the authors engage with each other? Is this engagement fruitful for furthering the field? Would we learn more as scholars by more study in this area? What do we still not know?
4. What are the major *implications* of the findings for democratic theory and public policy? What relevance do the studies have for *your interests*? What does the study say about the way in which the American political system operates in practice – does the system live up to its billing as a democracy? According to what expectations and what definition of democracy?

5. What are the implications for practitioners in polling, campaigns, and media?
6. How can this research be *improved*, in your view? What theories, methods and substantive foci deserve more attention in future research?

Evaluation

Final grades in this course are based on your success in 8 areas for a total of 175 points.

1. **Participation (30):** We have 15 classes, worth 2 participation points each (You get two free points for the Labor Day holiday). Each day (except the first day), you will receive the first point for attending, and the second point you will earn by actively engaging in class discussion. This participation should demonstrate that you have read and analyzed the readings prior to class. Your participation should be intelligent, informed, and frequent. If it becomes apparent that many in class have not read, I will administer a pop quiz which will take the place of participation points. It is in everyone's best interest to be prepared and thus, avoid quizzes!
2. **Discussion leading (30):** Two times over the course of the semester, you will help to lead the discussion; each discussion leading is worth 15 points. You will lead the week's discussion starting with an introduction to the week's readings that provides a concise summary of key findings and questions and *raise questions for discussion* (see the list of questions above as a guide). You should focus on the key issues or debates and follow those through several pieces; this requires summary and organization analysis. It is not required, but I encourage you to prepare a handout for the class to facilitate discussion. We will coordinate discussion leading during the first two weeks of class. On weeks where there is more than one discussant it should be clear there is coordination and that all discussants contributed substantively to the discussion. Do not take up the whole class with your introduction. Send me your discussion plan one week before the discussion day. See the rubric on Moodle for guidelines.
3. **Research paper outline speed-dating (5):** You will discuss your research idea with a "speed-dating" partner. Each dyad will receive about 12 minutes, split between both papers, to give feedback before rotating to a new partner. If I hear and see that you participate in a thoughtful, constructive manner you will receive these points. **Due Sept 9 in class**
4. **Research paper outline (20):** Submit a detailed paper outline including the research question, tentative theory and hypotheses, a sketch of relevant literature, possible variables and methodological approach, a description of data, and at least 10 formatted citations. This can be a numbered outline or a similar format. **Due Sept 23 before class**
5. **Research paper outline peer review (15):** I will assign you peer review partners. Following the instructions for literature peer review on Moodle, you will write up feedback for your partner and exchange it in class, where we will discuss it further. Also in class, I will review this feedback for completion. **Due Sept 30 before class**
6. **Research paper midway report (5):** A 1-page report summarizing what you have done and what else needs to be done.

7. **Final research paper (50):** A 15-page double-spaced research paper (not including figures, appendices, tables and references) examining a topic that reveals, in some way, the connections of media strategies and governing strategies. My preference is that the paper lay out a research design to test some proposition you develop and actually test hypotheses using data; this may be data you have gathered or existing data. In either case, this paper should explore the ideas and hypotheses of our readings and extend them to new situations and cases. Students should view this paper as a preliminary draft of a conference paper, thesis, or dissertation chapter. This paper should correspond to the paper outline submitted earlier in the course. **Due Dec 11 at 11:59 pm**
8. **Class Presentation (20):** We will devote the last class to presentations on the research you have done for your research paper. This presentation should be styled after an academic conference paper presentation lasting no more than 15 minutes. See the rubric on Moodle for guidelines.

Grading Scale

University policy is to utilize a plus/minus grading scale. Below is the 10-point +/- grading scale I will use for this class.

96.5 and above	A+
93.50 – 96.49	A
90.00–93.49	A-
86.50–89.99	B+
83.50–86.49	B
80.00–83.49	B-
76.50–79.99	C+
73.50–76.49	C
70.00–73.49	C-
69.99 and below*	F
*there are no D grades in grad. courses	

Course Outline

Week 01, 08/26 - 08/30: Course intro

Required Readings: Syllabus

To-do: sign up to be discussion leaders

Week 02, 09/02 - 09/06: Labor Day holiday, no class

To-do: sign up to be discussion leaders

Week 03, 09/09 - 09/13: Economic Theories of News: Part 1

Required Readings:

1. Albarran, A. B. (2010). *The media economy*. Routledge. Chapter 3

2. Hamilton, J. (2004). *All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information into News*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1
3. Sparrow, B. H. (2006). A Research Agenda for an Institutional Media. *Political Communication*, 23(2), 145–157.
4. Schudson, M. (2002). The news media as political institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5(1), 249-269.

Week 04, 09/16 - 09/20: Economic Theories of News: Part 2

Required Readings:

1. Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2010). What drives media slant? Evidence from U.S. daily newspapers. *Econometrica*, 78(1), 35-71.
2. Munger, K. (2020). All the news that's fit to click: The economics of clickbait media. *Political Communication*, 37(3), 376-397.
3. Zhou, X., & Zafarani, R. (2020). A survey of fake news: Fundamental theories, detection methods, and opportunities. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 53(5), Article 109.
4. Patterson, T. E. (2003). The search for a standard: Markets and media. *Political Communication*, 20(2), 139-143.

Week 05, 09/23 - 09/27: Surveillance Capitalism

Required Readings: Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

Week 06, 09/30 - 10/04: News media agenda setting

Required Readings:

1. Miller, J. M., & Krosnick, J. A. (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), 295–309
2. King, G., Schneer, B., & White, A. (2017). How the news media activate public expression and influence national agendas. *Science*, 358(6364), 776-780.
3. Barbera, P., Casas, A., Nagler, J., Egan, P. J., Bonneau, R., Jost, J. T., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). Who leads? Who follows? Measuring issue attention and agenda setting by legislators and the mass public using social media data. *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), 883-901.
4. Stern, S., Livan, G., & Smith, R. E. (2020). A network perspective on intermedia agenda-setting. *Applied Network Science*, 5, 1-22.

Week 07, 10/07 - 10/11: How communication and media shape public perception and understanding

Required Readings:

1. Arnold-Forster, T. (2023). Walter Lippmann and Public Opinion. *American Journalism*, 40(1), 51–79.
2. Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 103-126.
3. Cinelli, M., De Francisci Morales, G., Galeazzi, A., Quattrociocchi, W., & Starnini, M. (2021). The echo chamber effect on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(9), e2023301118.
4. Kleinberg, M. S., & Lau, R. R. (2019). The importance of political knowledge for effective citizenship: differences between the broadcast and internet generations. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 83(2), 338-362.

Week 08, 10/14 - 10/18: How communication and media shape the functionality of the society

Required Readings:

1. Shapiro, R. Y. (1998). Public opinion, elites, and democracy. *Critical Review*, 12(4), 501–528.
2. Arnold, R. D. (2004). *Congress, the press, and political accountability*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.
3. Grossman, E. (2022). Media and policy making in the digital age. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 25(1), 443-461.
4. Lorenz-Spreen, P., Oswald, L., Lewandowsky, S., & Hertwig, R. (2023). A systematic review of worldwide causal and correlational evidence on digital media and democracy. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7(1), 74-101.

Week 09, 10/21 - 10/25: Campaigns: Part 1

Required Readings:

1. Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2018). The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, 112(1), 148-166.
2. Lenz, G. S. (2009). Learning and opinion change, not priming: Reconsidering the priming hypothesis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 821-837.
3. Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., & White, I. K. (2002). Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, 96(1), 75-90.
4. Broockman, D. E. (2014). Distorted communication, unequal representation: constituents communicate less to representatives not of their race. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 307-321.

Week 10, 10/28 - 11/01: Campaigns: Part 2

Required Readings:

1. Stubager, R. (2018). What is issue ownership and how should we measure it? *Political Behavior*, 40(2), 345-370.
2. Nai, A. (2020). Going negative, worldwide: Towards a general understanding of determinants and targets of negative campaigning. *Government and Opposition*, 55(3), 430-455.
3. Galasso, V., Nannicini, T., & Nunnari, S. (2023). Positive spillovers from negative campaigning. *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(1), 5-21.
4. Milfeld, T., Flint, D. J., & Zablah, A. R. (2024). Riding the wave: How and when public issue salience impacts corporate social responsibility advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 53(1), 148-159.

Week 11, 11/04 - 11/08: Propaganda: Part 1

Required Readings: Stanley, J. (2015). *How propaganda works*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 2-5.

Week 12, 11/11 - 11/15: Propaganda: Part 2

1. King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 326-343.
2. Huang, H. (2015). Propaganda as signaling. *Comparative Politics*, 47(4), 419-444.
3. Lu, Y., & Pan, J. (2021). Capturing clicks: How the Chinese government uses clickbait to compete for visibility. *Political Communication*, 38(1-2), 23-54.
4. Mattingly, D. C., & Yao, E. (2022). How soft propaganda persuades. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(9), 1569-1594.

Week 13, 11/18 - 11/22: Content moderation

1. Myers West, S. (2018). Censored, suspended, shadowbanned: User interpretations of content moderation on social media platforms. *New Media & Society*, 20(11), 4366-4383.
2. Gillespie, T. (2020). Content moderation, AI, and the question of scale. *Big Data & Society*, 7(2), 2053951720943234.
3. Robert, S. (2019). *Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media*. Yale University Press. Chapter 2
4. Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023). Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts. *Science Advances*, 9(44), eadg6799.

Week 14, 11/25 - 11/29: Disinformation & Algorithmic Regulation

1. Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*, 5(1), eaau4586.
2. Bennett, W., & Livingston, S. (2020). The disinformation age. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 and 8
3. White, J. M., & Lidskog, R. (2022). Ignorance and the regulation of artificial intelligence. *Journal of Risk Research*, 25(4), 488-500.
4. Yeung, K., & Lodge, M. (2019). Algorithmic regulation: An introduction. In K. Yeung & M. Lodge (Eds.), *Algorithmic regulation*. Oxford University Press. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3483693>

Week 15, 12/02 - 12/06: Research Presentation**Class Policies****Filming & Recording**

You may not film or record this class without permission.

Office Hours & Availability

If you do not understand any material covered in class please do not hesitate to come to my office hours. Also feel free to ask questions during the lecture. Class participation is encouraged. The best way to get a hold of me is either during office hours or via email. When you email me treat it like formal correspondence. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours if received during standard business hours during the week. Expect responses in 48-72 hours for emails received on holidays or over the weekend. I will not discuss grades via email. Come see me during my office hours or before/after class if you need to discuss grades.

Moodle

I will use Moodle to post readings, supplementary material, and to sometimes make announcements. Please visit the course website on a regular basis.

Class Attendance and Hours Outside of Class

Attendance and participation are integral to your class success. Each class will build on preceding class lectures, so it is very important you attend each class. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get notes from a peer. As a general policy, for each hour you are in class, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours preparing for the next class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend around six hours outside of class each week reading or writing assignments for the class.

Late Assignments

late assignments will be accepted without prior communication.

Make-up Policy

Missing an exam or an assignment will result in a zero grade except under extraordinary circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances, for example, illness or medical emergencies, must be either university-approved or verified in other ways (e.g. a doctor's note indicating grave illness, not a routine check-up). In such cases, I have two expectations. First, the student will contact me as soon as physically able via email to alert me regarding the emergency. This will ideally be before the student misses the deadline. Second, students must make arrangements as soon as possible to both provide documentation of the excusable absence and reschedule the assignment or exam. I reserve the right to make make-up exams or assignments different from the original.

Laptops

There are some students that use their laptops in class effectively. There are many more that use their laptops as a means to pay partial attention. Inappropriate use of laptops in class is not just ill-advised, but it is also disruptive, distracting, and disrespectful. Use of a laptop in class is a privilege, not a right. If you abuse this privilege I will assign you a 0 for participation that day, and in some cases, you may be asked to leave. If a preponderance of students abuse this privilege I will ban laptops.

LSU Student Code of Conduct

The LSU student code of conduct explains student rights and what is expected of student behavior. Students are expected to understand this code as described on the [Code of Conduct page](#). Any violations of the LSU student code will be duly reported to the Dean of Students.

Disabilities

The University is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by the University. To this end, Louisiana State University will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course, you must present a letter to me from Disability Services in 124 Johnston Hall, indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

Prohibited Use of Generative AI

As a partner in your learning, it is important to both of us that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of your work and understanding. The introduction of artificial intelligence options to complete academic work jeopardizes my ability to evaluate your understanding of our course content and robs you of the ability to master the subject matter. Therefore, the use of generative AI programs for the purpose of completing course work is prohibited. This includes,

but is not limited to, using AI-generated essays, reports, code, or any other submissions as a substitute for your own original work.

Suspicious of the use of AI programs in academic work will be reported to Student Advocacy Accountability for review under the Code of Student Conduct and may result in impacts to your assignment and/or course grades.

Academic Success

The primary ingredients of your academic success are attending class, managing your time efficiently, taking good notes, and developing good critical thinking and communication abilities. LSU has a number of excellent resources that will assist you in developing these skills. The place to begin is the **Center for Academic Success** (CAS). The CAS offers guidance on what learning strategies are best suited to your talents, tutoring in the basic subjects, and workshops on a variety of topics, from note-taking to time management. **Communication Across the Curriculum** assist students in developing the communication skills necessary for academic and professional success. Finally, with respect to professional success, the **LSU Olinda Career Center** can assist you in choosing a major and a profession that best suits your talents and passions and help you develop a four-year career plan to ensure success when you graduate from LSU.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement

We believe diversity, equity, and inclusion enrich the educational experience of our students, faculty, and staff, and are necessary to prepare all people to thrive personally and professionally in a global society. Therefore, LSU is firmly committed to an environment that affords respect to all members of our community. We will work to eliminate barriers that any members of our community experience.

To make LSU a place where that can happen, we must recognize and reflect on the inglorious aspects of our history. We now acknowledge the need to confront the ways racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, LGBTQ+ phobia, intolerance based on religion or on national origin, and all forms of bias and exploitation have shaped our everyday lives.

We accept personal and professional responsibility to eliminate bias and oppression wherever they are found. We understand our obligation to speak up when we see bias whether it be in our teaching, study, or daily work. Our community will educate themselves proactively and continuously about how to intervene and bring bias to the attention of others with commitment and compassion.

We will hold ourselves accountable for our actions and inactions, and for maintaining intentional, measurable, and meaningful efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, including through ongoing evaluation of our policies, practices, and procedures.

Nondiscrimination, Sexual Harassment, & Title IX

LSU provides equal opportunity for all qualified persons in admission to, participation in, or employment in the programs and activities which the university operates without regard to race, creed, color, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran's status. LSU has implemented a

procedure to address complaints for those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment in violation of this policy. Please know that your instructors are here to support you and listen to your experience. We also want you to know that we are mandatory reporters and must report what we know to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. All LSU employees, with few exceptions, are required to report instances of sex- or gender-based harassment and discrimination, including sexual misconduct and power-based violence (e.g., sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, retaliation, etc.) for which they may not be the victim, but of which they are aware. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is the LSU office responsible for investigating complaints regarding any type of discrimination, sexual harassment, or power-based violence. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is located in 118 Himes Hall and the phone number is 225-578-9000. If you are aware of an individual who has been victimized, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX or file an online report by visiting [LSU's Title IX](#) website and clicking the **Report an Incident** box. If you have been assaulted, harassed, or a victim of violence, we encourage you to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX. Please reach out for help immediately. Some excellent resources available to Baton Rouge residents include:

- STAR (Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response; 24/7 hotline: 855-435-STAR (7827))
- IRIS Domestic Violence Center; 24/7 hotline: 800-541-9706
- The Lighthouse Program; 225-578-5718
- VIA LINK; 800-273-TALK (8255) [national line but answered from New Orleans]

National resources include:

- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network); 24/7 hotline: 800-656-4673
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center

For additional information, visit www.lsu.edu/civil-rights the **Office of Civil Rights & Title IX** and review **PM-73** (Prohibiting Power-based Violence, including Sex- and Gender-based Harassment and Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct).

LSU Collegiate Recovery Program

Louisiana State University is committed to being inclusive to students in recovery, and to assisting students who are exploring recovery resources. LSU's Collegiate Recovery Program is geared toward helping students remain in recovery while at LSU and seeks to advocate for students' recovery when applicable. If you have questions about LSU's Collegiate Recovery Program or available resources, please call 225-578-4826 or email asinge6@lsu.edu.

Wellbeing

Your sense of wellbeing is influenced by many parts of your life. The extent to which you feel happy, healthy and otherwise fulfilled matters to us at LSU. Should you need direction to address any number of problems you may have that is directly influencing your sense of wellbeing, please

visit lsu.edu/lsucares or complete the [LSU wellbeing resources and support form](#) to inquire as to specific offices to address your concerns. Please note the form is for non-emergency matters. For those matters requiring immediate attention, call the LSU police at 225-578-3231 or LSU Cares at 225-578-4307. For free, confidential, 24/7 emotional support and crisis management, call or text The Phone at 225-924-5781 (LSU1) or the Lifeline at 988.

Remote Learning

In the event of a campus-wide closure, this course may transition to an alternative form of instruction. I will notify you by Moodle announcement as soon as possible of the format our course will take. For example, the class may be held via Zoom and recorded for those unable to attend, or I will provide a lesson online that you can do asynchronously, or we may cover content at a different pace or schedule. If the emergency closure impacts scheduled tests, I will make alternative arrangements as soon as possible. If alternative formats are not available due to widespread loss of power and/or internet or other extenuating circumstances, the University may schedule makeup days per [Policy Statement 117](#).

Grade Review

I am willing to review a written request to review a grade submitted no earlier than one-week following receipt of the grade, and no later than 4 weeks after receipt of the grade. If such a request is made, students must be prepared that a review may result in either a lower or higher grade.