

Political Science 430: Political Communication
Fall 2013
Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15
Avery 118

Instructor: Kristen Deppe

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Office: 542 Oldfather Hall

Office Hour:

Coffee Hour: Wed. 9:00 to 10:00am at the Coffee House (1324 P St)

Office Hour: Thurs. 12noon – 1pm

There is no question that we are in a time of great change in how we communicate, and this is even truer when it comes to political discourse. Today there is Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Internet news sites, emails, 24-hour cable news channels, radio news programs... and many of these forms of communication didn't exist 50 (and some even 10) years ago. Both consuming and creating political news has changed. In this course we will examine both sides of the communication process, the citizens and how they are affected by what political information they receive (or don't) and both old and new media as the institution that creates a public sphere for political discussion.

The goal of the course is to become familiar with political science research that answers questions about individuals exposed to political communication, if it is successful – how and why it is or not, and what the effects the communication environment has on citizens and government. Emphasis is placed on critically analyzing the research and communicating ideas about it through written arguments, class discussions, and creating a research paper answering a question related to political communication.

Required Texts:

Prior, Marcus. 2007. *Post Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*.

Iyengar, Shanto. 2011. *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*.

All other readings will be provided on BlackBoard. The readings may change throughout the semester and if this happens I will let you know and update the syllabus on BlackBoard.

Grading

<u>Course Requirement</u>	<u>Points</u>
Participation/Attendance	100
Weekly Presentation	100 (50 each)
Reaction Papers (2)	100 (50 each)
Final Paper	125
Final Paper Presentation	25
Final Exam	50
	500

Grading Scale:

485-500 A+	435-449 B+	385-399 C+	335-349 D+	Below
465-484 A	415-434 B	365-384 C	315-334 D	300 =
450-464 A-	400-414 B-	350-364 C-	300-314 D-	F

Participation & Attendance:

Everyone is expected to be at all classes (attendance will be taken) and participate. In order to participate you must come prepared to class everyday by reading the material. In addition, you need to keep up with the daily news from a major newspaper (such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*). To ensure that people are keeping up with the reading quizzes will periodically occur. Sometimes I will supply the questions and sometimes you will supply the questions for the quizzes. The grades for these will make up part of your participation grade.

As my responsibility as the instructor, I will offer a civil, respectful environment for everybody to practice presenting and analyzing policy arguments. Everyone should make at least one comment during class. To ease into participation make sure that you are keeping informed on the issues through various news outlets. In addition, you can demonstrate engagement with the class by contacting me about the topics in the class, such as sending relevant news stories, or coming to coffee or office hours. *Remember that it is the quality of participation in the discussion is important, not quantity.*

Due to the fairly controversial nature of the politics that we will cover, all discussions must maintain a level of respect for their fellow students, the instructor, and all guest speakers. I will not tolerate anything less than professionalism in the classroom. Unsubstantiated statements of opinion will not be welcome and any *ad hominem* attacks will result in dismissal of the classroom.

Weekly Presentations:

The best way to learn is by teaching so you will have to sign up for two class periods where you and at least one other classmate will present to the group the readings for the week. There are three aspects to the presentation: 1) Brief synopsis of the readings; 2) Examples of the concept; and, 3) Class Discussion. You will begin by giving a brief description of the reading, making sure to pull out what the authors of the work were asking, how they answered the question, and what they found. Following the brief description you need to demonstrate the concept using current events found in any form of political communication that is necessary. Last you need to lead a class discussion on the readings. **You must turn in a copy of what you are going to say and 5 discussion questions by 5 pm the day before your presentation.**

Because these are done as a group and unfortunately sometimes people do not contribute as much to others you must provide a peer review for your partner and these will go into the Presentation Grade. On the day of the presentation send me an email rating your partner's contribution on a scale of 1 (being poor) to 10 (being the best partner ever) and provide a short paragraph explaining what the partner did and why you gave them the score you did.

Reaction Papers:

You will pick two weeks during the semester to write a reaction paper on the topic for that week. Doing this will allow you to interact more with the readings than just normal preparation for

class. It is completely up to you which weeks you choose. The papers should be 2-3 pages long (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 point font). The paper needs to quickly summarize what the readings discussed in one short paragraph. The main body of the paper is what you thought of the research including how they answered the question(s) being asked, what conclusions were made, if the argument was logical, and if you think they measured the concept correctly. These need to be your own ideas on the reading. You must critically analyze the reading and suggest how else the concept could be studied or how you would do it differently.

The papers are due by Monday at 5pm BEFORE we discuss the readings in class.

Final Paper:

The main objective of the class is to come out of it with your own piece of research addressing a topic in political communication. You will have to come up with a research question, review of the literature that relates to your question, provide data and analysis that answers your question, and a conclusion, summarizing what you find. The final product will be a 12 – 15 page research project that resembles an academic paper like the ones we will read throughout the semester.

There will be deadlines throughout the semester to make sure that you are on track to finish the paper. Details on the final paper will be provided.

Final Paper Presentation:

During the last week of class you will be required to present your paper to the class. This will be a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation where you will show us what you were asking, what others have said about your topic, and what you found. More detail will be provided later in the semester.

Final Exam:

You will be given the questions to the take-home final exam on Tuesday, December 10th and you must turn in your exam by Tuesday, December 17th at 3pm. The exam will consist of 2 out of 4 short answer questions and 1 out of 3 essay questions. The exam will test whether you kept up with the readings and thought about them. The questions will require you to integrate material from the course, analyze what we have discussed, and provide your own opinion on how the readings address issues in political communication.

Other Course Policies:

Be respectful of everybody in the classroom. I will not tolerate anybody who is not courteous of other people's opinions. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion on the issues that will be discussed and you are welcome to disagree, however do so by attacking the logic and facts behind the position, not the person.

Have a sense of humor!

Cell Phones and Computers. No cell phones in class, period. Computer privileges TBD.

Emailing. Please email me with any questions or concerns you might have. However, please do so with correct etiquette. This means that all emails should have a proper greeting, use complete

words and sentences, and conclude with a signature and your name. How you communicate in email impacts how others perceive your professionalism. If I get an email that does not have a greeting, body, and/or signature, I will send it back requesting that you properly format the message before I will read it or any attachment on it.

Office/Coffee Hours. I strongly encourage you to come see me during office and coffee hours or make an appointment if these times do not work for you. The semester goes by quickly so it is imperative that any problems you are having get addressed as soon as possible.

Academic Dishonesty. I take academic dishonesty seriously. *Anyone found guilty of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism will, at a minimum, receive an F for this course.* Fabrication means altering information, falsification means inventing information. Plagiarism means presenting someone else's work as your own, either by not giving proper acknowledgement of the source or by presenting in whole or in part any work that has been prepared by or copied from another person.

Incompletes and Late Papers. I will not give course incompletes except in the most extreme and documented circumstances. Papers that are not turned in on time will be docked at the rate of a full letter grade per week, beginning immediately. If you turn in a paper any time between one minute and one week later it will be a letter grade lower.

Services for Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Course Schedule and Readings

The schedule and readings are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. I will announce on BlackBoard and/or through email if the readings change.

	Schedule and readings	What's Due
Week 1	Welcome to Class	
	8/27 Introduction to class	
	8/29 Intro to Communication Iyengar Ch1; Bennet and Iyengar	
Week 2	Methods in Communication	
	9/3 NO CLASS	
	9/5 Methods in Communication: Experiments Experimental Handbook Ch. 1 and 14	
Week 3		
	9/10 Methods in Communication: Content Analysis Stroud and Higgins	
	9/13 Data Analysis No Reading	
Week 4	Citizens, the Enviro, and Classic Effects	
	9/17 Delli Carpini and Keeter Iyengar Ch 2 and 3	Research Question
	9/19 McCombs and Shaw Krosnick and Kinder	
Week 5	Framing Effects	
	9/24 Kahneman and Tversky Nelson, Oxley and Clawson	
	9/26 Druckman Chong and Druckman	
Week 6	Information Processing	
	10/1 Kuklinski et al. Tabor	Lit Review
	10/3 Lodge and Tabor TBA	
Week 7	Emotion and Opinion Change	
	10/8 Miller Brader	
	10/10 Prior Ch 1 and 2	
	Bias	
Week 8	10/15 Turner Groseclose	
	10/17 Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk Iyengar and Hahn	Methods
Week 9		
	10/22 NO CLASS (Fall Break)	

10/24 In Class Movie

Week 10		News	
	10/29	Prior Ch 3 and 4	
	10/31	Bennet, Lawrence and Livingston Iyengar Ch 3	

Week 11		Content and Source Coverage	
	11/5	I & M Ch 4 Patterson	
	11/7	Hayes and Guardino	Draft

Week 12		Campaigns	
	11/12	Iyengar Ch 6 and 9 Graber	
	11/14	Hayes TBA	

Week 13		Infotainment	
	11/19	Mutz and Reeves Baum	
	11/21	Xenos Cao	

Week 14		Digital Media	
	11/26	Iyengar Ch 5 Boulianne	
	11/28	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)	

Week 15		Paper Presentations	
	12/3		
	12/5		Final Paper

Week 16		Policy and Consequences	
	12/10	Barabas and Jerit Winning with words	Final Exam Passed Out
	12/12	Iyengar Ch 11; Prior Ch 8	

Final	12/17	Final Exam Due	
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