

**Political Science 471B**  
**Proseminar in Comparative Politics: Media and Politics around the World**  
**California State University, Northridge**

Spring, 2003  
Wednesday 2:00-4:45pm, SH 104  
Course #94171

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**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to explore the role of print and electronic media in politics around the world. In doing so, we will assess media impacts on government, policy making, election campaigning, political movements, and the prospects for informed political deliberation. Special attention will be paid to the portrayal of political issues, candidates and political themes in popular culture, including film, television, radio, music, the internet, billboards, bumper-stickers, and slogans.

This course is divided into three sections. In the first section, we will analyze the relationship between media and politics in general. We will do so primarily (but not exclusively) by reference to the United States. We will discuss what media is, what is expected of the media in democratic and authoritarian societies, how the media can be manipulated by political leaders and interest groups. Analyses will be done both on the influence the media has on governance as well as on public opinion among mass publics. Strategies used by governments to influence the media, such as coercion, *agents provocateur*, timed press releases, leaks and strategic public diplomacy will be analyzed. Additionally, strategies used by popular movements, international organizations and interest groups to influence policy and build movements through the media will be addressed. Mainstream as well as non-mainstream media outlets will be analyzed.

In the second section of this course we will analyze the growing transnational media conglomerates and the political institutions designed to govern them. Special attention will be paid to different international political structures, media laws, and the role of wire services and the internet internationally. Furthermore, we will discuss the economic integration of media oligopolies. The influence of the media on international organizations will also be addressed. We will pay special attention to growing international media giants such as Reuters, Agence France-Presse, AP, UPI, CNN, Al-Jazeera, the Voice Of America, Star-TV, MTV, Disney, News Corp., Sony, and the BBC.

The last section of the course will be devoted to case studies of the interrelationship of media and politics in different countries around the world, including but not limited to: the United States, Mexico, England, France, Germany, Russia, Romania, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Australia, India, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Canada. Special attention will be paid to different constitutional and institutional political structures, as well as differing social and political cultures. Types of politics that will be addressed include mass movements, domestic economic and social policies, regime support, regime change (including *coups d'etat*), foreign policies and goals, international economic policies, environmental politics and human rights.



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Upon completion of this course, you should be able to understand many things about the interaction between the media and politics around the world:

- You will be able to describe how the media function as the “Fourth Branch of Government.”
- You will be able to understand how the media define, shape, reinforce, and transform peoples’ political ideas, economic ideologies, and policy preferences.
- You will be able to uncover examples and sources of media bias in the presentation of political issues, candidates, and ideologies.
- You will be able to describe how public officials, candidates, political organizations and interest groups use the mass media to communicate with the public.
- You will be able to describe how the media uses stories related to politicians and political issues to increase circulation and to boost ratings.
- You will be able to compare and contrast the different strategies by which citizens can influence the mass media.
- You will be able to identify and critique how feature films and television programs “construct” political identities and set the groundwork for social, political and economic interaction.
- You will become familiar with “alternative” forms of media and their impact on politics.
- You will be able to apply different theories that describe how people process information about politics and the effects of this processing on their attitudes, beliefs and behavior.
- You will understand how different media institutions have evolved over time and how their history has shaped their current operation and influence.
- You will be able to explain how commercial considerations affect the coverage and portrayal of politics in the news as well as television programming and print content.
- You will understand how the media and politics are interrelated in a number of different countries around the world.
- You will develop the analytic tools to critically assess the messages you encounter in the media.
- You will understand the ways in which you can take a more active part in learning and communicating about politics.

### **Required Texts**

- Chomsky, Noam. 2002. *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Seven Stories Press. ISBN# 1-58322-536-6. Paperback.
- Graber, Doris A. 2000. *Media Power in Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Congressional Quarterly. ISBN# 1-56802-416-9. Paperback.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Quentin Fiore. 2001. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. Gingko Press. ISBN# 1-58423-070-3. Paperback.
- Morris, Nancy and Silvio Waisbord. 2001. *Media and Globalization: Why the State Matters*. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN# 0-7425-1030-1. Paperback.
- Ó Siochrú, Seán, Bruce Girard and Amy Mahan. 2002. *Global Media Governance: A Beginner’s Guide*. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN# 0-7425-1566-4. Paperback.

You are required to read from the above texts as part of your coursework. All of the above listed books will be available for purchase in the Matador Bookstore. A copy of each book will be placed on reserve in the Oviatt Library Reserve Reading Room (Second Floor), so you need not necessarily purchase these books. In addition, handouts distributed in class will be required reading, and students are required to follow the interaction of media and politics in a national newspaper such as *The New York Times* or *The Los Angeles Times* (both are available for delivery with a student discount and are also available on-line). Students will also be required to follow at least two issues in an assigned country on a weekly basis. This research is to be done with respect to a news source of their choosing throughout the semester as part of their Media Monitoring Project.

## Course Requirements

There are four requirements for the course:

1. **Participation:** includes contributions to classroom discussion as well as attendance (do not be tardy or leave class early). In order to participate well in this class, you must pay close attention to assignments and deadlines (all of which are listed in this syllabus). You must complete all assigned readings prior to coming to class. Attendance is a very important aspect of this class — you will not receive the full benefit of this course if you are not in class to learn from your peers and to offer your own analyses. To get credit for attending class, you must show up within 10 minutes of the start of class. If you are not in class within the first 10 minutes, you will be marked absent for the day. You will also be marked absent if you leave class early. You will be permitted one unexcused absence. According to University policy, the following qualify as excused absences:

1. Illness or injury to the student
2. Death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like
3. Religious reasons (California Educational Code section 89320)
4. Jury duty or government obligation
5. University sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips, etc.)

Attending an athletic event as a fan or to support a friend or family member is not an excused absence. Do not schedule meetings, banquets, vacations, or work for other classes during our regular class meeting time. If you can not attend class on a regular basis due to your employment, please reconsider taking this class. Beyond your first unexcused absence, your participation grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for every time you are marked absent. For example, if you earned a participation grade of a B+ and had three unexcused absences, you will be penalized two-thirds of a letter grade, and your final participation would be a B-. Similarly, if you had six unexcused absences and you had earned an A- for your participation grade, you would be penalized for five-thirds of a letter grade, meaning that you would end up with a C for your final participation grade. Turn off all pagers, phones and other electronic devices prior to entering the classroom. If you have an electronic device that emits noise during class (even an audible “vibration”), you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent for that day — no excuses and no exceptions.

2. **Alternative Media Assignment:** There will be one short assignment which must be typed and double-spaced. An assignment sheet with specific guidelines will be distributed one week before the assignment is due. If you can not make it to the class in which the assignment sheets are distributed, make sure that a classmate gets a copy for you. A late assignment must be turned in directly to me (do not turn them into the office or slide them under my door). Late Assignments will be deducted one full letter grade for class period that they are late. Please do not email your work to me or show up to class with a diskette and attempt to explain why you have not yet printed your assignment. Always back-up your computer files in at least two places. It is your responsibility to keep track of due dates and to follow up on missed work. Telling the instructor that you “did not know” about a course requirement is not an acceptable excuse. Refer to this syllabus frequently. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any assistance. It is better to email me as I am on campus only two days per week.
3. **Examinations:** The examinations will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. There will be two midterm examinations and a final exam. Examinations will not be cumulative. Make-up exams are rarely given and only when a university-authorized excuse is provided. These excuses include illness and a death in the family only. You will not be excused from an exam simply because you missed the prior class. Any requests for a makeup exam must be made *before* the exam is given (call me). You will not be permitted to take a make-up exam if you do not request one before the exam is given. Make-up examinations will not include multiple choice questions. If you wear a

hat with a brim on the day of an examination, you will be asked to remove it. If you have a disability that warrants additional consideration for examinations, please inform me so that I can accommodate you.

4. **Media Monitoring Project and Country Profile:** The purpose of the project is to gain insight into how the media works and how issues are portrayed in a foreign country. As part of your coursework, you will be required to profile the relationship between the media and politics in a foreign country in a 15 minute presentation to the class (schedule of presentations will be determined in Week 3) and to follow two issues in a foreign media source over the course of the semester. The monitoring of the two issues is to begin Week 4 of class and end the Week 14. At the end of the semester you will be required to produce two news stories per week as evidence of your monitoring project, either as print or audio/video tape evidence. This evidence is to be turned in with a 5-7 page final paper that analyzes the portrayal of the two issues in terms of the analytical skills learned in the class (apply what you have learned). The paper will be due on the last day of instruction. The paper must:
- be typewritten in 12 point Times Roman font
  - be double spaced
  - have 1 inch margins on top, bottom, and both sides
  - include a title and cover page but not a cover (such as plastic, simply staple your paper)
  - include a bibliography page
  - done in the citation style of your choice (footnotes or parenthetical — be consistent)
  - include page numbers
  - include an introduction, body, and a conclusion that looks toward the future

Late papers must be turned in to the Political Science Department Office and date stamped. Late papers will be down-graded one full letter grade for every business day (Mon-Fri) that they are late (i.e. a B becomes a C if the paper is one day late). Plagiarism is a *very serious* offense, and you should be familiar with this university's policy and penalties for plagiarism: The CSUN catalogue defines plagiarism as intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in academic exercise (pp. 516-518). The Political Science Department does not tolerate plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind and will pursue plagiarism cases to the full extent allowed by CSUN rules, including expulsion from the university. At the minimum, based on the discretion of the instructor, students found guilty of plagiarism may receive an "F" in the course and their case may be referred to the appropriate university offices for further administrative action. Purchasing a paper constitutes plagiarism. I am familiar with all of the on-line term-paper sites and I *will* check your paper against those available on-line.

### **Grading**

Participation	10%
Alternative Media Assignment	10%
Examinations	60% (20% each)
Media Monitoring and Country Profile	20% (10% each)

A plus/minus system of grading will be used for all assignments, exams, and papers. A letter grade will be assigned for each of the above categories. The grade will be converted to grade points and weighted by the corresponding percentage (see above). Here is an example: Suppose Stephanie received a B- for Participation, an A- for her Alternative Media Assignment, a C+ for her first Midterm Exam, a B+ for her second Midterm Exam, a B for her Final Exam, and a B- for her Country Profile and a B+ for her Media Monitoring Project. Stephanie's final grade would be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Final Grade} &= (2.7 * .10) + (3.7 * .10) + (2.3 * .20) + (3.3 * .20) + (3.0 * .20) + (2.7 * .10) + (3.3 * .10) \\ \text{Final Grade} &= .27 + .37 + .46 + .66 + .60 + .27 + .33 \\ \text{Final Grade} &= 2.96, \text{ which is closest to } 3.0 \text{ grade points, which is equivalent to a B.} \end{aligned}$$

## Course Outline

### **Week 1 (1/29). Course Introduction and Political Socialization**

*“People only see what they are prepared to see.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*“Your world was made for you by someone above, but you choose evil ways instead of love. You made me master of the world where you exist. The soul I took from you was not even missed.” -Black Sabbath, from “Lord of this World,” c. 1971 Warner Brothers.*

*In-class Film: American Rock (Schoolhouse Rock)*

- ◆ Syllabus Distributed
- ◆ Political Socialization: Sources and Effects

### **Week 2 (2/5). Media Production Processes**

*Reading: McLuhan and Fiore, all.*

*Guest Lecturer and Presentation: Gabriela Cowperthwaite, Producer, Arcwelder Films Ltd.*

- ◆ What is Media?
- ◆ How Media is Made
- ◆ Sources of Funding
- ◆ Control of Content
- ◆ Sources and Access
- ◆ The Importance of Visuals and Narrative
- ◆ Documentary Film Distribution and Exhibition
- ◆ Documentary Films and Political Ideologies

### **Week 3 (2/12). The Roles of Media in Democracies and Authoritarian Regimes**

*“Glittering prizes and endless compromises shatter the illusion of integrity.” -Rush, from “Limelight,” c. 1981, Polygram.*

*Reading: Graber, pp. 7-43; 213-231.*

*Media Monitoring Project Countries Assigned*

- ◆ Redefinition of Media
- ◆ US Communications Policy
- ◆ 1996 Telecom Act
- ◆ Arbitron and Nielsen Ratings Systems
- ◆ Protections for the Media in the United States
- ◆ Additional Responsibilities for the Media in the United States
- ◆ Objective Journalism
- ◆ Advocacy Journalism
- ◆ Muckraking

### **Week 4 (2/19). Media Control I: Propaganda and Advertising**

*“The worst forms of tyranny, or certainly the most successful ones, are not those we rail against, but those that so insinuate themselves into the imagery of our consciousness and the fabric of our lives as not to be perceived as tyranny.” -Michael Parenti*

*Reading: Chomsky, all.*

*In-class Film: Triumph of the Will (clip)*

*In-Class Presentation: Examples of US and German Propaganda*

*Assignment: One paragraph explaining what media source you will monitor and how, including which two issues you will monitor. Does not need to be typed.*

- ◆ William Randolph Hearst
- ◆ Edward Bernays

- ◆ Leni Riefenstahl
- ◆ World War II Propaganda
- ◆ Anti-Communist Propaganda

**Week 5 (2/26). Media Control II: Advertising (cont'd) and Media Events, Media Effects Theories**

*“Faced with the choice between changing one’s mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof.” -Galbraith’s Law*

*“The failure to see the damage done by advertisements is the surest sign of substandard intelligence, or worse.” -H. G. Wells*

Reading: Graber, pp. 68-97; 112-125; 152-170.

*In-Class Presentation:* Examples of Subliminal Advertising Techniques, Political Commercials

- ◆ Advertising: Audience Targeting and Techniques
- ◆ Presidential Media Strategies: Going Public
- ◆ Campaign Ads
- ◆ The Influence of Attack Ads
- ◆ Candidates vs. The Press
- ◆ The Media and Campaign Issues
- ◆ The Media and Election Outcomes
- ◆ Media Bias?
- ◆ Issue Attention Cycle
- ◆ The Magic Bullet, Minimal Effects and Agenda Setting Theories
- ◆ Framing
- ◆ Metaphor
- ◆ Constructionism
- ◆ Media and Social Capital

**Week 6 (3/5). Midterm Exam First Half of Class, Culture Jamming**

*“We are living in a material world and I am a material girl.” - Madonna c. 1984 Warner Brothers.*

*“Fret for your figure and fret for your latté and fret for your hairpiece and fret for your lawsuit and fret for your Prozac and fret for your pilot and fret for your contract and fret for your car.” -Tool, from “Ænima,” c. 1996, BMG.*

*No Reading*

*In-class Film:* Culture Jam

- ◆ Hijacking Culture
- ◆ Fighting Consumerism and other Dominant Political Messages
- ◆ Non-traditional Media Techniques
- ◆ Bumper Stickers and Postcards
- ◆ Banners and Posters, especially Robbie Conal
- ◆ Billboards
- ◆ Newspapers and News Weeklies
- ◆ Art and Politics, especially Barbara Kruger
- ◆ Street Sign Correction

**Week 7 (3/12). Media Monopolies and Globalization**

Reading: Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan, pp. xi-31.

Bagdikian: The Media Monopoly (Handout)

*Alternative Media Assignment Due*

- ◆ Media Monopolies and Oligopolies
- ◆ 3 Major TV Networks

- ◆ Viacom and Clear Channel
- ◆ Low-Power Radio
- ◆ Cross Ownership and “Synergy”
- ◆ US Cultural Imperialism
- ◆ Transnational Media Giants
- ◆ Global Media Trends

**Week 8 (3/19). Frameworks for International Media Governance**

*Reading:* Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan, pp. 35-97.

- ◆ Anarchy as the Defining Characteristic of International Politics
- ◆ International Telecommunication Union
- ◆ WTO and IMF Regulations
- ◆ United Nations-related Organizations
- ◆ Influence of Non-governmental Actors
- ◆ The Supremacy of State Actors

**Week 9 (3/26). Case Studies of Transnational Media**

*Reading:* Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan, pp. 119-142;  
Graber, pp. 292-312.

- ◆ CNN
- ◆ BBC
- ◆ Disney
- ◆ Sony
- ◆ Star-TV
- ◆ Al-Jazeera
- ◆ Abu Dhabi
- ◆ Wire Services
- ◆ The Voice of America and Radio Sawa

**Week 10 (4/2). The Future of International Media Governance**

*Reading:* Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan, pp. 99-115; 143-180;  
Morris and Waisbord, 3-19.

- ◆ Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights
- ◆ Counter-terrorism
- ◆ Intelligence Agencies such as the CIA and NSA
- ◆ Satellite TV
- ◆ Streaming “Entertainment”
- ◆ The Internet

**Week 11 (4/9). Midterm Exam First Half of Class, Underground Activist Media**

*No Reading*

*In-class Film:* Guerilla News Network

- ◆ Guerilla Media Technology
- ◆ Guerilla Media Style
- ◆ Spokespersons
- ◆ Topics
- ◆ IndyMedia (Independent Media Center)
- ◆ AlterNet

## **4/16: Spring Break**

### **Week 12 (4/23). Media and Politics Around the World I: Europe**

*Reading:* Morris and Waisbord, 95-115;  
Graber, 204-210; 363-374; 385-393.

- ◆ England
- ◆ France
- ◆ Germany
- ◆ Russia
- ◆ Romania
- ◆ Turkey

### **Week 13 (4/30). Media and Politics Around the World II: Africa and the Middle East**

*Reading:* Morris and Waisbord, 37-54;  
Graber, 226-231; 304-312.

- ◆ South Africa
- ◆ Nigeria
- ◆ Israel
- ◆ Iran
- ◆ Saudi Arabia

### **Week 14 (5/7). Media and Politics Around the World III: Asia and Australia**

*Reading:* Morris and Waisbord, 21-33; 55-92.

- ◆ Australia
- ◆ India
- ◆ China
- ◆ South Korea
- ◆ Malaysia
- ◆ Japan

### **Week 15 (5/14). Media and Politics Around the World IV: North and South America**

*Reading:* Morris and Waisbord, 117-160.

*Monitoring Project Papers Due*

- ◆ Mexico
- ◆ Argentina
- ◆ Brazil
- ◆ Canada
- ◆ Conclusion: The Importance of the State in a Comparative Political Perspective

**Final Exam: Wednesday (5/21) 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm in our regular classroom.**