

Political Science 430S
Seminar in American Politics:
Media, Public Opinion, Campaigns and Elections
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Fall, 2003
CRN# 80594
MWF 2:00-2:50 pm
UCB 118

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Mon. and Wed. 3-5pm,
and by appointment.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore the interrelationship of four facets of American Politics: print and electronic media, public opinion, campaigns and elections. In doing so, we will assess the media's impact on government, policy making, election campaigning, and the prospects for democratic 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. Additional consideration will be given to the structural and institutional factors influencing elections in the United States. This is an "American Politics" class, and examples and analyses in class discussion will focus almost exclusively on the electoral system of the United States. However, students are invited to explore foreign electoral systems and politics in this course for purposes of class discussion. This course is classified as WI – a "writing intensive course," and accordingly, students will be expected to prepare several high-quality essays and research papers. Writing is an important aspect of this class, and students will receive much feedback regarding their writing. Students will also be given the opportunity to revise and improve their term paper.

Goals of the Course

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

- 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 Americans' 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 in the context of political campaigns.
- 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 understand the constitutional, legal, and economic issues and conflicts raised by the existence of a free press in a democratic, corporate-dominated, capitalist society.
- 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 become familiar with the occupational norms of journalism as a profession, and you will be able to explain how these norms shape the coverage of political news.
- You will develop the analytic tools to critically assess the messages you encounter in the media.
- You will understand why some people choose to vote and others do not and why the United States has a lower voter turnout than other industrial democracies.
- You will be able to compare and contrast different theories developed by political scientists to explain citizens' vote choices.
- You will understand how campaign messages are tailored to different segments of society.
- You will understand changes and trends in American election campaigns.
- You will be able to debate the major contemporary issues facing campaign and election reform.
- 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* 2nd ed. Seven Stories Press. ISBN# 1-58322-536-6. Paperback.

Graber, Doris A. 2002. *Mass Media and American Politics*, 6th ed. Congressional Quarterly. ISBN# 1-56802-635-8. Paperback.

Erikson, Robert, and Kent Tedin. 2003. *American Public Opinion: Its Origin, Contents and Impact, Update Edition*, 6th ed. Longman. ISBN# 0-321-12734-X. Paperback.

Maisel, L. Sandy. 2002. *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process* 3rd ed. (Post-Election Update). Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 0-7425-1627-X. 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 university bookstore. Additionally, one copy of each book will be placed on reserve in the Mookini Library, so you need not necessarily purchase them. In addition, handouts distributed in class will be required reading, and students are required to follow politics in an online national newspaper such as *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* or *The Washington Post*.

Student Responsibilities and Requirements

There are four requirements for this course:

- 1. Participation and Attendance Policy:** Participation includes the quality and frequency of individual students' contributions to classroom discussion as well as attendance. You are expected to attend every class session. Simply reading the texts is not a substitute for classroom discussion and learning. 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). Disagreement with the instructor and other students during class discussions is welcome as long as it is done respectfully. In all class discussions, you must be courteous and respectful of others. You must complete all assigned readings prior to coming to class. Do not expect to get a good participation grade if you do not contribute to class discussion.

By enrolling in this class, you are agreeing to attend class during the entire duration of the semester and for the entire class period. 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 be permitted two unexcused absences. An excused absence is an illness that prevents you from attending class, religious holiday or a death in the family. Do not schedule

meetings, banquets, employment, vacations, or work for other classes during our regular class meeting time. Beyond your first two unexcused absences, 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 four unexcused absences, you will be penalized two-thirds of a letter grade, and your final participation would be a B-. Similarly, if you had seven 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. If you have any concerns regarding your ability to attend class on a regular basis, such as athletic events or employment, please consider dropping the class to make room for someone who can attend on a regular basis.

2. **Assignments:** are take-home work which will receive a letter grade. Any assignments turned in after the first 10 minutes of class will be treated as late by one day. Late assignments are to be turned in at the next class period and will be deducted one full letter grade for every class period they are late. Assignment sheets specifying requirements will be distributed in class. They will not be emailed. See me during class or during my office hours if you missed any of them. Assignments must be double spaced and turned in as a hard copy, they may not be emailed. See Academic Integrity Policy and Late Assignment Policy below for additional details regarding writing assignment policies.
3. **Examinations:** will be comprised of take-home essays. You will be required to address certain questions in a 4-5 page essay. You are expected to incorporate course material into your essay. You should cite readings as appropriate. Assignment sheets for the examinations will be distributed one week prior to the due date, and there will be no extensions. It is your responsibility to make sure that you receive the assignment sheet.
4. **Research Paper:** You will be required to produce a 6-7 page Research Paper for this course. For the paper, you must analyze the efforts of an individual, government agency, political party, interest group, or political movement to use the media in order to influence public opinion (either generally or in the context of an election). Your analysis should be performed in terms of the analytical skills learned during this course. In addition to detailing the media strategies of the subject of your analysis, you should analyze the effectiveness of these media strategies and offer strategic advice for their improvement. Your paper must include at least five textual (not internet) sources. Do not be afraid of the library. You may cite internet sources, but they must be authoritative and will not count towards your requisite five. Course texts may be cited, but again, they will not count toward the requisite five. 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 plastic cover, simply staple it)
 - 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

Students will be permitted to revise and improve this paper should they wish to do so. See Academic Integrity Policy and Late Assignment Policy below for additional details regarding Term Paper policies.

Evaluation Method and Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated by the instructor and will receive a letter grade for each of the course requirements:

Participation	15%
Assignments	20% (two assignments, 10% each, 2-3 pages each)
Midterm Examination	20% (4-5 page essay)
Final Examination	20% (4-5 page essay)
Research Paper	25% (6-7 page research paper)

The instructor's evaluation of student performance will be guided by the following table:

Evaluation	Grade	Grade Points
Excellent	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D	1.0
Failure	F	0.0

- In order to earn an Excellent (A) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of all of the factual material, be able to apply and in fully integrate theories and concepts, and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.
- In order to earn a Good (B) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of nearly all of the factual material, demonstrate some application and integration of theories and concepts, and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.
- In order to earn a Satisfactory (C) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of most of the factual material and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.
- In order to earn a Poor (D) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of most of the factual material.
- In order to earn a Failing (F) grade, a student must not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the factual material, or fail to turn in an assignment, examination or final paper.

Grade weighting method: The grade a student receives for each requirement will be converted to grade points and weighted by the corresponding percentage (see above). The final value will be rounded to the closest Grade Point assignment and the corresponding grade will be recorded as the student's final grade in the course. Here is an example: Suppose Margaret received a B- for Participation, a B+ on her first Assignment and a B on her second Assignment, a C for her Midterm Exam, a B+ for her Final Exam and a C+ on her Research Paper. Margaret's final grade would be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Final Grade} &= (2.7 * .15) + (3.3 * .10) + (3.0 * .10) + (2.0 * .20) + (3.3 * .20) + (2.3 * .25) \\ \text{Final Grade} &= .405 + .330 + .300 + .400 + .660 + .575 \\ \text{Final Grade} &= 2.670, \text{ which is closest to } 2.7 \text{ grade points, which is equivalent to a B-.} \end{aligned}$$

Other Course Policies and Notes

Add / Drop Policy

This class is nearly full. I will start a waiting list if this class fills. If you do not wish to take this class, please drop it immediately in order to make room for another student. You may add the class prior to 8/29 at 12:00 midnight if there is an opening on the computer system. If there are openings available, I will add students at the beginning of the second week (Monday, 9/3). You must be present to add. Seniors and Political Science Majors on the waiting list will be given priority if there are not enough spaces in the class (not those who signed up first on the waiting list). Lying about your academic status or major affiliation will constitute a violation of Academic Integrity and the student will receive an F in the course and may be reported to the administration for disciplinary action.

Grade Options Policy

Students may take this course for Credit / No Credit, but they must exercise this option on or before Friday, 9/12. The last day to withdraw with a "W" is Friday, 10/17. Incompletes are very rarely given and only in cases of an emergency and provided that the student has completed at least half of the course requirements and is earning a C- or better.

Student Conduct Policy

Students who engage in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave class immediately and will be marked absent for the day. Disruptive behavior consists of, among other things, frequent talking with other students during lectures and presentations, eating, and electronic noises. 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. You will be marked absent if you leave class early or if you begin to pack up your belongings before class is dismissed.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic honesty is required of all students. Each student is responsible for understanding and following campus policies on academic honesty. Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend on the integrity of University courses and is a serious offense. The UHH Student Conduct Code defines academic dishonesty in the following way:

"Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; purchasing term papers; or drylabbing, which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, or fabricating data to fit the desired or expected results" (p. 6).

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Note that submitting the same paper for two more than one course *without the prior approval of both instructors* is considered to be a case of academic dishonesty. If plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty (including cheating on examinations) is suspected, the incident will be thoroughly investigated. If you are caught cheating in any form or plagiarizing any part of a test, paper, or other assignment, you will receive an "F" for the course and may be reported to the University administration for further possible action, including expulsion from the university.

Late Assignment Policy

Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments that are turned in during or at the end of class will be treated as late. Late assignments are to be turned in to me at the next class meeting and the assignment will be deducted one full letter grade for every day it is 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.

Note on Disability Services

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office as early in the semester as possible. The office is located in Campus Center Room 311. The office can be contacted at 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), or via email at shirachi@hawaii.edu.

Note on Academic Advising

Advising is a very important resource designed to help students complete the requirements of the University and their individual majors. Students should consult with their advisor at least once per semester in order to decide upon courses, check progress towards graduation, and discuss their career options and other educational opportunities provided by UH Hilo. Advising is a shared responsibility, but students have the final responsibility for meeting degree requirements.

Course Outline

Week 1 (8/25-29). Political Socialization, and Democratic Expectations of the Media

Reading: Erickson and Tedin, ch. 5 (to be read by Wednesday).

In-class Film: American Rock (Schoolhouse Rock)

- ◆ Syllabus Distributed
- ◆ Political Socialization: Sources and Effects
- ◆ What is “The Media?”
- ◆ Marshall McLuhan’s contribution to understanding media
- ◆ Lippmann’s “Pictures in their heads”
- ◆ The Role of the Media in a Democracy
- ◆ The Role of the Media in Authoritarian Regimes
- ◆ US Communications Policy
- ◆ Protections for the Media in the United States
- ◆ Additional Responsibilities for the Media in the United States

Week 2 (9/3-5). Early Media Manipulation: Muckraking, Yellow Journalism and Propaganda No Class Monday, 9/1 (Labor Day)

In-Class Presentation: Examples of US Wartime Propaganda

Reading: Chomsky, all.

- ◆ Objective Journalism
- ◆ Advocacy Journalism
- ◆ Muckraking
- ◆ William Randolph Hearst
- ◆ Edward Bernays
- ◆ Leni Riefenstahl
- ◆ World War II Propaganda

- ◆ Anti-Communist Propaganda
- ◆ Media Roles in Spectator vs. Participatory Democracy
- ◆ Chomsky's Propaganda Model

Week 3 (9/8-12). Media Effects Theories and Research

Reading: Graber, chs. 1 and 7.

Putnam: "Bowling Alone" (Handout)

- ◆ The Magic Bullet Theory
- ◆ Minimal Effects Theory
- ◆ Agenda Setting Theory
- ◆ Framing Theory
- ◆ Metaphor Theory
- ◆ Constructionism
- ◆ Media and Public Opinion
- ◆ Media and Social Capital

Week 4 (9/15-19). Media Industry Consolidation and Democratic Politics

Reading: Graber, ch. 2-3.

Bagdikian: The Media Monopoly (Handout)

Ultra-Concentrated Media (Handout)

- ◆ 1996 Telecom Act
- ◆ 2003 FCC Cross-ownership Ruling
- ◆ Media Monopolies and Oligopolies
- ◆ 3 Major TV Networks
- ◆ Viacom and Clear Channel
- ◆ Cross Ownership and "Synergy"
- ◆ US Cultural Imperialism
- ◆ Transnational Media Giants
- ◆ Arbitron and Nielsen Ratings Systems
- ◆ Media Access and Democratic Discourse
- ◆ Infotainment

Week 5 (9/22-26). News Generation and Reporting Practices

Assignment: Research Paper Topic due (a few sentences, does not need to be typed, due Monday)

Reading: Graber, ch. 4.

- ◆ Sources of News
- ◆ For-profit vs. Non-profit News
- ◆ Journalistic Routines
- ◆ Gatekeeping
- ◆ "Horse race" and "Game" Coverage of Politics
- ◆ Format
- ◆ Content
- ◆ Variety
- ◆ Depth
- ◆ Quality
- ◆ Bias?
- ◆ Consumerism and Free Market Ideology
- ◆ The American Dream

Week 6 (9/29-10/3). Broadcast and Documentary Media

Assignment: Comparative Media Analysis (due Monday)

In-class Film: The California Reich

Reading: Graber, ch. 5.

- ◆ Sources of Funding
- ◆ Control of Content
- ◆ Sources and Access
- ◆ The Importance of Visuals and Narrative
- ◆ Documentary Film Production
- ◆ Special Difficulties Facing Documentary Producers
- ◆ Documentary Film Distribution and Exhibition
- ◆ Documentary Films and Political Ideologies
- ◆ Cinema Verité

Week 7 (10/6-10). Broadcast Media (cont'd)

In-class Film: This is What Democracy Looks Like

Reading: Graber, ch. 6.

- ◆ History of Broadcast Media
- ◆ Types of Broadcast Media
- ◆ Broadcast Media Effects
- ◆ Broadcast Media Production
- ◆ Political Talk-Radio
- ◆ Getting a Message “On the Air”

Week 8 (10/13-17). Print and Internet Media

In-class Film: Guerilla News Network

In-class Presentation: Bumper Stickers and Slogans

Reading: Graber, ch. 12.

- ◆ Bumper Stickers and Postcards
- ◆ Banners and Posters
- ◆ Billboards
- ◆ Pamphlets
- ◆ Magazines
- ◆ Newspapers
- ◆ Alternative Book Publishers
- ◆ Comics
- ◆ The Internet and Politics

Week 9 (10/20-24). Alternative Media and Culture Jamming

Midterm Exam Due Monday

In-class Film: Culture Jam

In-class Presentation: Guerilla Art and Faux Propaganda

Reading: Graber, ch. 6.

- ◆ Alternative Book Publishers
- ◆ Robbie Conal and Guerilla Art
- ◆ Barbara Kruger
- ◆ Alternative Weeklies
- ◆ Cable Access
- ◆ Pirate Radio

- ◆ Audio and Videotapes
- ◆ Internet Reporting: Indy Media and the Guerrilla News Network
- ◆ The Internet as a Commercial Vehicle for other Alternative Media
- ◆ Internet Humor and Politics
- ◆ Typo-squatting
- ◆ Political Pranksterism
- ◆ Billboard Liberation
- ◆ Street Sign Correction

Week 10 (10/27-31). Characteristics and Sources of Public Opinion

Reading: Erickson and Tedin, chs. 1-4.

- ◆ Measuring Public Opinion
- ◆ Difficulties in Measuring Public Opinion
- ◆ Political Interest and Attention
- ◆ Ideology
- ◆ Partisanship
- ◆ Presidential Approval
- ◆ Influence of Public Opinion on Governance

Week 11 (11/3-7). Aggregate Consensus and Group Differences in Public Opinion

Reading: Erickson and Tedin, chs. 6-8.

- ◆ General and Specific Opinions
- ◆ Political Trust
- ◆ Political Efficacy
- ◆ Demographic Differences in Political Attitudes
- ◆ The “Gender Gap”
- ◆ Campaign Attempts to Exploit Demographic Differences

Week 12 (11/10-14). Voter Turnout and Vote Choice

Reading: Maisel, ch. 4-5.

- ◆ Who Votes?
- ◆ Voter Turnout Trends
- ◆ Why Do Americans Not Vote?
- ◆ Is Turnout a Concern?
- ◆ How to Improve Turnout
- ◆ Sociological Theory of Voting (Columbia School)
- ◆ Social-Psychological Theory of Voting (Michigan School)
- ◆ Economic Theories of Voting (Rochester School)
 - ◆ Simple Economic
 - ◆ Retrospective
 - ◆ Prospective
 - ◆ Sociotropic
- ◆ Spatial Theory of Voting (AKA Issue Voting)
- ◆ Affective Intelligence Theory of Voting

Week 13 (11/17-21). Election Rules and Parties

Assignment: Presidential Candidate Profile (anyone other than the incumbent, due Monday)

Reading: Maisel, ch. 1-2;

Erickson and Tedin, ch. 9.

- ◆ Types of Elections
- ◆ Primary and General Elections
- ◆ “Open” and “Blanket” Primaries
- ◆ The Electoral College
- ◆ The Nature of Political Parties
- ◆ Party Realignment and Dealignment

Week 14 (11/24-26). Electioneering I: Campaign Structures and Strategies
No Class Friday, 11/28 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Reading: Maisel, ch. 9-11.

- ◆ Campaign Finance Rules
- ◆ McCain-Feingold Challenge
- ◆ Median Voter Theorem
- ◆ McGovern-Fraser
- ◆ Conventions
- ◆ Campaign Organization
- ◆ Issue Strategies
- ◆ Electoral College Strategies
- ◆ Third Party Candidates

Week 15 (12/1-5). Electioneering II: Media and Message Strategies
Research Papers Due Monday

In-class Presentation: Campaign Advertisements

Reading: Maisel, ch. 12;

Graber, ch. 8.

- ◆ Free Media vs. Paid Media
- ◆ Debates
- ◆ Campaign Ads
- ◆ The Influence of Attack Ads
- ◆ The Internet and Political Campaigns
- ◆ Candidates vs. The Press
- ◆ The Media and Campaign Issues
- ◆ The Media and Election Outcomes

Week 16 (12/8-10). Future Trends

Revised Research Papers Due Wednesday

In-class Presentation: Michael Moore and Viggo Mortensen public statements

Reading: Graber, chs. 9 and 11;

Erickson and Tedin, ch. 12

- ◆ Adversarial Role
- ◆ Media Scandals
- ◆ Coverage of Congress
- ◆ Coverage of the President
- ◆ Coverage of Foreign Affairs
- ◆ Media Celebrities and Politics
- ◆ Future Prospects for Reporting, Deliberation, and Civil Democratic Society

**Final Exam Essays due in my office during our regularly-scheduled final exam time:
Monday, December 15th, 2:00–4:00pm.**