

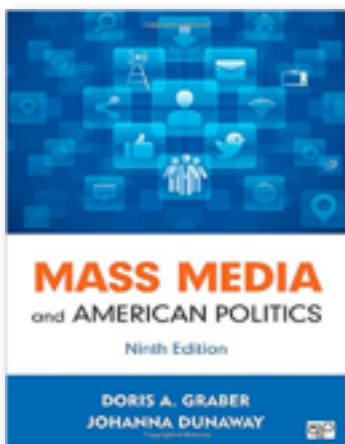


Political Communication is a sub-field of political science and communication that deals with the production, dissemination, procession and effects of information, both through media and interpersonally, within a political context.

Political communication is an interdisciplinary field found at the intersections of communication, media and journalism studies, political science and sociology. Its theoretical foundations and empirical approaches are diverse, drawn as they are from those different fields. And as one of the field of communication's primary subfields, it is characterized with its focus on developing and answering research questions rather than the development of unified intellectual traditions.

Given this, the course is designed to introduce students to major works and topics in this interdisciplinary field. Its reading list is designed to include both 'classics' in the field and state-of-the-field work. Political communication's breadth and diversity makes it difficult to claim comprehensiveness in such a survey, and the choices made here necessarily reflect the interests and expertise of the instructor.

The course's overarching structure follows three major themes: the role of media in society, with particular focus on journalism and news media, how their work is done, and relationships to citizens; the media effects tradition, and what it has contributed to our understanding of media's impacts on public opinion; and the place of political communications in civic life, with particular concern for media's role in larger social structures, political communication outside of the media, and the future of citizenship and civic engagement in new media.



Course Schedule

M,W,F 14:00-14:50

McCormack M01-0608

Textbooks

Graber, D.A., & Dunaway, J. (2014). *Mass media and American politics* (9th Ed.). Washington DC: CQ Press.

Joyce ed. 2010. *Digital Activism Decoded The New Mechanics of Change*, Debate Press. Online here: http://klangable.com/blog/?page_id=16

All other materials can be accessed via the course website on Blackboard.

Contact

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Office Hours: Tu&Th 9-10

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Course Assignments

Participants in this course will be required to attend the scheduled classes and participate actively in the discussions.

There will also be 5 required assignments:

1. An individually done, original work consisting of 1000 word biography of a non-Western, non-male activist.
2. A group project (2 people per group) consisting of a 1000 word documentary film review.
3. Act as discussion lead in class.
4. Weekly posts to Blackboard
5. Individual final project. A 2500 word analysis of the media use in a current social movement.

Goals

By the end of the course the participants will be able to:

- Clearly grasp key concepts in media, political speech, participation and activism
- Understand the role of media in political speech and action
- Historically contextualize current media politics
- Discuss political communication with theoretical and empirical examples
- Be familiar with concepts of democracy, public sphere and civil disobedience
- Analyze current events and social/political movements portrayed in media such as Occupy, Tea Party, Arab Spring, etc.

Grading

<i>The Bio</i>	70 points
<i>The Film Review</i>	70 points
<i>Weekly Post</i>	50 points
<i>Discussant</i>	70 points
<i>Final Project</i>	100 points
<i>Attendance</i>	40 points

The total amount of points awarded in the course is 400. The grade is based on the following percentage scale:

A 94 or above A- 90 – 93

B+ 87 – 89 B 83 – 86 B- 80 – 82

C+ 77 – 79 C 73 – 76 C- 70 – 72

D+ 67 – 69 D 63 – 66 D- 60 – 62

F 59 or below.



Discovering Core Concepts

The **public sphere** (German: Öffentlichkeit) is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. It is "a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment."

The public sphere can be seen as "a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk" and "a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed".

Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_sphere

Civil disobedience is the active, professed refusal to obey certain laws, demands, and commands of a government, or of an occupying international power. Civil disobedience is a symbolic or ritualistic violation of the law, rather than a rejection of the system as a whole. Civil disobedience is sometimes, though not always, defined as being nonviolent resistance.

Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_disobedience

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Deadlines.

All assignments and exams must be completed and turned in on or before the date assigned. Writing assignments are posted separately in Blackboard and must be submitted through SafeAssign. If you fail to turn in an assignment on time you will lose 10% of your total grade for each day it is late. Assignments that are more than five days late will not be accepted and you will receive a grade of ZERO for that assignment.

All participants are encouraged to question and challenge the ideas being presented and discussed. Please remember that people and ideas must be treated with respect. Avoid disruptive behavior.

You are expected to contribute to classroom discussions. You are expected to demonstrate respectful attention to the speaker (whether the speaker is the instructor, a guest, or another student).

Class Cancellation.

Should classes be cancelled due to extreme weather or other unforeseen circumstances the classes will be conducted online via Blackboard.

Readings.

Readings must be completed before the day they are assigned on the course schedule. Be sure to do the readings in light of the discussion questions and take notes while reading.

Deadlines.

All assignments and exams must be completed and turned in on or before the date assigned. Writing assignments are posted separately in Blackboard and must be submitted through SafeAssign. If you fail to turn in an assignment on time you will lose a letter grade for each day it is late. Assignments that are more than five days late will not be accepted and you will receive a grade of ZERO for that assignment.

Digital Devices.

Laptops and other devices may be used for taking notes. However, using

devices for activities not related to the class is not permitted.

Turn your cell phones off when you enter the classroom unless you have prior approval from the instructor.

Academic integrity.

Students are required to adhere to the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating, to the University Statement on Plagiarism and the Documentation of Written Work, and to the Code of Student Conduct as delineated in the Catalog of Undergraduate Programs. The Code is available online. https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code

**Attendance.**

Attendance is mandatory. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining class materials (e.g., notes, assignments) on your own.

Attendance also means that the participant is on time and engaged in the discussion. Non-attendance and non-participation will negatively impact your final grade.

**Accommodations.**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offers guidelines and support for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services, Campus Center, Upper Level, Room 0211, 617-287-7430. The student must present these recommendations and discuss them with each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of Drop/Add period.

Schedule.

Changes to the syllabus may be made at the instructors discretion and if circumstances require. Participants will be notified of changes via Blackboard.

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SCHEDULE: READINGS FOR THE WEEK

<p>Week 1</p> <p>Wed, Sept 9</p> <p>Fri, Sept 11</p>	<p>Introduction to the course</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Mon, Sept 14</p> <p>Wed, Sep 16</p> <p>Fri, Sep 18</p>	<p>The Digital Activism Environment</p> <p>Mon: Joyce pp. 15-46</p> <p>Wed: Joyce pp. 47-98</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Mon, Sept 21</p> <p>Wed, Sept 23</p> <p>Fri, Sep 25</p>	<p>Civil Disobedience</p> <p>Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper2/thoreau/civil.html</p> <p>Letter from a Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Mon, Sept 28</p> <p>Wed, Sept 30</p> <p>Fri, Oct 2</p>	<p>Digital Actions in the Aggregate</p> <p>Mon: Joyce pp. 99-118</p> <p>Wed: Joyce pp. 119-149</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Mon, Oct 5</p> <p>Wed, Oct 7</p> <p>Fri, Oct 9</p>	<p>Effects: What Is Digital Activism's Value?</p> <p>Mon: Joyce pp. 149-180</p> <p>Wed: Joyce pp. 181-217</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Mon, Oct 12 CLOSED</p> <p>Wed, Oct 14</p> <p>Fri, Oct 16</p>	<p>Media Power and Government Control</p> <p>Wed: Graber ch 1-2</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Mon, Oct 26</p> <p>Wed, Oct 28</p> <p>Fri, Oct 30</p>	<p>Media Freedom, Law & Politics</p> <p>Mon: Graber ch 3</p> <p>Wed: Graber ch 4</p>

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SCHEDULE

Week 8 Mon, Nov 2 Wed, Nov 4 Fri, Nov 6	Media as Policy Maker: News Making & Reporting Mon: Graber ch 5 Wed: Graber ch 6
Week 9 Mon, Nov 9 Wed, Nov 11 CLOSED Fri, Nov 13	Citizen Journalism: From Bloggers to Wikileaks WikiSecrets Julian Assange, Bradley Manning, and WikiLeaks (Library Resource)
Week 10 Mon, Nov 16 Wed, Nov 18 Fri, Nov 20	Covering Politicians, Courts & Foreign Affairs Mon: Graber ch 7 Wed: Graber ch 9
Week 11 Mon, Nov 23 Wed, Nov 25 Fri, Nov 26	Media & Behaviour Mond: Graber ch 10 Wed: Graber ch 12
Week 12 Mon, Nov 30 Wed, Dec 2 Fri, Dec 4	Anonymous We Are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists (2012) www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zwDhoXpk90 Coleman, G. Anonymous in Context: The Politics and Power Behind the Mask. https://www.cigionline.org/publications/2013/9/anonymous-context-politics-and-power-behind-mask
Week 13 Mon, Dec 7 Wed, Dec 9 Fri, Dec 11	Culture, Communication & Politics
Week 14 Mon, Dec 14	Future of Political Communication Mon: Graber ch 13

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The Activist Bio

Did you know that only 15% of the English Wikipedia's biographies are about women? The purpose of this exercise is to "uncover" an activist. Female political activist from the southern hemisphere who was active prior to 1995.



What to include...

- What makes this person special or interesting?
- What kind of effect did she have on the world? other people?
- What examples from their life illustrate those qualities?
- What events shaped or changed this person's life?
- Did she overcome obstacles? Take risks? Get lucky?
- Would the world be better or worse if this person hadn't lived? How and why?

This bio will be double spaced, 1000 words without footnotes or bibliography and include an analysis of the historic, political and social role she played in history. This exercise is worth up to 70 points.



"Read no history: nothing but biography, for that is life without theory." Benjamin Disraeli



Julia de Burgos 1914 - 1953

Julia de Burgos (February 17, 1914 – July 6, 1953) was a poet from Puerto Rico. As an advocate of Puerto Rican independence, she served as Secretary General of the Daughters of Freedom, the women's branch of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. She was also a civil rights activist for women and African/Afro-Caribbean writers...

...It was later discovered that on July 6, 1953, she collapsed on a sidewalk in the Spanish Harlem section of Manhattan, and later died of pneumonia at a hospital in Harlem at the age of 39. Since no one claimed her body and she had no identification on her, the city gave her a pauper's burial on Hart Island, the city's only potter's field.



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Write a film review

Being critical is not the same thing as being negative. Rather it means exercising or involving careful judgment or judicious evaluation. The evaluation is not based in one's subjective feelings. A strong review should not simply state whether you like or dislike a film. A strong review weighs different aspects of the movie and draws a fair conclusion about the merits and flaws of the film.



When writing a review be specific, and be objective. Be specific means that it is not enough to say you enjoyed the film; you must say what specifically you enjoyed about the film and why this aspect(s) of the film is important to you. Being objective means that your subjective feelings about the subject matter, mode of presentation and your personal evaluation of a culture that is different from yours do not belong in a critical film review. For example, the film may bore you but that may not be a factor of the over-all quality of the film. Rather, it may be because you have problems interpreting some aspect of the film because you do not understand the film's context or

you lack background information about the events portrayed.

Getting started

These questions may be useful for your work:

1. What is the main issue/topic of the documentary? Is it a political, social, or just informative piece? This is the first step to writing your review. Knowing whether the documentary is political, social, or informative will affect the specific details that you choose to discuss within your review as well as slightly alter your audience.

2. What is the context of this issue? Is this issue controversial? (Do research if necessary!) Context will help both you and your readers determine the significance and accuracy of the film based on the events at the time. Including context into your review will also allow readers to see that you are knowledgeable in your topic.

3. What is the history of the director of the film? There are some directors who are well-known for making especially biased pieces or who are well acquainted with the subjects whom they are filming, which will give you an idea as to the bias of the film.

4. How accurate is the documentary? Using the context and the history of the director, you can find out what is accurate, inaccurate, or slightly skewed about the documentary. It is very important to inform your reader about this.

5. What does the audience have to know or believe to understand or appreciate this documentary? Your answer to this question is exactly the background information that what you will have to inform your reader about, whether it is in the introduction or insinuated throughout the review.

6. Which specific points in the film do you wish to analyze in detail? (These can include scenes, quotes, fluency of film, bias, use of imagery, use of music/sound, degree of interest, juxtaposition of shots, etc.) Of

course, if you find more points later that you wish to add, you should do so, but first choosing a few points means that these should be highlighted since they immediately stood out to you.

The review

The body of your review should include a description of the film and your critical analysis.

When describing the film you should include quotes, excerpts, specific scenes, and any outside information you find necessary. By using direct quotes and specific scenes, you give the reader a clearer description of the film. Because you are limited to a certain amount of space, you will not be able to write a detailed description of the film. You will want to include only major thematic elements that occur and have



relevance to any issues you wish to discuss. When presenting any critical analysis and making an argument you need to follow it up with evidence to support your stance. Evidence will typically consist of quotes, outside facts (from a creditable source), specific scenes, and information on those associated with the film (such as director's motives).

This text is from **“Documentary Movie Reviews” by Cynthia Hsu, Michael Mazur, and SunJung So.**

This review will be double spaced, 1000 words without footnotes or bibliography. This exercise is worth up to 70 points.

Documentaries

- Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media (1992) www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEvxOdMWOU
- The Panama Deception (1992) www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo6yVNWcGCo
- The Century of the Self (2002)
- Race: The Power of An Illusion (2003) Library Resource
- Orwell Rolls In His Grave (2003) www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_lYGyIaK80
- Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral On a Moving Train (2004) Library Resource
- Weapons of Mass Deception (2004) www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkkAXkhKg98
- Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism (2004) Library Resource
- Control Room (2004) www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3rMo5cgaXQ
- Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class (2005) Library Resource
- Iraq For Sale: The War Profiteers (2006) www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q8y-4nZP6o
- Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People (2007) www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKD3CnPJNOE
- War Made Easy (2007) www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9DjSg6l9Vs
- The War You Don't See (2010) <https://vimeo.com/67739294>
- PsyWar: The Real Battlefield is the Mind (2010) <https://vimeo.com/14772678>
- Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a Media Stereotype (2013) Library Resource
- White Like Me: Race, Racism & White Privilege in America (2013) Library Resource
- Citizen Koch (2014)
- War on Whistleblowers (2015)



Weekly Posts

Political communication is not only something that is to be found in the textbooks of some university course. It is a living subject that is happening all around us. From the political campaign we are experiencing today with colorful characters like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders to the more basic expressions of civic grievances at school councils and city halls. One thing is certain the communication of politics is everywhere.

In order to ensure that the topic becomes more alive this exercise requires of the participants that they find examples of the readings in the everyday lives.

The goal is to recognize the readings of the week in the reality of the world around us. The examples can be taken from local or international press, from websites, from contemporary popular culture. Once an example has been identified the text should be about the ways in which the messy reality of everyday life can be interpreted through the theoretical lens of the textbooks.

Therefore the early stages of the political campaign, and the actions of individual players, can be used as examples of

politicians attempting to grab the attention of prospective voters by making, more or less, outlandish claims, promises and attacks on their opponents.

How does the reporting of the conflicts in Syria, the troubles in Iraq, the economic crisis in Greece, or the nuclear deal with Iran seem in relation to the explanations of foreign policy reporting put forward in the textbook?

This assignment requires that the participants once a week find an act of political communication that overlaps with the theoretical discussion in the textbooks and write a short post about it. The post shall be 300 words long and be submitted before 17:00 on Fridays. Participants are expected to comment on two posts submitted by others. In order to count as commenting the comments must contribute to the text and/or discussion.

This exercise is worth up to 50 points.





Discussion Lead Assignment

Students will be required to lead one class discussion this term.

Discussion Leads consist of groups of 2-3 students who will work together to construct a discussion prompt/question for the class.

Discussion prompts/questions should be contextualized by a 10-15 minute presentation on an aspect of the reading or a related topic to the reading that directs the class to think meaningfully about the discussion question.

Groups will be determined by students via signing up for which week's discussion you are interested in leading.

Each group will earn one grade; all students within that group will earn the same grade for their group's work.

The only exception to this rule is if a student in a Discussion Lead Group does not show for their Group's Lead day. Any students not present and actively involved in their Group's presentation will receive a zero for the assignment.

Discussion Lead Guidelines

Your presentation should not provide an indepth review of all the reading material assigned for that class meeting.

Ten minutes is not enough time to review pages of dense theoretical work. Choose one theme or idea that stands out to you.

Novice: You could summarize an idea to the best of your ability, and then introduce a related discussion question.

Proficient: You could make an effort to explain the significance of an idea then and/or now, and then introduce a related discussion question.

Advanced: You could demonstrate how to apply an idea - perhaps by showing how it is still relevant to our lives today by making a connection to something current that exemplifies this idea, and then introduce a related discussion question.

You are expected to reference section(s) of the material that are relevant to your discussion question you want us to engage in - this is highly recommended as it is constructive to "frame" the discussion; however, you are not to overview the entirety of the course readings due that day.

You are welcome to use/show multi-media that departs from the reading but is related in some way. This aids us all in applying the reading to make new or more culturally current connections, or perhaps posing provocative questions to get us to think about the reading in a different way.

Video clips may not be longer than 1/3 of your presentation time.

You are more than welcome to quote sections of the reading to draw our attention to specific ideas.

However:

Do not read verbatim the text on a slide to us - we are capable of reading it for ourselves.

A good alternative option is to paraphrase any text written on a slide.

The best option is to use (relevant) images, graphs, or content and then *tell us* what would have otherwise been written on the slide.

Finally, try to think of questions that don't have "easy" answers but make us think about the material in constructive ways. This is a difficult assignment do not take it lightly. Be prepared and try your best. When in doubt contact me in advance.

This exercise is worth up to 70 points.





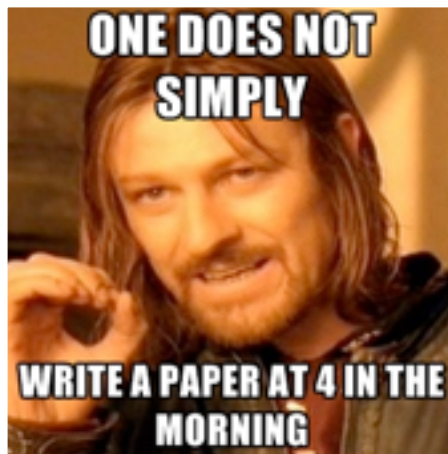
Final Paper

The final paper is an original piece of research. The topic must be within the parameters of the course and is chosen by the participant, and approved of by the instructor. The paper is to be double spaced, 2500 words in length, not including footnotes or bibliography. The paper is worth up to 100 points.

- Find a question that interests you, try to be unique. Pick a research question early. Make sure it fits the assignment. Find Make sure to come up with a topic that is a good fit for the assignment. If you struggle choosing a topic, conduct some brainstorming and seek suggestions from your instructor.
- Prepare an outline with the question, some ideas it may include and an early analysis. Add some sources. Don't be too detailed since your ideas might change as you conduct research and write the essay.

After you've finished an outline, don't hesitate running it by your instructor.

- You must support the claim made in your essay with evidence. Claims can be



supported with empirical evidence, expert opinion, and logical anecdotes.

Good essays contain catchy introductions: Explain to the reader why this is an important topic.

- Make sure your thesis statement is clear and that it provides a preview of what your paper will address.
- Use reliable and authoritative references and sources for your paper.
- Get rid of any B.S. Instructors will dock your paper for irrelevant information used to fill space.
- Don't plagiarize.
- If you're struggling, get help.