**Course Description and Goals**

This course examines the theoretical and actual role of mass media in the United States, including the structure of mass media industry, news production, effects on political and social views, and how the media are regulated.

Every day, we are bombarded by hundreds of news items through dozens of channels: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, blogs, text messages, webcasts, podcasts, radio, television, the printed press, and more. It is difficult enough to endure and process the information stream, but citizens must make up their minds not just about what to consume, but also whom to trust and what to believe. The diversity of available angles, voices, and worldviews has never been greater. The rapid and radical changes we witness in our news and information environment makes public and private decisions even more difficult. Yet, in a democratic society, so much hangs in the balance on how well-informed the citizens are.

In this course we will investigate the connections between mass media, public opinion, and American politics. We will explore various questions: What role do the media play in US democracy? What can we expect of the media? How do the media affect political knowledge, opinion, and civic participation? What is framing, priming and agenda-setting? How do we think about these concepts in a “post-broadcast” world? How is the Internet affecting US democracy?

**Course Material**

  
  For purchase at B&N Rutgers on College Avenue or at rutgers.bncollege.com.

  Used copies available online from $0.01. On reserve for 2-hour sessions at Alexander Library.

- **All required readings** will be available on the Sakai course site.

- **All required documentary films** are available online for legally free viewing as listed below.

**Course Requirements**

1. Six online assignments  
   Maximum value: 6 x 5 points  = 30%
2. Peer reviews  
   Max. value: 32 x 0.5 points  = 16%
3. Final paper  
   Maximum value: 1 x 40 points  = 40%
4. Attendance/Participation  
   Max. value: 28 x 0.5 points  = 14%
   Total  
   100 points  =100%
5. Presentation (extra credit)  
   Maximum value: 1 x 10 points

Due dates will be announced on the course’s Sakai site. Final paper: **7 p.m., Monday, December 21, 2015**
Online Learning
All course material (except the required textbook and online documentaries) and lesson plans will be available on the course’s Sakai site. Students are required to actively use the Sakai site for submitting online assignments, co-grading them for peer review credit, and submitting the final paper and the optional presentation.

The site’s chat room is always available for peer consultations. The instructor will monitor the chat room and participate in the ongoing discussion as deemed necessary. If you have a direct question to the instructor, please bring it up during class, office hours, or, as a last resort, via email.

Online Assignments
Online assignments consist of six postings of some media product (news story, blog, twitter, video, etc.) related to the subject matter along with a two-paragraph reaction paper/commentary on each. The commentary must (i) explain how the posting relates to course topics and (ii) add evaluation and/or critique. More information will follow in class and on the Sakai site.

The online assignments will be peer reviewed. Each student is required to review at least 32 postings by other course members. The instructor will monitor peer reviews and may (co-)grade assignments if necessary.

Presentation
Students can earn extra credit by preparing a 5-minute (5-slide) presentation on an instructor-approved topic and present it in class. Signup sheets will be available at the Sakai site for scheduling the presentations at the beginning or end of appropriate class sessions. Presentations may also be peer-reviewed in class.

Grading Scale

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<td>A</td>
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Personal Response Systems
The class will experiment with i>clicker device and REEF Polling (i<Clicker’s iOS/Android-compatible mobile app) to provide feedback, take ad hoc quizzes, and to take attendance. The software is available for free download.


Android Google Play: [Coming soon]
A semester fee of $9.99 is payable (after a 14-day free trial) as in-app purchase or by PayPal. If you have a problem obtaining the app or a device, speak with or email your instructor.

More about this experiment in class.

Attendance
Class attendance is required in order to earn a good grade. You are responsible for all material presented in class and in the readings. Lectures are based on the readings, but they do not cover everything and they may go beyond the readings to present new or additional research and examples related to the subject. All content presented through lectures, readings, and in-class examples are subject to testing through the final paper.
Late Policy
Unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor, no late assignments will be accepted. Exceptions will be made in case of emergencies. Late penalties will be applied on a case-by-case basis. In case of an emergency, notify the instructor via email.

Religious Holiday Policy
It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting. Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.

Academic Integrity
The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Rutgers’s academic integrity policy can be found at: www.academicintegrity.rutgers.edu

Academic integrity means, among other things:
- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.
- If you are in doubt about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with your instructor.

To help students and instructors, the final paper will be submitted online using the Turnitin originality check service built into the Sakai Learning Management System. See detailed instructions on the course site.

Academic Support Services
Rutgers has a variety of resources for academic support. For more information, check www.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-support
Rutgers has Learning Centers on each campus where any student can obtain tutoring and other help. For more information, check: http://lrc.rutgers.edu
Rutgers also has a Writing Program where students can obtain help with writing skills and assignments: http://plangere.rutgers.edu/index.html

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
The Rutgers Office of Disability Services evaluates student needs and provides documentation about necessary accommodations. Students who need accommodations in class must do so through the Rutgers Disabilities Services Office: https://ods.rutgers.edu
Class Schedule
(Subject to change: All changes will be announced on Sakai; please check it before each class)

Introduction
1. 9/2
   Introduction
   Discussion of current media issues: The presidential primary campaign

Historical Development and Democratic Theory
2. 9/7
   a. Bruce Williams and Michael Delli Carpini, “Media Regimes and American Democracy,” in *After Broadcast News*

3. 9/8 [First change in designation of class days: Monday classes will be held]
   b. Michael Schudson and Susan Tift, “American Journalism in Historical Perspective,” in *The Press*

4. 9/9

5. 9/14
   b. Bruce Williams and Michael Delli Carpini “And That’s the Way It [Was],” in *After Broadcast News*

Media and Policy
6. 9/16
   a. Doris Graber, Ch. 3 in *Mass Media and American Politics*
   b. Michael Schudson, “The Political Culture of News,” in *Social Meanings of News*

7. 9/22
Ownership
8. 9/28
   b. Lance Bennett, “The Political Economy of the News”

9. 9/30
   b. Martin Gilens and Craig Hertzman, “Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage…”

10. 10/5
   a. Alex Gibney, Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream [In preparation for class discussion, watch it online at: http://video.pbs.org/video/2296684923/]

The Media as News Organization; Critiques of News Production
11. 10/7
   a. James Fallows, Ch. 4 & 6 in Breaking the News

12. 10/12
   b. Doris Graber, Ch. 4 in Mass Media and American Politics

Media Effects: Framing, Priming, and Agenda-setting
13. 10/14
   a. Shanto Iyengar, Ch. 2, 4—5 in Is Anyone Responsible?

14. 10/19
   a. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media”

Campaigning and Election Coverage
15. 10/21
   a. Doris Graber, Ch. 8 in Mass Media and American Politics

16. 10/26
   a. Rachel Gibson, “From Brochureware to ‘MyBo’: An Overview of Online Elections…”
b. Eitan Hersh and Brian Schaffner “Targeted Campaign Appeals and the Value of Ambiguity” [Unpublished manuscript as of 2012]

Media, Women, and Minorities
17. 10/28
   b. Kim Fridkin Kahn, “Differences in Campaign Coverage: An Examination of U.S. Senate Races”

18. 11/2
   b. Christopher Campbell, Ch. 4 in Race, Myth and the News

19. 11/4
   b. Göran Olsson, The Black Power Mixtapes 1967—1975, Story AB & Swedish TV, 2011, 100 min. [In preparation for class discussion, watch it online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5_qnnqyXQk]

20. 11/9
   b. Travis Dixon and Daniel Linz “The Overrepresentation and Underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as Lawbreakers on Television News,” Journal of Communication

Terrorism, War, and Journalism
21. 11/11
   a. Bruce Williams and Michael Delli-Carpini “9/11 and Its Aftermath,” in After Broadcast News

22. 11/16
   b. Shanto Iyengar and Jennifer McGrady, Ch. 4 in Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide.

23. 11/18
   a. Jehane Noujaim, Control Room, Magnolia Pictures, 2004, 84 min. [In preparation for class discussion, watch it online at: www.topdocumentaryfilms.com/control-room]

The MoveOn Effect
24. 11/23

25. 11/25: NO CLASS: Change-of-Designation Day (Friday classes meet on this date)
Infotainment
25. 11/30
   a. Patricia Moy, Michael Xenos and Verena Hess, “Communication and Citizenship: Mapping the...”
   b. Geoffrey Baym “The Daily Show and the Reinvention of Political Journalism,” Ch. 6 in From Cronkite to Colbert

Media and the Web: Narrowcasting?
26. 12/2
   b. Eli Pariser, Ch. 1, The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You

27. 12/7
   a. Markus Prior, Ch. 1 in Post-Broadcast Democracy
   b. Cass Sunstein, Ch. 3 in Republic.com2

28. 12/9

Guest Speaker: TBA

FINAL PAPER due date: Submit your paper at the course site on Sakai by 7 p.m., Monday, December 21, 2015.
(It is mandated by the University, so individual instructors cannot change it.)