Power struggles have always been decided by the battle over people’s minds; this is to say, by the management of processes of information and communication that shape the human mind. (Manuel Castells 2010:xxxii, *The Power of Identity*)

**ABOUT THE COURSE**

Since the advent of the print press media, the ability to disseminate words and imagery has aided in forging mass social movements, new political alignments and even nation-states. As political scientists, we take special notice of how the media shapes political landscapes. Often referred to as the “Fourth Estate,” the media is a social and political force to be reckoned with as not only having an impact on politics, but as constitutive of the political. This course introduces various conceptual tools that will enable students to interpret and critique the political aspects of the media. By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to offer robust political critiques of the media. Central questions include: What role does the media play in a well-functioning democracy, and does our media system today fulfill that role? What level of political knowledge should we expect of citizens, and how do elite media institutions and new media communications channels help us reach that level? How are identities formed through media? Is the news biased towards liberals or conservatives? How is the Internet changing all of this? And finally, what constitutes the “media” in an era when anyone with a phone camera and Internet connection can engage in acts of journalism themselves?

Our course meets online, which presents unique challenges and opportunities to our learning experience. We will take advantage of online media tools in order to enhance our learning over the course of the semester. Tools such as our class website, [www.341politicsofmedia.com](http://www.341politicsofmedia.com), You Tube, Prezi, Netflix and other online media will be used throughout to enhance media literacy, and to gain broader proficiency in online learning. You are expected to read a vide variety of news sources and gain a critical eye for how to interpret the news. Through writing reaction papers, you will apply the themes and methods we learn in our readings towards an analysis of a "current event." Your final
paper in this course will be an opportunity to explore in-depth an issue regarding media and politics. By the end of this course, you should be conversant about the main theories steering media studies today, as well as be capable of producing your own critical political analysis of the media.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Through careful surveying of media environments and the analysis of various media theories, you will gain critical reading and writing skills that are used to enhance media literacy.
- By studying the most relevant concepts and methods in the field of political science and applying them, you will develop a critical eye for the news media.
- Developing familiarity with the new media environment, including social media, blogs and the Internet.
- Communicate effectively in public forums - students will learn to express themselves clearly, and prepare themselves as communicators through practice in the virtual classroom and through course work.
- Become critical of power - students will be expected to learn to identify the workings of power in various forms, including power in language, in institutions, and in daily life. The ability to analyze power effectively, to ask critical questions about authority and legitimacy, are central to a robust understanding of politics.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL**

3. Supplemental readings found on Laulima: [https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal: Syllabus, websites, selected videos, worksheets, additional readings and more!](https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal: Syllabus, websites, selected videos, worksheets, additional readings and more!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of the Course</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2) Mid-term and Final</td>
<td>(20 pts. each x2) 40 pts</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Participation (based on your responses to online discussion questions)</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Posts</td>
<td>(10 pts each x 2)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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At the end of the semester, your grade will be assigned according to the following scale: A+ (98-100), A (97-93), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), and F (below 59).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1) Exams
A Mid-term and a Final exam will be held online (On Laulima). Questions are given out one week in advance of the exam due-date. The exams are expository writing assignments based on our course readings, supplemental media, films and discussions. The Mid-term Exam is due at the end of week 8 and the Final Exam is due during week 17. It is imperative that you stay up to date with your reading assignments throughout the semester, as you will find it exceedingly difficult to “cram” before the exam. Your best strategy is to read continuously, following our reading schedule. Be sure to take copious notes while reading, and, your will find that you will have all the resources you need to do well on the exams.

2) Reaction Posts
You will sign up to write TWO Reaction Posts during the course of the semester (I will send out a sign-up sheet). This entails selecting a reading or a film from our schedule and posting your reaction to it the Wednesday that reading is due. This must be posted at 12pm on Wednesdays (HST). I will send each of you an invitation to become an “author” on our blog, www.341politicsofmedia.com, and you will post your Reaction Post here. You may only sign up to write a reaction post to one film, but not about any You Tube clips as these are designed only to supplement readings.

Reaction Post guidelines:
1. Make a brief title to your post
2. Your post must be between 500-1000 words, 12 pt Times New Roman font. Make specific references to details in the readings and films by citing relevant quotes and stories. Proofread your reaction post before uploading it.
3. You will be evaluated on your ability to critically analyze, rather than summarize your findings. Your reaction post should be thought provoking and feel free to get creative with how you present your ideas.
4. Answer the following questions:
   a. What are the main points/arguments of the reading/film? (one paragraph)
   b. How can this reading/film help us gain a better understanding of media and politics?
   c. Do you agree or disagree with the arguments presented? Why?
   d. What associations did this reading/film give you? (Here you may wish to supply a link to a news story, You Tube video, or provide a brief story about how this reading/film made you think differently).
e. Finally, ask a question or two that you wish the class to answer in the comment section.

3) **Online Participation and Comments**
A significant part of your work in this course will be based on your responses to “Reaction Posts” (see above) on our website. To receive participation points, you must respond by commenting on a reaction post at least once per week. Your responses should consist of a minimum of 250 words that reflect your engagement with the course material, answering questions brought up in the reaction post and your own analysis. The comments are due every **Friday at 12pm (HST)**. There may also be brief pop-quizzes and assignments that all count towards your participation points.

4) **Final Research Project – Online Newsography Report:**
Throughout the course, students are expected to read journals, blogs and newspapers that encompass the global mediascape. **The final term paper will consist of your research about one online news media organization and how this news outlet affects the political.** I will provide a list of acceptable online news media outlets for you to critically analyze (example: New York Times, Fox News, CNN.com, Democratic Voice of Burma). Your task during the 10 weeks of this course will be to critically consume the news from this media outlet on a daily basis.

Research stages:

1. **Consume:** The first stage of your research will be to actively read, watch and interact with this media outlet. To this end you should bookmark the news site so you read, watch or listen to the news headlines every day – “like” the news outlet on Facebook, “follow” it on Twitter, and do all you can to stay up to date on the news.

2. **Research:** The next stage will be to conduct research about the history, scope and impact of this news outlet. Ask critical research questions such as: When was it established and why? Where does it stand politically? What is the demographic of this news outlet’s readership? How is this media outlet affected by corporate sponsorship or political influence?

3. **Online ethnography:** Your research paper must contain a virtual ethnography component, meaning you will employ ethnographic methods such as virtual participant observation and interviews, which allow you to study a community of interaction through computer-mediated social interactions. You must cite online interactions with news consumers or producers of the media outlet you have chosen. The comments section of online news agencies offers fertile ground for interaction with news consumers, as does their Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. **Your paper must contain at least one interview with a consumer of this media source.**

4. **Media event:** during your research you should pay special attention to one media event that is reported on in your chosen media outlet. Discuss how this media event is portrayed and compare its coverage with other news agencies.

5. **Academic discussion:** You must cite at least two of the readings and key concepts we have covered in this class, as well as a minimum of three "outside" academic sources. Your paper must contain a bibliography. By "academic
Evaluation: You will be graded on your ability to critically analyze rather than summarize your findings. You should have a main argument (your thesis statement) and support your main argument with course materials and academic sources. You must submit a research proposal to me by Friday, 6/27 at 4pm which will include the media organization of your choice, the academic papers you will use and your proposed methodology. Your final paper should be between 5 and 10 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font and include a bibliography. The final paper is due Friday, 8/8 at 4pm, uploaded to the “assignments” section on Laulima. Make sure you have your name, the date and page numbers on your assignments. I do not grade on grammar and spelling, but please do read and edit you work properly before handing it in. It is a good idea to find someone to help you edit your paper. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style when structuring your paper and citing your references:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

COURSE SCHEDULE

Section I – POLITICAL MEDIA
Week 1 – 08/24 – 08/30
How are politics and media linked?
Read: Bennett, News, ch 1: “The News about Democracy”
Write: An Autoethnography - post to www.341politicsofmedia.com
Watch: Episode 1 of “House of Cards” (on Netflix)

Week 2 – 08/31 – 9/6
How does the medium affect the message?
Read: M. McLuhan, The Medium is the Message (Pp. 7-32) in Understanding Media
Watch: “Marshall McLuhan Full lecture: The medium is the message – 1977”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImaH51F4HBw

Week 3 – 09/07 – 09/13 (09/07 – Labor Day)
What is news? Media/Medium Bias, Scandals, Fear and Racism
Fiske J., Videotech (Laulima)
Watch: the “Rodney King Incident” video (You Tube):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OauOPTwbqk
Week 4 - 09/14 – 09/20
Re-presentation and Reception: Producing and Consuming Culture
Read: Hall. S. "Encoding / Decoding."
Watch: Stuart Hall, "Representation and the Media," You Tube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sbYyw1mPdQ&list=PL33E370F138F566FE

Week 5 – 09/21 – 09/27
Technological Determinism
Read: Williams. R., The Technology and the Society in The New Media Reader (Laulima)

Final Research Paper Proposal Due, Friday at 4pm, Uploaded to Laulima

Section II – PUBLICS, IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM
Week 6 - 09/28 – 10/4
Identity and the Nation
Anderson, B. Imagined Communities (selections on Laulima)

Week 7 – 10/05 – 10/11
The formation of Publics and Counterpublics
Read: Warner, M. Publics and Counterpublics
Fraser, Nancy. “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.”
Ferguson, K. Anarchist Counterpublics (both on Laulima)

Week 8 - 10/12 – 10/18
Orientalism and Indigenous Media
Read: Excerpts from Edward Sa’id's Orientalism (on Laulima)
Silva, N., Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism
Watch: "Reel Bad Arabs" (You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lugFgJn9krI
and “Edward Said On Orientalism,” (You Tube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g)

Mid-term Exam due Friday at 4pm uploaded to Laulima

Section III – THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MEDIA
Week 9 - 10/19 – 10/25
The Corporatization of Media
Read: Bennett, News. Ch 7: “The Political Economy of the News and the End of a Journalism Era”
Watch: The Corporation (Netflix)

Week 10 – 10/26 – 11/1
Media at War
Supplemental (optional) videos:
“Manufacturing Consent” (You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzufDdQ6uKg)
and “The Political Economy of the Mass Media” (You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6JqFtDWfxI)

Section IV – MEDIA METHODS
Week 12 - 11/02 – 11/8
Media and Methods: Virtual Ethnography
Read: Mankekar, P., National Texts and Gendered Lives: an Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City (Laulima)
Boellsdorf, T. Coming of Age in Second Life (Laulima)
Supplementary video (optional): The Virtual Body: Coming of Age in Second Life (You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmghOAY01aI)

Section V – THE EVENT
Media and Political Movements: The Arab Uprising
Read: Bennett, News, ch 8 “All The News That Fits Democracy: Solutions for Citizens, Politicians and Journalists”
Watch: “The Square” (Netflix)

Week 14 - 11/16 – 11/22
Online Social Movements: The Saffron Revolution
Read: Sebro, T., “Digital Counterpublics in the Burmese Diaspora.” (Laulima)
Watch: “Burma VJ”

Section VI – THE EVENT AND NEW MEDIA
Week 15 - 11/23 – 11/29 (11/26, Thanksgiving)
What is New Media and what is an event?
Read: Manovich, What is New Media?
Slavoj, Z. “Event: a philosophical journey through a concept” (Laulima)
Watch: “Terms and Conditions May Apply” (Netflix)
Or any episode of “Cyber Awe” (TED Talks on Netflix)

Week 16 – 11/30 – 12/6
New Media and Diasporas
Read: Bernal, V. “Eritrea on-Line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere.” (Laulima)

Week 17 – 12/07 – 12/13
Exam Week: Final Exam due Tuesday 12/8 at 4pm uploaded to Laulima

GENERAL POLICIES AND ADVICE

*If you have concerns about your performance in the course, please email me as soon as possible. We have a lot to cover and it may be easy to fall behind. Taking 1-2 days “off” may severely affect your grade.

*Late work will not be accepted. It is to your advantage to stay on top of your assignments. Given the short amount of time we have to cover such a large amount of material, if you fall behind it will be extremely difficult for you to catch up. If you miss an exam or a due date because of illness or an emergency, you must have a note from your doctor for me to accept late work.

*A problem with your computer or with the internet is not a valid excuse for turning in late assignments. If you are having problems with your computer please plan ahead.

*You must be self-motivated to do well in this class. This course requires about 9 hours of study/class time per week. You will need to schedule time to complete the readings and assignments as indicated in the syllabus.

*Students are advised that academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) are prohibited by UHM’s "The Student Conduct Code" - if you are having problems with the class, please come and discuss them with me. Plagiarism or cheating will likely lead to you failing the course, or other academic sanctions.

**If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require class or testing accommodations, please talk to me as soon as possible or let me know via email. If you are a student with a documented disability and have not voluntarily disclosed the nature of your disability and the support you need, you are invited to contact the The KOKUA program on campus (956-7511), which coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

*I uphold the University of Hawaii's nondiscrimination policy in my classes. UHM does not tolerate discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, national origin, ancestry, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, arrest and court record, or associational preference.
In addition, my classroom, office, and by extension Laulima courses, are UH-designated Safe Zones. The Safe Zone program is committed to creating and maintaining a positive social and academic environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans gendered students. Again, any discriminatory acts or language (on Chat, Messages or Forums) on the basis of sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

**Final Note**
Your learning is my principal concern, so I may modify the schedule or syllabus if it will facilitate your learning. For example, we may discover that we want to spend more time on certain topics and less on others. I'll consider changing the schedule if such changes would benefit most students’ learning in this course.