

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA
POLS 341: The Politics of Media

Meets: Online on Laulima and at www.341politicsofmedia.wordpress.com

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About the Course

This course introduces key concepts and themes that illustrate the ways in which media and politics intersect through readings, writing assignments, video documentaries, discussions and media surveys. The mass media is a key component of the political landscape. This course seeks to introduce students to various conceptual tools that will enable them to interpret and critique the political aspects of the media. By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to offer political critiques of the media in terms of the various hermeneutics and strategies that have been introduced and explored. 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 American citizens, and how do elite media institutions and new media communications channels help us reach that level? Is the news biased towards liberals or conservatives? How is the Internet changing all of this, and 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 on online media tools in order to enhance our learning over the course of the semester. Tools such as live presentations and class contents on Prezi, You Tube, eBlogger, Laulima and online media will be used throughout the course to enhance media literacy and to gain broader proficiency in online learning. You are expected to read a wide 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

- ✓ Developing critical reading and writing skills that will be used to enhance media literacy.
- ✓ Learning key concepts and methods in the field of political science and applying them to 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 Materials

1. W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion, 8th edition*. New York: Longman Publishing.
2. Herman, E. and N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*
3. Supplemental readings found on Laulima: <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal:> Syllabus, websites, selected videos, worksheets, additional readings and more!

Structure of the Course	Points	% of grade
Exams (2)	(200 pts. each x2) 400 pts	40%
Online Participation (based on your responses to online discussion questions)	200 pts	20%
Reaction Papers	(25 pts each x 8) 200 pts	(2.5% each x 8) 20%
Media Research Project: Final Paper and Online Presentation	200 pts	20%
Total Points	1,000	100%
Extra Credit (up to 50 pts)		
Extra Credit Book Review	20 pts	
Extra Credit Current Events (3 max)	10 pts each (30 pts max)	

Assignments and Grading

Students will demonstrate their understanding of course material through bi-weekly reaction papers, online activities, essay writing and two exams.

1) Exams

A Mid-term and a Final exam will be held online (On Laulima). Study guides are given out one week in advance of the exam.

2) Reading Discussion Questions/Online Participation

A significant part of your work in this course will be based on your responses to questions I pose in the "Discussion" section of Laulima/our online blog. The answers to these questions are due every Friday at 4pm (HST).

3) Reaction Papers

Your reaction papers are based on a "current event" you want to write about. This can be a film, a television show, a book, article or news story you come across (i.e. you choose what you want to react to). Every week we will look at articles from a different news source. You may write your reaction paper on one of the articles assigned, or you may choose your own media "event". When discussing your current event, you must use one of the concepts or texts we have discussed in class. Your reaction paper should be no more than two single spaced pages, and written in Times New Roman 12 point font. Your paper must be submitted either as a Word or a .Pdf file and uploaded to Laulima Wednesdays (every other week) at 4pm. Answer the following questions in your reaction paper, and be sure to mark by number which question you are answering in the body of your paper:

- 1) Summarize briefly the main points of the "event".**
- 2) What were some of the political statements or arguments that were made?**
- 3) Do you agree or disagree with these statements or arguments? Why?**
- 4) How did this "political event" change your perspective?**
- 5) How would you connect this event to what we have been learning in this course?**
- 6) What did you learn that you did not know before?**

Go to Assignments->click on Reaction Paper (week number)-> Upload your paper.

4) Media Research Project - Final Paper:

The final term paper will examine a topic in politics or in the media that the student wishes to explore in-depth using the concepts covered in this class. You must cite some of the readings and key concepts we have covered in this class, as well as a minimum of two "outside" sources. Your paper must contain a bibliography.

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.

Research Project Guidelines Summary:

- 1.** Please include and underline your thesis statement
- 2.** Focus on 1-2 major topics from the course as indicated in the syllabus (e.g. political culture, globalization, the prison industrial complex, voting etc...).
- 3.** Cite relevant course material, including readings and films.
- 4.** Your final paper should be between 5 and 10 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font and include a bibliography. 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 your work properly before handing it in. It is a good idea to find someone to help you edit your paper.

Students are encouraged to read journals, blogs and newspapers that encompass the global mediascape. We will be discussing various media "events" in class by exploring articles in news media and how they relate to concepts we are learning in class.

Class Schedule (subject to change, it is your responsibility to stay up to date with changes in the schedule)

	Theme	Assignments
Week 1	Introductions, Review of syllabus, Course Expectations What is the Media and Why is it Political?	Bennett, <i>News</i> , Foreword (by Graber), Preface, and ch 1 Selected articles from <i>The New York Times</i>
Week 2	The Medium and the Message	Bennett, <i>News</i> , ch 2 M. McLuhan: The Media is the Message (on Laulima) Selected articles from <i>BBC News Online</i> and <i>The Guardian</i> Reaction Paper #1 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima
Week 3	What is News?: Encodification/Decodification	Arno, A.,: <i>Alarming Reports</i> (on Laulima) Hall. S. "Encoding / Decoding." Watch Stuart Hall: "Representation and the Media - " http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=409 Selected articles from <i>Newsweek</i>
Week 4	Media Bias Liberalism v. Conservatism in the Media	Bennett, <i>News</i> , ch 5 and review the discussion of media bias, ch 2, especially pp 35-44, ch 4 Selected articles from <i>Time Magazine</i> Reaction Paper #2 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima
Week 5	Politicians and the Media: Scandals, Terrorism and Fear	Iyengar, <i>Media Politics</i> , ch 10 (on Laulima) Sebro. T. <i>Terrorism in Norway: Of Trolls and other Monsters</i> Selected articles from <i>Foreign Affairs</i>
Week 6	Media Issues: Media Politics in Hawai'i	Silva, N., <i>Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism</i> , Duke University Press, Washington D.C. (on Laulima) Selected articles from the <i>Honolulu Star</i>

		<p><i>Advertiser</i> Reaction Paper #3 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima</p>
Week 7	The Media and Globalization	<p>Bennett, News, ch 3 and 8 (read pp 266-272) Selected articles from <i>Le Monde International</i> Watch: "The Square"</p>
Week 8	Media and Methods: Virtual Ethnography	<p>Mankekar, P., <i>National Texts and Gendered Lives: an Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City</i> (Laulima) Boellsdorf, T. <i>Coming of Age in Second Life</i> (Laulima) Selected articles from <i>Asia Times</i> Reaction Paper #4 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima Mid-Term Exam due on Laulima, Friday at 4pm</p>
Week 9	Media, Identity and the Nation	<p>Castells, M., <i>The Power of Identity</i> Anderson, B. <i>Imagined Communities</i> (selections on Laulima) Selected articles from the <i>BBC News</i> online</p>
Week 10	The Internet and Online Social Movements	<p>Sebros, T., <i>Moving Histories, Exit Voice: Online Burmese Resistance Discourse</i> (on Laulima) Selected articles from the <i>Democratic Voice of Burma</i> Watch: "Burma VJ" Reaction Paper #5 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima</p>
Week 11	The Media and Changing Technoscapes	<p>Fiske J., <i>Videotech</i> (Laulima) Watch the Rodney King incident video (online)</p>
Week 12	Orientalism and The Media	<p>Excerpts from Edward Sa'id's <i>Orientalism</i> (on Laulima) Watch: "Reel Bad Arabs" Reaction Paper #6 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima</p>
Week 13	Political Economy of the Media	<p>Herman, E. and N. Chomsky, <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i>. Introduction and Ch 1 The Propaganda Model Selected articles/webisodes from <i>Fox News online</i></p>
Week 14	Media and War I	<p>Herman, E. and N. Chomsky, <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i>. Introduction and Ch 5 The Indochina Wars (Vietnam) Selected articles/webisodes from <i>Al Jazeera</i></p>

		online Reaction Paper #7 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima
Week 15	Media and War II	Herman, E. and N. Chomsky, <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i> . Introduction and Ch 6 The Indochina Wars (Laos and Cambodia) Selected articles/webisodes from globalpost.org (World Military News)
Week 16	Media Research Final Project	Student online presentations and feedback exchange Exam review Reaction Paper #8 due Wed at 4pm uploaded to Laulima
Week 17	Finals Week	Final Exam due on Laulima, Wed at 4pm. Final Paper Due uploaded to Laulima, Fri at 4pm

Extra Credit

You may earn up to 50 points in extra credit during this course. You can chose to do a book review of novel or a politics and media themed book that will earn you up to 20 points. Additionally, you can write short papers about a "current event" that in some way relates to anthropology. Each current event paper can earn you up to 10 points in the class.

1. Book review (20 points): Write a 2-3 page review of political science book, or a book that uses or reflects the political science concepts covered in this class. If you are unsure about where to find a book that matches your interests, please ask me and I can give you several options to chose from. Before you write your report - ask me if the book you have chosen is appropriate.

2. Current event - up to 3(10 points each): A current event is anything that has happened recently and received national or local attention in the media or in the community. Write a 1-2 page analysis of a current event where you use at least one central concept we have learned in this course and cite at least one news-source that discusses the event.

* All extra credit work should be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font and include a bibliography. Make sure you have your name, the date and page numbers on your assignments.

Due date: I encourage you to turn these in earlier rather than later in the semester. I will accept extra credit work until **the final Exam Date**, but please do not wait until the last day to hand these in.

General Policies and Advice

***If you have concerns about your performance in the course, please come see me or 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 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 KCC'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 Disability Support Services Office, Ilima 103, 734-9552 (V/T), or email kapdss@hawaii.edu for assistance.

***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.