

**POLS 341 – The Politics of Media (Online)**

**Summer 2015 Extension**

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*"All the sound and fury, magnified through the television and the Internet, coarsens the public culture. It makes tempers flare, helps breed distrust. And whether we politicians like to admit it or not, the constant vitriol can wear on the spirit."*

*B. Obama, The Audacity of Hope*

*"There is now a menace called Twitter."*

*R.T. Erdoğan*

**1. Course Description**

This course has a Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus designation. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, students will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues; responsibly deliberating on ethical issues; and making ethically determined judgments.

The course designed to provide students with an essential understanding of the functioning of media in politics and the major ethical frameworks that influence the role of media in terms of social and political phenomena. We will focus on the influences and effects of media on politics, setting public agendas, interpreting events, manipulating the political process, political learning through popular culture as the major topics of discussion throughout the course.

By the end of the course, the students will have acquired an understanding of:

- the role of media within networks of governance
- the ways through which media fulfills that role
- individual-media relations considering the political responsibility of the citizen (if there is such thing)

We will also ask the questions whether the media functions in favor of particular political groups/camps and what the potential political or other outcomes of such functioning might be. Then we will turn to the internet and social media to discuss the difference those make in news conduction and interpretation, considering today we are all agents of media with our Facebook, Twitter, and blogger accounts accessible almost anytime, anywhere.

## 2. Course Structure

The course will be delivered through Lulima. I will post the lectures at the beginning of every week and you will be responsible for reflecting your take on the material by posting weekly assignments (reaction paragraphs) on Lulima. Written interaction is the backbone of this class, so you are also expected to comment on/critique other students' reactions.

You will use your Lulima account to login to the course from <https://lulima.hawaii.edu>. You will use Lulima also for accessing additional course readings (such as journal articles or videos that support that week's lecture topic) and posting your assignments in addition to engaging in class discussion under each week's assigned topic.

## 3. Course Material and Requirements

As an online course, you are required to participate in the course discussions electronically. In order to do this, you must have a reliable connection to the internet (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable), access to Lulima, and have basic competency using web browsers and email.

Basic course readings:

- Alec Charles. 2014. *Interactivity 2: New media, politics, and society*. Peter Lang AG (Available Online – UH Manoa eBrary)
- Ziauddin Sardar. 2010. *Introducing Media Studies: A Graphic Guide*. Icon Books.

Please read the weekly assigned part of the basic material above in addition to the additional readings (if any) before engaging in that week's discussion. I will send all material through Lulima.

### Weekly Reactions and Participation

Online participation in this course is very important. After each week's class, you will be required to post a 500 word reaction to the review question I posted on Lulima. You are also encouraged to comment on other student's reaction for us to be able to make this class into an interactive discussion platform.

### Writing Assignment

There will be one mid-term writing assignment, 5 pages double-spaced and with full citations (see below), in which you will answer a question I will ask related to the class discussion. This writing assignment should be emailed to the instructor before the deadline (TBA). The paper will be graded according to how well it is structured, how clearly and precisely it is written, and how rigorously it is argued. You can develop this midterm paper into a broader final project after receiving feedback from me on your proposed project.

### Final Project

The final project will be a 10-page (*double spaced, Times New Roman 12*) research paper. You are expected to use a minimum of 10 resources (and at least five of those must be resources other than the class readings) (books, journal articles, newspaper articles, in which you will answer a question you have developed about the politics of media. You will send a draft 3 weeks prior to the submission deadline and receive feedback from me. Please have a

look at this citation guide and contact me if you have any questions about providing references: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

Alternatively, as this will be an interactively developing course, instead of writing a final paper you may also create a presentation and make a video documentary to support your presentation topic/question. Students are encouraged to send an outline of what they will be working on for the final project and receive feedback from me.

#### 4. Grading

Overall 100 points to be broken down as follows:

Weekly Reactions: 5 points (per reaction) = a total of 10 reactions / 50 points

Writing Assignment (Mid-term): 20 points

Final Project: 30 points

At the end of the course, I will add your points and assign a letter grade as shown below. Your letter grade will be converted to a four-point scale as listed on the UH Manoa *Credit and Grades* section of the course catalog found here: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/undergrad-ed/creditsGrades.htm>:

93-100 =A	90-92- =A-	87-89 =B+	83-86 =B	80-82 =B-	77-79 =C+
73-76 =C	70-72 =C-	67-69 =D+	63-66 =D-	60-62 =D-	59-0 =F

#### 5. Course Schedule

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|--------|---|
| Week 1 | Introduction: Why should we study media within politics?<br><b>Sardar, p. 1-15</b><br><b>Alec, Chapter 1: Engines of Change</b>   |
| Week 2 | Media as “political” industry<br><b>Sardar, p.16-20</b><br><b>Alec, Chapter 2: Electronic Politics</b>  |
| Week 3 | Media, videogames, and war<br><b>Benedict Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities</i>, Chapter 2 “The Origins of National Consciousness”</b><br><b>Alec, Chapter 3: War Games</b> |
| Week 4 | Media and “the people”: Does public response really matter?<br><b>Sardar, p. 21-37</b>  |

**Alec, Chapter 5: Social Networks**

Week 5 Semiotics: Decoding material

**Sardar, p. 38-51**

**Alec, Chapter 4: Reality Television**

**Date TBA - Writing Assignment due -**

Week 6 Is it the material or audience that defines media content?

**Ethics discussion: Common good approach**

**Sardar, p. 64-81**

**Alec, Chapter 6: Public Knowledge**

Week 7 Gender politics of media: Representation of sexual images

**Ethics discussion: The fairness (justice) approach**

**Media Studies p. 82-88**

Week 8 Desire in production: Politics of advertising

**Ethics discussion: Virtue approach**

**Media Studies p. 107-122**

Week 9 Media censorship as political power

**Barney Warf, Geographies of global Internet censorship, *GeoJournal*, 2011**

Week 10 Social media & movements: Impact of Facebook, Twitter and the like

**Jeffrey S. Juris, Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation, *American Ethnologist*, May 2012**

**Alec, Chapters 7 & 8: The Twitterati & Revolutions**

**Date TBA - Final Projects due -**

## 6. Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Students are required to follow the UH Manoa campus policies as listed in the course catalog or found here: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>. Students are required to be respectful of their classmates and refrain from disruptive behavior in the classroom and on campus. If you engage in cheating or plagiarism, you will receive an F (0.0) grade for the course and I will be forced to report you for academic dishonesty.

**Plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely 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. If you have questions regarding what does and does not constitute plagiarism, please ask me.

### **7. Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please let me know and contact the KOKUA Program in *Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services* or call them at (808)956-7511.

Please Note: As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. I will inform you about such changes via email.