

Professor: Elio DI PAOLANTONIO

Course Title: The Evolution of American Political
Campaigns - Spring 2024 Semester

Number of contact hours: 20

ECTS: 5 ECTS

Syllabus

Sciences Po Toulouse

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA – ENGLISH TRACK International & Comparative Studies Diploma

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

*“Everybody experiences far more than he understands.
Yet it is experience, rather than understanding, that influences behaviour.”*

It’s uncertain whether Marshall McLuhan realized just how accurately his observation would come to characterize the American electorate in the 21st century. With the amount of political media coverage during election campaigns, today’s voters have never had greater access to information about their political representatives and electoral candidates. Paradoxically, the public is arguably much less informed than ever before as the average citizen seems unable to actually process the overwhelming amount of content available. The relentless broadcasting loops in 24-hour news programming and an increasingly fragmented media ecosystem sustained by the Internet has inaugurated an era of media *saturation*. Within the context of eroding public trust of mainstream journalism and political institutions, this course examines media & electoral campaign interaction and considers the implications for American democracy.

Ongoing developments in the media landscape have led to profound changes in the way the news industry, politicians and their constituents relate. In the digital age, the influence of the media on American politics has evolved significantly and today’s news organizations are facing new challenges in their attempt to cover political campaigns and policy issues. Meanwhile, the techniques used by politicians to win elections, maintain power and accomplish policy objectives are also shifting. In this context, we will look at the nature of modern political campaigning and take into consideration the complex relationships between the major actors involved.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Consider the pervasiveness of advertising as a cultural & political specificity in the U.S.A.
- Introduce key notions in media literacy to decode election campaign communication techniques
- Encourage critical thinking on public opinion influence of campaigning practices
- Familiarize students with the evolution of political campaign media coverage in the age of the Internet
- Address implications of political campaigns & media interaction on maintaining healthy democracy

GRADING AND EVALUATION:

THERE ARE TWO EVALUATIONS FOR THIS COURSE WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1 WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT – **50%**
- 1 FINAL EXAM – **50%**

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (WEDNESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER)

THERE IS **ONE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT** THAT STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE IN GROUPS. THE ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GIVEN OUT DURING THE THIRD CLASS AND MUST BE HANDED IN THE SAME DAY ELECTRONICALLY.

FINAL EXAM

STUDENTS WILL SIT FOR A 2-HOUR WRITTEN EXAM ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASS. THE EXAM WILL CONSIST OF WRITING **ONE SHORT ESSAY** IN RELATION TO THE COURSE (LECTURES + READINGS). THERE WILL BE A CHOICE OF QUESTIONS – STUDENTS WILL ONLY BE REQUIRED TO ANSWER ONE.

NB ORAL PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION CAN TAKE MANY FORMS: ANSWERING THE PROFESSOR'S QUESTIONS, ENGAGING IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS), ELABORATING ON A FELLOW STUDENT'S COMMENTS... IT CAN BE DONE USING THE CHAT OR BY ACTIVATING THE MICROPHONE. WHATEVER THE CASE, STUDENTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE DURING THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.

CALENDAR:

CLASSES WILL BE HELD DURING THE FALL SEMESTER OVER A 10 WEEK PERIOD BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 13TH & NOVEMBER 24TH WITH A TOTAL OF 2 HOURS OF LECTURES PER WEEK.

CLASS 1

MEDIA LITERACY

CLASS 2

THE ART OF SPIN

CLASS 3

GROUP PROJECT – ANALYZING POLITICAL ADS

CLASS 4

ADS AS CULTURE (PART 1)

CLASS 5

ADS AS CULTURE (PART 2)

CLASS 6

DEMOCRACY & THE INTERNET (PART 1)

CLASS 7

DEMOCRACY & THE INTERNET (PART 2)

CLASS 8

POLITICS OF MEDIA (PART 1)

CLASS 9

POLITICS OF MEDIA (PART 2)

CLASS 10

FINAL EXAM

LEARNING RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY:

A **COURSE READER** WILL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS VIA THE MOODLE PLATFORM AT THE END OF EACH CLASS. **ALL READINGS ARE MANDATORY.**

THE FOLLOWING **BIBLIOGRAPHY** IS INTENDED FOR THOSE STUDENTS WISHING TO DO FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE SUBJECT. **THESE READINGS ARE NOT MANDATORY BUT RECOMMENDED:**

ANSOLABEHERE, S., BEHR, R., & IYENGAR, S. (1991). *MASS MEDIA & ELECTIONS: AN OVERVIEW*. AMERICAN POLITICS QUARTERLY, 19, 109-139.

ARNOLD, R.D. (2004). *CONGRESS, THE PRESS, AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY*. PRINCETON, NJ: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS.

BAGDIKIAN, B.H. (2000), *THE MEDIA MONOPOLY* (6TH EDITION). BOSTON: BEACON.

BENNETT, W.L., LAWRENCE, R.G. & LIVINGSTON, S. (2008) *WHEN THE PRESS FAILS: POLITICAL POWER & THE NEWS MEDIA FROM IRAQ TO KATRINA*. CHICAGO: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

BERNAYS, E. (1928), *PROPAGANDA*. NEW YORK: IG PUBLISHING.

DELLI CARPINI, M.X. & KEETER, S. (1996), *WHAT AMERICANS KNOW ABOUT POLITICS & WHY IT MATTERS*. NEW HAVEN, CT: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

DIAMOND, E. & BATES, S. (1992) *THE SPOT: THE RISE OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION*. CAMBRIDGE, MA: MIT PRESS.

ESHBAUGH-SOHA, M. & PEAKE, J.S. (2011) *BREAKING THROUGH THE NOISE: PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP, PUBLIC OPINION AND THE NEWS MEDIA*. STANFORD, CA: STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

- GANS, HERBERT J. (2003) *DEMOCRACY & THE NEWS*. NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
- HEDGES, C. (2009) *EMPIRE OF ILLUSION: THE END OF LITERACY AND THE TRIUMPH OF SPECTACLE*. NEW YORK: NATION BOOKS.
- HERMAN, E. S., & CHOMSKY, N. (1988). *MANUFACTURING CONSENT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MASS MEDIA*. NEW YORK: PANTHEON BOOKS.
- IYENGAR, S. (1990) *SHORTCUTS TO POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE: SELECTIVE ATTENTION & THE ACCESSIBILITY BIAS*. IN J.H. KUKLINSKI (EDS.) *INFORMATION & THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS* (PP. 161-185). CHAMPAIGN: UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS
- KLEIN, N. (1999) *NO LOGO*. TORONTO: KNOPF CANADA.
- MCCHESNEY, R.W. (2004), *THE PROBLEM OF THE MEDIA*. MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS, CH.2, CH.3
- MCCHESNEY, R.W. & NICHOLS, J. (2010), *THE DEATH & LIFE OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM*. NEW YORK: NATION BOOKS.
- MILLER, C. (2008, NOVEMBER 7). *HOW OBAMA'S INTERNET CAMPAIGN CHANGED POLITICS*. FROM NEW YORK TIMES BLOG WEBSITE : <https://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-internet-campaign-changed-politics/>
- MILLER, J.M. & KROSNICK, J.A. (2000). *NEWS MEDIA IMPACT ON THE INGREDIENTS OF PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATIONS: POLITICALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE CITIZENS ARE GUIDED BY A TRUSTED SOURCE*. AMERICAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, 44, 295-309
- SPEAKES, L. (1988) *SPEAKING OUT: THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY FROM INSIDE THE WHITEHOUSE*. NEW YORK: SCRIBNER.
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