POS 3235 (91043), Mass Media and Politics

Fall Term 2021 Syllabus

(August 23 – December 11)

(Traditional/Lecture Course Format)

(Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00 – 1:15 P.M., MSB (0360))

(3 Credit hours)

Part 1: General Course Information.

Instructor: Alvin (AJ) Quackenbush

Email: alvin.quackenbush@ucf.edu

Office Hours: Fall 2021, **online via Webcourses:** Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 – 2:30 P.M. and by appointment.

Political Science Department Office: Howard Phillips Hall, Room 302

Phone: (407) 823-2608

Website: http://politicalscience.cos.ucf.edu/

Required Materials: "Media Politics, A Citizen's Guide," Iyengar, 4th ed., ISBN: 978-0-393-67543-6.

Course Description: (3 Credits)

Influence of media on campaigns, public officials, public opinion, the definition of political news, and selected public policies. Prerequisite(s): None.

Introduction:

Welcome to Media and Politics. Above all, news media has a profound influence on American society and politics. The study of American politics as it exists in the 21st century, thus, requires an examination of the role of media in framing political debate and legitimizing local, national, and international issues. Essentially, this media-focused course emphasizes the ways in which news media shape everything we know about politics. Like all journalism disciplines today, political journalism is rapidly changing with the Internet. A significant portion of the course will be dedicated to new media and how online reporting and social networking has altered the current political landscape.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Recognize the fundamental role of media in shaping the public's perception of politicians, the government, and the political structure.
- Understand the importance of the Internet and new media in the modern information age and the profound effect it has on media coverage, campaigns, and privacy.
- Recognize the strengths and weaknesses of certain media sources and develop ways to ascertain the validity of information from media sources.
- Identify how political figures are affected by the media and ways in which political figures respond to, influence, or even manipulate news coverage.
- Critique the ways in which films and television programs establish political identity and establish a framework for societal interaction and discussion.
- Understand the differences in media coverage of the three branches of government.
- Apply different mass media theories to describe how important media issues are developed or framed.
- Understand media ownership and media regulation, as well as the diminishing freedoms of the press in our capitalist, democratic society.

Topics and Discussion:

Please keep in mind that in this course we will be analyzing and debating topics that are current, relevant, political, and sometimes controversial. Some students may find that certain topics hard to discuss and there may be a level of discomfort. Please keep in mind that the intent is to promote critical thinking, present alternative ideas, challenge preconceptions, and deepen important conversations.

It is natural for students to sometimes feel overwhelmed. If this happens, please advise me in class or afterwards via email. As always, the goal is to maintain a safe space for learning

Part 2: Classroom Policies.

Grading: Please keep in mind that all students are graded according to the same standards. My goal is to be fair and consistent. As a result, I do not make special exceptions for students that are not given to the entire class. Also, students are not given special assignments that are not offered to everyone. This would be unfair to the class. Additionally, written assignments are graded according to course rubrics and assignment directions; points are NEVER taken off because of someone's political ideology, party preference, or my personal views. Any comments in that regard are not deductions. They are designed to invoke critical thinking, present alternative ideas, suggest other narratives, challenge your arguments, etc.

Attendance: Regular class attendance is expected. There is a direct correlation between class attendance and overall success in the course. All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid. There will be a 10 point syllabus quiz due on Friday, August 27th during the first week of the semester to ensure student attendance in the course.

Tardiness: Students who are coming to class are expected to be on time. Students who are tardy disrupt other students and the overall learning environment, so tardiness is not acceptable. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, *etc*., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Email: It is the policy of this professor to communicate with you via UCF email or the Webcourses message system. Failure to check for e-mail messages will not be accepted as an excuse for missed work.

Cell Phone**:** Students are required to turn off all cell phones and electronic devices before the beginning of class because they can disrupt the learning environment. This means no text messaging! If a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student may be asked to leave for the remainder of the class. If there is an emergency situation warranting the use of a cell phone during class time, the student must notify the professor in writing prior to the beginning of class. During a testing situation, if a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student's test or examination will be collected and the student will be asked to leave without an option for completion.

Laptop Computers: Students may use their laptop, tablet, or "mini-computer' (smart phone) during class to take notes or to access the Internet for research. A student who uses this freedom in an inappropriate fashion may be asked to leave the class for that day or to turn off their laptop or phone.

Protected Course Learning Materials: Please keep in mind that students are not permitted to take personal video in class. Also, all course learning materials are protected information and cannot be shared via social media or outside of the class canvas page. In order to maintain a comfortable and private learning environment, students should not take screen shots of the course website. This is to protect the privacy rights of you and your fellow students. Such

conduct may be determined to be a violation university policy and the student code of conduct. Please see the "University Policies" section below for more information.

Part 3: Assignments.

1. Syllabus Quiz: There will be a 10 point syllabus quiz due on Friday, August 27th at 5:00 P.M. during the first week of the semester to ensure student attendance in the course.
2. Discussions: During the semester there will be 6 discussion posts related to current events, the media, and course outcomes. Each is worth 10 points and your lowest score will be dropped. The discussions will be completed in webcourses on our course page and will be graded according to the attached rubric. Due dates and specific directions can be found on webcourses.
3. Written Assignment: During the semester you will be required to write one short research paper. The assignment will be worth 50 points and graded according to the attached rubric. The assignment will be type written and will be at least 2000 words (based upon the word count in Microsoft word), not including titles and work cited. Papers that do not meet the minimum word count will not be accepted and no partial credit will be given to short papers. The paper assignment will be posted on webcourses during the semester with specific details. The due date will be included in the assignment and is listed in the course schedule at the bottom of the syllabus. Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to make sure that your paper is attached correctly. Late papers will be accepted with a penalty.

   *The University Writing Center (UWC) offers writing support to students from first-year to graduate in every discipline. Below is more information about the center.

   University Writing Center
   Colbourn Hall 105
   Satellite Locations: Main Library, Rosen Library, Online
   407-823-2197

   http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu

4. Examinations: There will be three exams in this course during the semester. The tests will consist of fill in the blank, multiple choice and true/false questions. The dates are listed in the schedule at the bottom of the course syllabus. Any student not completing the examination will receive 0 of those possible points, and this will impact the final average in the course.

Late Work Policy: The examinations should be taken on or before the date indicated in the syllabus. Again, no makeup exams are available without the explicit consent of the instructor, which shall only be granted in cases of documented emergences. All make up exams will be short answer and essay format only.

All graded materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grades section of Webcourses@UCF. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades.

Part 4: Basis for Grade.

Evaluation: Your grade will be determined by grades on a syllabus quiz, 6 Discussion posts (your lowest score will be dropped), 1 Written Assignment, and three Examinations.

Syllabus Quiz: 10 points (5%)

5 Discussion posts: 10 points each (50 total, (25%))

1 Written Assignment: 50 points (25%)

3 Examinations: 30 points each (90 total, 45%))

200 Total Points

Grading Scale:

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

60 - 69 = D

59 and below = F

Part 5: University Policies.

University Policies: The UCF Golden Rule Student Handbook is at http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/ and UCF policies and procedures can be found at http://policies.ucf.edu/.

Withdrawal Policy: Withdrawal for each term begins after "Late Registration and Add/Drop" ends. Students may withdraw from a class and receive the notation of "W" until the date noted in the "Academic Calendar" of the *Schedule Web Guide*. A student may withdraw from courses

using myUCF at https://my.ucf.edu, or by visiting the Registrar's Office (Millican Hall 161), certain college advising offices, or a Regional Campus records office. For a complete policy more information on withdrawals please go tohttps://www.academicservices.ucf.edu/

Student Code of Classroom Conduct: UCF is dedicated not only to the advancement of knowledge and learning, but is concerned with the development of responsible personal and social conduct. By enrolling at the university, a student assumes the responsibility for becoming familiar with and abiding by the general rules of conduct. The primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the professor. Students who engage in any prohibited or unlawful acts that result in disruption of a class may be directed by the professor to leave the class. Violation of any UCF policies/procedures or classroom rules may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University. Disciplinary action could include being withdrawn from the class, disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate and authorized actions. So, act mature, treating others with respect, verbally or online. The UCF Student Code of Conduct is in the current Student handbook and more information can be found at http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/.

Ethics: As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/).

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com: In this course we may utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit http://www.turnitin.com (Links to an external site.).

Religious Observances: Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class to observe a holy day of their religious faith. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the Faculty Center's main web page under "Calendars," and for additional information, contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at 407-823-6479.

Course Accessibility: It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

In-Class Recording Policy: Outside of the notetaking and recording services offered by Student Accessibility Services, the creation of an audio or video recording of all or part of a class for personal use is allowed *only* with the advance and explicit written consent of the instructor. Such recordings are only acceptable in the context of personal, private studying and notetaking and are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the separate written approval of the instructor.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students**:** Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Disclaimer: Changes in the syllabus and/or schedule may be made at any time during the term by announcement of the professor. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

Diversity and Inclusion: One way to promote a safe and caring classroom community is to encourage each student's unique voice, perspective, and presence. The following diversity statement gives professors language for explaining how students' contributions will be valued:

The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at www.shield.ucf.edu and http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – http://oie.ucf.edu/ & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/ & sas@ucf.edu
- Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events – www.diversity.ucf.edu
- Student Bias Grievances – Just Knights response team – http://jkrt.sdes.ucf.edu/
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – http://compliance.ucf.edu/ & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- Ombuds Office – http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu

Part 6: Campus Safety Statement.

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at <http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html>.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF> (click on link from menu on left).
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <https://my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<You CAN Survive an Active Shooter>).

Part 7: University COVID Policies

University-Wide Face Covering Policy for Common Spaces and Face-to-Face Classes

The University expectation is that students, faculty and staff wear masks while indoors, in line with CDC guidance and with Florida's State University System and in an effort to help protect our campus community. However, neither the university nor individual faculty and staff members may require individuals to wear masks if they choose not to do so.

Notifications in Case of Changes to Course Modality

Depending on the course of the pandemic during the semester, the university may make changes to the way classes are offered. If that happens, please look for announcements or messages in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email about changes specific to this course.

COVID-19 and Illness Notification

Students who believe they may have a COVID-19 diagnosis should contact UCF Student Health Services (407-823-2509) so proper contact tracing procedures can take place.

Students should not come to campus if they are ill, are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID, or if anyone living in their residence has tested positive or is sick with COVID-19 symptoms. CDC guidance for COVID-19 symptoms is located here: (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)

Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness reason to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

In Case of Faculty Illness

If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any alterations to this course.

Course Accessibility and Disability COVID-19 Supplemental Statement

Accommodations may need to be added or adjusted should this course shift from an on-campus to a remote format. Students with disabilities should speak with their instructor and should contact sas@ucf.edu to discuss specific accommodations for this or other courses.

Should this course shift to remote-only instruction, the university has provided several resources to assist students with learning: https://digitallearning.ucf.edu/newsroom/keeplearning/

Technology Access – Depending upon modality, this course might need to shift to remote or fully online instruction based on medical guidance. This course also could be fully online and thus it may require access to additional technology. If students do not have proper access to technology, including a computer and reliable Wi-Fi, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. Information about technology lending can be found at https://it.ucf.edu/techcommons/ and https://library.ucf.edu/libtech.

Part 8: Course Schedule.

Fall 2021, August 23 – December 11, Traditional, Face-to Face Course Format

Course Schedule: (UCF Calendars are at https://calendar.ucf.edu/2021/fall)

All the dates and assignments listed below are tentative and can be changed at the discretion of the professor with proper notification via UCF email.

Week 1: (August 23 – 29), **Drop Refund Deadline August 27.**

Introduction.

Syllabus Quiz due by 5:00 pm, on Friday, August 27th at 5:00 P.M.

Week 2: (August 30 – September 5)

Chapter 1: Introduction: Image Is Everything

Discussion 1 due September 5.

Week 3: (September 6 – 12)

Chapter 2: The Press and the Democratic Process: The American System in Comparative Perspective

Week 4: (September 13 – 19)

Chapter 3: The Media Marketplace: Where Americans Get the News

Discussion 2 due September 19.

Week 5: (September 20 – 26)

Exam 1: Chapters 1 - 3, Thursday, September 23rd in class.

Week 6: (September 27 – October 3)

Chapter 4: Reporters, Official Sources, and the Decline of Adversarial Journalism

Discussion 3 due October 3.

Week 7: (October 4 – 10)

Chapter 5: New Media, New Forms of Campaigning

Week 8: (October 11 – 17)

Chapter 6: Campaigning through the Media

Discussion 4 due October 17.

Week 9: (October 18 – 24)

Catch up and Review.

Week 10: (October 25 – 31), **October 29 – Withdrawal Deadline.**

Exam 2: Chapters 4 – 6, Thursday, October 28th in class.

Week 11: (November 1 – 7)

Chapter 7: Campaigns That Matter

Week 12: (November 8 – 14)

Chapter 8: News and Public Opinion

Discussion 5 due November 14.

Week 13: (November 15 – 21)

Chapter 9: Going Public: Governing through the Media

Written Assignment 2: due November 21.

Week 14: (November 22 – 28), **November 24 – 26, no class – Thanksgiving Break.**

Chapter 10: Evaluating Media Politics

Discussion 6 due November 28.

Week 15: (November 29 – December 6)

Catch up and Review.

Week 16: (December 6 – 11**), Final Exam Period.**

Examination 3: December 9, from 10:00 am. – 12:50 pm. Chapters 7 – 10.