POS 3235 - Mass Media and Politics

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2026
Class Meeting Days: MWF
Class Meeting Time: 11:30AM - 12:20PM
Class Meeting Location: CB1 O308
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Autumn Perkey
Office Location: Howard Phillips Hall, 302K
Office Hours
Monday 2:00PM-3:00PM

Friday 10:00AM-11:00AM

Or by appointment
Email: autumn.perkey@ucf.edu

Course Description

POS 3235 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Mass Media and Politics: PR: ENC 1102 or POS 2041 or C.I. Influence of media on campaigns, public officials, public opinion, the definition of political news, and selected public policies. Occasional.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze and apply agenda-setting, priming, and framing theories to interpret empirical data and evaluate media influence on political information and public opinion through case studies.
2. Critically compare and defend campaign and public official communication strategies—including propaganda and persuasion techniques—and communicate findings effectively in policy memos and briefings.
3. Assess and synthesize the impact of digital platforms, international media, and regulatory frameworks on democratic accountability, and design evidence-based policy recommendations in a capstone paper and oral presentation.
4. Apply established ethical principles to identify potential harms in media practices and propose mitigation strategies that promote transparency and democratic norms.

Required Course Materials and Resources

Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide
ISBN: 978-0393887778
Authors: Shanto Iyengar
Publisher: W.W. Norton
Publication Date: 2022
Edition: 5th

Propaganda & Persuasion
ISBN: 978-1071854365
Authors: Nancy Snow, Garth S. Jowett, and Victorai O'Donnell

Publisher: SAGE Publications, INC
Publication Date: October 10, 2024
Edition: Eighth Edition

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

The overall grade for this course will consist of six different assignment categories: weekly quizzes, group and in-class assignments, written assignments, a midterm exam, media diary, and final capstone project and presentation. Each assignment and full description are provided on Webcourses.

Breakdown of Course Grades	
Assignment Category:	Percent of Final Grade:
Quizzes	15%
Group and In-class Assignments	20%
Written Assignments	20%
Media Diary	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Capstone Project and Presentation	15%

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Crisis Simulation (In-class Team Exercise)	Assignment	100
	Start of Media Diary	Assignment	
1/16/26	Media Institutions Quiz	Quiz	0
1/18/26	Media Diary Start	Assignment	100
1/23/26	Framing Exercise	Assignment	100

Grading Scale

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Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	61-63%
F	0-60%

If you would like to review any of your grades, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade. Grade disputes will require a meeting with me and some prior prep work on your part that will need to be submitted to me prior to our meeting. Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have clear standards on grade cutoffs and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut ($89.99 \neq 90.00$).

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup Work Policy

- If you are unable to make class and miss an exam/quiz due to an emergency or a university-approved scheduling conflict, you must let me know as soon as possible and provide relevant documentation. I will be as accommodating as possible for students with emergent situations. If conflicts arise affecting your attendance or

missing an assignment, make-up will only be considered if you contact me prior in writing via email.

- If you represent UCF in an authorized event that conflicts with class, you must submit a Program Verification Form in advance. I will provide a reasonable, equivalent make-up for missed graded work with no penalty for the excused absence, consistent with UCF Policy 4-401.
- UCF reasonably accommodates religious observances. Notify me no later than the tenth business day of the term if you wish to be excused for holy days; you are responsible for material covered and will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete missed work. No penalty will be applied for excused observances.

Missed/Late Assignments

Late work will be accepted without a university excuse up to seven (7) days after the due date. For each day an assignment is late there will be a deduction of 20% for each day off the final grade for the assignment.

Attendance

Attendance and engagement are assessed through in-class activities (retrieval quizzes, ad coding labs, discussion) and online tasks in Webcourses. Per UCF guidance, “appropriate engagement” is the analogue to attendance across modalities (e.g., participating live, completing embedded activities, contributing to discussions). Please review the weekly module checklists to ensure you meet engagement requirements. No make up work will be provided for group and in-class assignments if not in attendance.

Communications

I will endeavor to answer all email correspondence within 48 hours on business days. However, this may not always be possible. Please do not expect responses after business hours, when the university is closed, or over the weekends. Please be conscientious about the times you send your emails, plan accordingly and begin assignments with appropriate lead-time.

Adjustments to Readings and the Syllabus

While the syllabus aims to be a contract, it is a living document. I may need to adjust deadlines or activities due to unforeseen circumstances or to better meet learning goals.

All changes will be communicated clearly and timely via Webcourses announcements, and no student will be unfairly disadvantaged by a change.

Classroom Recording and Conduct

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach students about a particular subject. Recording classroom activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, and private conversations is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance, and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct as described in the Golden Rule.

Group and In-class assignments

This course relies heavily on teamwork and cooperation throughout the semester. Early on in the semester, you will be assigned into various different groups of four at random and will be asked to accomplish various tasks in a group effort. Since 20% of your final grade is mostly composed of grades on various team projects, teamwork skills are essential for this class. If you are having difficulties with working in groups, please feel free to discuss this with me and whether this course is ideal for you.

How to Study for the Course

Each week the course consists of four sets of materials:

1. Your textbooks
2. Academic articles
3. News media / public sources
4. Media for analysis

The course is broken up to allow each week to introduce the topic (Monday), delve deeper (Wednesday), and an applied understanding (Friday). Reading guides are provided on Webcourses for each week with overviews of the material and suggested questions to check for your understanding. I recommend keeping a list of questions or confusing points from the readings that I can emphasize during lectures. Given the course has a routine flow each week, I suggest early in the semester developing what your study and assignment plan looks like for you and outlining the time you need to complete readings and assignments in advance.

Controversial Content

This course will discuss some potentially controversial issues, especially around politics. Part of the purpose of the course is to enable you to understand the role of the media in the political process, how it is used, and the potential effects on citizens. You are expected to have an open mind and to try to *understand* the course content and it's implications (and to consider the ideas and evidence used) for many different positions on these issues, and to critically examine and respectfully discuss such arguments, ideas and evidence.

Remember we attack the idea or argument, but not the person making it. Mistreatment of others for their personal views will not be tolerated.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is governed on an assignment-by-assignment basis.

For each assignment, you must carefully review the instructions to determine whether AI-generated content is permitted. In some cases, you may be permitted (though not required) to use GenAI. When using GenAI, you must disclose specifically where and how it was used in the process of completing the assignment. Unless explicitly allowed, all components of your work must be fully prepared by you. Any attempt to represent GenAI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism. Ultimately,

students are responsible for the accuracy and veracity of submitted work whether AI-generated or not.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assessment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing

misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designated on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a

leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

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 Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF

cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

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 arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF's Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF Classroom has an Emergency Procedure Guide posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY**. When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND**. When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty, and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and

text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this 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.

Class Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Foundations: Media Institutions and Minimal Effects
2	Agenda-setting, Priming, Framing
3	Campaign Strategy and Political Advertising
4	Political Advertising: Emotion and Persuasion
5	Contrasting Ads and Propaganda Techniques
6	Media and Public Officials
7	Policy Coverage and Outcomes
8	Midterm Review and Exam
9	Government Propaganda and Analysis
10	Digital Media and Algorithms
11	Polarization, Selective Exposure, and Echo Chambers
12	Disinformation and Identity Ecosystems
13	International Media and Conflict
14	Crisis Communication
15	Regulation and Ethics
16	Final