

**Political Science (POL) 4266**  
**Media and Politics**  
**Spring 2006, 4 Credits**

Days/Time: TTH, 2:00 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.  
Location: 134 Community Service  
Instructor: Angie Bos  
Office: 140C Community Service  
Phone: (320) 589-6205  
E-mail: [bosal@umn.edu](mailto:bosal@umn.edu)  
Website: <http://myu.umn.edu>, find webCT course page under “toolkits”  
Office Hours: Tuesday 4pm-5pm in my office; Wednesday 2pm-3pm at Common Cup coffee shop or via UM Chat; Thursday 1pm-2pm in my office, or by appointment.

### **Course Description**

In this course we will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which the mass media influence politics in the United States. We will explore the role that media play in providing information for citizens in U.S. democracy, examine how the media influence the political process, and investigate how the goals of and changes within the media industry influence the impact media coverage has on citizens' views of and participation in U.S. politics. We will discuss the ways in which media coverage influences U.S. public opinion broadly as well as focusing on some specific individual-level media effects, including: agenda setting, priming, and framing. Through our study, we will explore how the media either enhance or limit the potential for citizens to contribute to democracy as well as how the media either limits or facilitates the potential for political elites to manipulate public opinion. Several readings will focus on the ways in which media cover and influence American elections. We will also discuss whether political science theories regarding the media hold up given new media technologies (cable television, the internet, blogs, etc.).

Throughout the course we will discuss ways to systematically study the media and their role in U.S. politics by focusing on specific case studies and by discussing and conducting various research methods appropriate to research in this area. This course is designed to promote understanding of and hands-on experience in research in political science. It will be, for a large part, an active-learning experience. Class sessions will include minimal lecture time and focus on relevant videos, class and small group discussion, examination of case studies, group activities, discussion of current events, and individual in-class writing.

### **Course Objectives**

- Given the research project and the various deadlines and assignments related to the project, students will gain and demonstrate high-level research skills.
- Given the research project poster session, students will publicly discuss their research.
- Given the application essays, students will apply course content to current media coverage and fictional television.
- Given the analytic essays and exams, students will think critically about the relevant readings and will write compelling essays with clear and sustained arguments.
- Given being an “Expert for the Day” students will lead class, publicly sharing knowledge with their peers that they've gained regarding the day's topic.

## Course Requirements & Assignments

**Participation.** This course includes several components in which you must participate in the learning. Student preparation, attendance, and active participation are required and will constitute an important part of the final grade. The class sessions will often incorporate content you should have read prior to class and will assume that you have done the readings; coming to class prepared for group activities and discussion is essential for successful participation in the class. Weekly group and individual activities that are completed in class will be turned in randomly to be graded for 6 sessions throughout the semester (you will have one freebie). You should plan to read a daily newspaper throughout the semester since current event news coverage will often be incorporated into class sessions and activities.

**Team Research Project.** Each student in the course will work on a research project with a classmate throughout the semester. This assignment will enable you to get firsthand experience in designing and conducting original research on media and politics. There are several goals: for you to identify a major area of interest in media and politics, narrow down your topic to a specific research question, derive testable hypotheses by drawing on literature outside of the course content, and to choose and carry out appropriate research methods to address the question you've specified. In order to accomplish all this, I have set various due dates for portions of the research proposal in order to keep you on track. Teams will be assigned once I have determined which students share research interests. You may complete the assignment on your own, however you should be aware that it will be a large undertaking by yourself! I will hand out a detailed assignment sheet the first week of class which you can consult regarding various paper deadlines.

**Poster Session.** At the end of the semester, we will model an academic conference in which you will present your final research project to the entire class. You will present your work visually on a poster and your classmates will walk through the exhibit asking questions and learning about your projects. This "poster session" concept is based on professional, academic conferences that exist to allow professional political scientists to present their current work to their peers. Your grade for your presentation will be based on your classmates' and my evaluations. Participation in and attendance at the conference is a required part of the class. The main task of the conference is to gain experience in creatively and publicly presenting your ideas. You will each be required to submit notecards at the Poster Session detailing the questions you've asked of your classmates regarding their research projects. These notecards will be submitted with your name for credit.

**Analytic Essay.** Throughout the semester, you will have two separate options to write a 3-5 page analytic essay related to the readings; you must write one of the two weeks. Your essay must address one of the questions handed out in class one week prior to the due date (you may write your own question if you get it approved by me). Your essays should be analytical and not merely descriptive. I have read these materials, and do not need to be reminded of what we have read. Please do not summarize the authors' arguments, but rather integrate, analyze, and critique them. Be prepared to discuss the essay topics on the date they are due, whether or not you have chosen to write about that particular topic. That is, even when you are not writing your analytic essay, you should have thought about the topics and have some insights to share with your peers. You have the option to write both essay options in which case you'll receive the higher grade of the two.

**Exams.** One in-class midterm exam will test your synthesis of the course material. It will consist of essay questions (you will have a choice of questions) related to course themes. The essay options will require you to define, apply, and synthesize course concepts and readings. The final exam will be a take-home exam. The exam will require you to work individually for up to four hours to respond to approximately two comprehensive essay questions. This exam will be open-book and open-note, however given the time constraints you will need to prepare prior to opening the exam. You will work on this exam using the honor system. The exam will be sent to your university e-mail

account on Sunday, May 7. I trust that you will open the e-mail containing the exam, work on the exam for up to four hours, and then send the exam to me via e-mail (copy your work into the message and attach the word file). The exam will be due via e-mail on Tuesday, May 9 at 6pm (when your University scheduled final would end). One week prior to both exams, I will distribute a study guide.

**Experts for the Day.** You will also be required to lead 30 minutes of a class session with another student in the course. You will receive your team assignments early in the semester based on your interests and priorities for presenting on the possible dates. Presentations will focus on a specific topic related to that day’s readings. I will give your team an article which will highlight potential topic ideas for your presentation. I encourage you to be creative with these sessions and to use multiple teaching techniques to make the material interesting. You may also consider bringing treats for your classmates! At the end of the class period prior to leading your session, your team is required to meet with me to go over your detailed session outline (I will hand out a template for this outline).

**Reading Analysis.** Throughout the semester, you will be required to turn in five reading analyses which summarize and evaluate course readings. A satisfactory Reading Analysis should name the reading you’re discussing, summarize the main point of the reading and the evidence presented, critique the reading/evidence, and state one question you have about the reading (related to course content). Your Reading Analysis should be approximately one single-spaced page. You should e-mail each Reading Analysis assignment to me 24 hours prior to the class session the reading is assigned for. You must specify “Reading Analysis” in the subject line of the e-mail. A template for these assignments will be presented in class early in the semester.

## Course Assignments

<b>Team Research Project (35%)</b>		<b>175 points total</b>
1. One page description	2/21	10
2. Five page research proposal (bring 5 copies)	3/16	35
3. Team Conference	4/3-4/7	5
4. Data Collection Complete (bring to class)	4/25	5
5. Poster session presentation	5/2	30
Poster session notecards	5/2	10
6. Final Paper	5/4	80
<b>Analytic Essay (15%) (write one of two options)</b>		<b>75 points</b>
Option 1:Section I	2/16	
Option 2: Section II	4/18	
<b>In-Class Midterm (15%)</b>	3/28	<b>75 points</b>
<b>Take-Home Final (15%)</b>	5/9	<b>75 points</b>
<b>Experts for the Day (10%)</b> (30 minute session with a classmate)	Possible Dates: 2/2, 2/9, 2/23, 3/2, 4/4, 4/6, 4/13, 4/18	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Reading Analysis (5%)</b>	Any 5 readings	<b>25 points (5/ card)</b>
<b>Class Participation (5%)</b>	Collected randomly 6 times; one freebie	<b>25 points (5/ time)</b>

Total Points Possible: = 500 points

## Grades

Your final course grade will be based on the total points you receive from all assignments listed above. The plus and minus grade system will be used. The following are the grading standards set forth in

the University's Uniform Grading Policy. The complete policy statements are available on the web at: <http://www.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html>.

- § A range- Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. Points: 463
- § B range- Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Points: 398
- § C range- Achievement that meets course requirements in every respect. Points: 348
- § D range- Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements. Points: 297 +
- § S - Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better (achievement required for an S is at the discretion of the instructor, but may be no lower than a C-). Points: 348
- § F - Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. Points: Below 297
- § I (Incomplete) – See course policy below.

### Required Readings

All required books are available for purchase at the UMM Bookstore and on reserve in the library.

1. Marion R. Just, Ann N. Crigler, Dean E. Alger, and Timothy E. Cook. 1996. *Crosstalk: Citizens, Candidates, and the Media in a Presidential Campaign*.
2. Amy Fried. 1997. *Muffled Echoes*.
3. Kellstadt, Paul. 2003. *The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes*.
4. W. Lance Bennett. 2004. *News: The Politics of Illusion*.
5. W. Lance Bennett & Robert M. Entman. 2000. *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*.

### Additional Required Readings

(on E-reserve, JSTOR, Course Website, or in hard copy to xerox at the instructor's office)

- Baum, M. A. & S. Kernell. 1999. Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television? *The American Political Science Review*, 93 (1), 99-114. **JSTOR**.
- Druckman, J. N. 2003. "The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate Revisited." *The Journal of Politics* 65, 559-571. **E-RESERVE**.
- Druckman, J.N. and M. Parkin. 2005. The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters. *Journal of Politics* 67 (4), 1030-1049. **E-RESERVE**.
- Fridkin-Kahn, K. 1994. The Distorted Mirror: Press Coverage of Women Candidates for Statewide Office, *The Journal of Politics*, 56 (1), 154-173. **JSTOR**.
- Graber, D. A. 2006. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Chapter 1. *Mass Media and American Politics*. "Media Power and Governmental Control." Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Graber, D.A., editor. 2000. Media Power in Politics. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. **E-RESERVE**. Chapters:
  - 3. Lippmann, W. Newspapers.
  - 7. Rogers, E.M. & J.W. Dearing. Agenda-Setting Research: Where has it Been, Where is it Going?
  - 9. Lasorsa, D. L. & S. D. Reese. News Source Use in the Crash of 1987: A Study of Four National Media.

- 11. Friedland, L., M. Sotirovic, & K. Daily. Public Journalism and Social Capital: the Case of Madison, Wisconsin.
- 12. Delli Carpini, M. X. & B. A. Williams. Constructing Public Opinion: The Uses of Fictional and Non-Fictional Television in Conversations about the Environment.
- 26. O’Heffernan, P. Mass Media Roles in Foreign Policy.
- Holbert, R. L., Pillion, W., Tschida, D. A., Armfield, G. G., Kinder, K., Cherry, D. L. And Daulton, A. R. (2003). *The West Wing*s Endorsement of the U. S. Presidency: Expanding the Bounds of Priming in Political Communication. *Journal of Communication* 53, 427-447. E-RESERVE.
- Jacobs, L. R. & R. Y. Shapiro. 2000. Chapter 2. *Politicians Don’t Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. E-RESERVE.
- Kuklinski, J.H., P. J. Quirk, J. Jerit & R. F. Rich, The Political Environment and Citizen Competence, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Apr., 2001), 410-424. JSTOR.
- Mutz, D. 1998. Chapter 6. Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes. New York: Cambridge University Press. E-RESERVE.
- Nelson, T. E. & Z. M. Oxley. 1999. Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion. *The Journal of Politics*, 61(4), 1040-1067. JSTOR.
- Parkin, M. 2005. Engaging with Late Night Comedy’s Serious Message: How Late Night Appearances Affect Young Peoples’ Political Decisions. E-RESERVE.
- Putnam, R. D. 1995. Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *Political Science and Politics*, 28, 664-683. JSTOR.
- Sigelman, L. & M. Kugler. 2003. Why is Research on the Effects of Negative Campaigning so Inconclusive? Understanding Citizens’ Perceptions of Negativity. *Journal of Politics* 65(1), 142-160. E-RESERVE.
- Sunstein, C. 2001. Chapters 1 and 3. *Republic.com*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. E-RESERVE.

## Class Schedule and Readings

### Part I: Media and Democracy

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
<b>WEEK 1</b>			
1/17	Course Introduction		
1/19	Information, Media and Democracy	DG Chapter 1; Lippman 2000	
<b>WEEK 2</b>			
1/24	Current Media Environment	Chapter 5 MP; Chapter 3 PI	
1/26	Media Bias	Chapter 2 PI; Druckman and Parkin 2005	
<b>WEEK 3</b>			
1/31	Information Environment & Political Knowledge	Chapter 11 MP; Huckfeldt et al. 2001	
2/2	Elite Manipulation & Elite-Media Relations	Jacobs & Shapiro Chapter 2	
<b>WEEK 4</b>			
2/7	The President and the Media	Druckman 2003; Baum & Kernell 1999	

2/9	Political Engagement & Public Journalism	Putnam 1995; Chapter 3 MP; DG Chapter 11	
<b>WEEK 5</b>			
2/14	Research Methods in Media & Politics	Choose one of the following from DG: 1. Chapter 26 2. Chapter 12 3. Chapter 9 One Reading TBA	
2/16	Transition to Part II of Course: Media Effects	PI Chapter 7; Chapter 10 MP	Analytic Essay Option 1

### Part II: Media Effects

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
<b>WEEK 6</b>			
2/21	Media and Public Opinion	Fried Chapters 1-2	One Page Description
2/23	Media and Public Opinion	Fried Chapters 3-4	E4D: Jeff and Bekah
<b>WEEK 7</b>			
2/28	The Media & Campaigns	Just et al. Chapters 1-2	
3/2	The Media & Campaigns	Just et al. Chapters 4-6	E4D: Evan and Alyssa
3/6 - 3/10	<b>Spring Break! Live it up!</b>		
<b>WEEK 8</b>			
3/14	The Media & Campaigns	Just et al. Chapters 8, 10	E4D: Matt and Susan
3/16	Negative Political Advertising	Sigelman et al. 2003	Research Proposal
<b>WEEK 9</b>			
3/21	Research Prospectus Read Around	Classmates' Prospectuses	
3/23	Late Night TV and Candidate Evaluations. Guest Lecture: Michael Parkin	Parkin, 2005	
<b>WEEK 10</b>			
3/28	In Class Midterm Exam		In Class Midterm
3/30	Agenda Setting and Priming	DG Chapter 7; Miller and Krosnick 2000	
<b>WEEK 11</b>			
4/4	Framing	Nelson and Oxley 1999	Team Conferences E4D: Alex and Jessie
4/6	Fictional TV Effects	DG Chapter 12; Holbert et al. 2003	E4D: Zach and Tara
<b>WEEK 12</b>			
4/11	Media and Polling: Guest Lecture by Bas van Doorn	Mutz Chapter 6	
4/13	Gender, Race and the Media	Kahn 1994; Kellstedt Chapter	E4D: Miracle and

		2	Margaret
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### Part III: New Media and the Future of Media and Politics

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
<b>WEEK 14</b>			
4/18	Race and the Media	Kellstadt Chapters 4, 6	Analytic Essay Option 2 ; E4D : Sunnie and Graham
4/20	No Class!		
<b>WEEK 15</b>			
4/25	New Media	Sunstein Chapters 1 & 3 ; Chapter 14 MP	Bring Data to Class; E4D: Russ and Sarah
4/27	Media & Democracy	MP Chapters 20, 22; PI Chapter 8	Optional Research Paper Draft
<b>WEEK 16</b>			
5/2	Poster Session		Poster
5/4	Class Party: Watch "Wag the Dog"		Final Research Paper
5/5	Study Day		
<b>Finals</b>			
5/7-5/9	Take Home Final	Sunday - Tuesday	Due by e-mail on 5/9 by 6pm.

\*MP=Mediated Politics (Bennett & Entman, eds.); PI=News: The Politics of Illusion (Bennett);  
DG=Doris Graber's Media Power in Politics book (E-Reserve)

### COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance Policy.** Since this course requires active participation in the classroom you are expected to attend all class meetings. You are responsible for whatever happens in class, such as announcements, group work, and handouts. Six times throughout the semester either individual or group work will be turned in and five of them will be counted for participation points. Please turn off your pagers and cell phones.

**Computer Access.** Access to a computer, printer and the internet are necessary for completing assignments and for checking e-mail messages from the professor. All class announcements will be sent to your U of M e-mail address; please make sure you are receiving and reading these e-mails.

**Meeting with the Instructor.** I strongly encourage you to meet with me during office hours. I am available daily on e-mail and check our voice messages frequently. Be aware that while I may often respond to your e-mails immediately, I may not get to responding right away. I will try to respond within 24 hours. Please do not hesitate to call me at my office phone number or e-mail me to set up a meeting to discuss course topics, your assignments, or anything else you would like to chat about (e.g., going to graduate school, getting an internship, etc.). Please come to me with any questions or concerns.

**Disabilities and Special Needs.** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Please contact Disability Services in 363 Briggs Library (320-589-6178). The Disability Services Office at UMM provides support for students with physical, mental or cognitive disabilities. It is the office designated with the responsibility for determining reasonable accommodation according to the Americans with Disabilities Act and for maintaining confidential records documenting disabilities. The goal of the office is to reduce or remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

**Incompletes.** Incomplete coursework is a major inconvenience for students and instructors. I expect you to do everything in your power to avoid this situation. Legitimate excuses include verified illnesses and family emergencies. No incompletes will be given unless a legitimate excuse has been verified and you have a prior written agreement with me.

**Grade Disputes.** I want you to have every opportunity to understand the criteria I use to evaluate your work. This is why I have you do various iterations of your research project throughout the semester in order to allow revisions to your project where necessary. Evaluation of your research project will take into account how you utilized feedback on earlier assignments to improve your project. If you feel you have been given an unfair grade on a course assignment, please submit a short paragraph summarizing your dispute to me and we can set up a meeting to discuss the dispute.

**Late Work.** Late work is highly discouraged. All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the stated due date. Late work will be penalized one entire grade (e.g., A to B) for every 24 hours after the due date. The weekend counts as one day. I am skeptical of any excuses for late work that involve computer failure, thus you should be sure to save your work often and to always back it up in another way. With the exception of the Reading Analysis assignments and the Take Home Final, I do NOT accept papers by e-mail.

**Make-Up Work.** Students are expected to turn in a hard copy of each assignment in class on the date it is scheduled in the syllabus. You are also expected to take the in-class mid-term on the day that it is scheduled. Possible exceptions include serious illness (requires health service note), family emergency, religious observances, or a legitimate conflict with recognized University activities (all for which you'll need a Chancellor's excuse). You must have documentation for these emergencies. If these apply, you must contact me to request a makeup. Make these arrangements as soon as you know of the conflict – BEFORE the due date if possible. Make-up exams and assignment extensions for non-University approved reasons are not guaranteed.

**Academic Integrity.** Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

**Scholastic Dishonesty.** Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly

grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty will be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, please ask.

**Classroom Conduct.** My expectation is that students will be highly engaged and active in our learning environment. While politics is at times a contentious and controversial subject, I expect students to maintain the highest level of civility and respect to one another and to the instructor in the class regardless of sharp differences of opinions. This class will require sophisticated arguments and critical thinking and I expect that students use these skills to develop their own opinions and express their own thinking. While the world of political debates often goes 'negative' and personal, I expect more from you as students of politics!

**University Policy on Student Conduct:** The University requires a community free from violence, threats, and intimidation; protective of free inquiry; respectful of the rights of others; open to change; supportive of democratic and lawful procedures; and dedicated to a rational and orderly approach to the resolution of conflict.

**Diversity in the Classroom.** Diversity in the classroom is the ultimate goal of any successful democratic environment. One of my goals as an educator is to provide students with the exposure to opinions, cultures, political viewpoints and personal experiences different from their own. With this in mind, I expect students to respond with respect and an open mind to expressions of examples of the previous list that they may find challenging or very different and to actively participate in creating an environment where every person in the class is safe to express his/her opinion.

**Policy on Sexual Harassment.** The University of Minnesota has a strict policy on sexual harassment. According to this policy, sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature designed to interfere with an individual's work or create a hostile working or academic environment." Any behavior will be immediately reported to the Board of Regents resulting in disciplinary action up to and including academic dismissal.

**Academic Senate Expectations of Student Workload.** According to the University Academic Senate, "one semester credit is to represent, for the average University of Minnesota undergraduate student, three hours of academic work per week (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, study, and so on), averaged over the term, in order to complete the work of the course. Enrollment for 15 credits in a semester would thus require approximately 45 hours of work per week, on average, over the course of the semester. All grades for academic work are based on the quality of the work submitted, not on hours of effort." For this class, then, you should be putting in approximately 12 hours of work per week including class time.

**Return of Coursework to Students.** All papers and assignments will be returned in class in a timely manner. If you are not in attendance and do not receive your work, you must make arrangements with me to have it sent to you next semester.

**UMM Resources:**

[The Writing Room, 327 Briggs Library; 320-589-6299, writroom@morris.umn.edu](#)

The Writing Room offers you the opportunity to consult with a trained tutor (either a student or an English instructor) about your writing. Tutors can work with students on specific papers/assignments or on your writing in general. Their website: [http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/writing\\_room/](http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/writing_room/)

Academic Assistance Center, 363 Briggs Library; 320-589-6179

The Academic Assistance Center offers tutoring, study tables and courses to help you succeed in your courses at UMM. You may also e-mail Kathryn Gonier Klopfleisch, at [gonierkr@morris.umn.edu](mailto:gonierkr@morris.umn.edu).