
POLI 307 Politics and the Media

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, Fall 2022

Instructor	Dr. Saemyi Park
Class Location & Time	SCI D223 & T/TH 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM
Instructor's Office	SCI D335
Online Office Hours	M 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM or by appointment
In-Person Office Hours	T/TH 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM or by appointment
e-mail	spark@uwsp.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the role of the media in the political system. The news media are sometimes called the fourth branch of government as they become a central feature of modern representative democracy. We explore the history of news media in the United States, the evolution of federal regulations on mass media, the process of news-making and news-reporting, the relationship between news audience and news organizations, the roles of media in political campaigns, the media effects and media biases, and the emerging importance of social media in American politics.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

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

1. Recognize the fundamental role of the media in the United States
2. Comprehend how news organizations decide what to report and how to report
3. Explain the changing media environment and its consequences
4. Analyze the interaction of the news media and politicians/campaigns
5. Understand and explain the effects of the news media on the public
6. Identify challenges and changes in the modern information age

Students will meet the outcomes listed above through a combination of the following activities in this course:

- Exams (for all LOs)
- Analytic Paper (LO1 & LO2 & LO4 & LO5)
- In-Class Activities (for all LOs)
- Research Project & Presentation (LO2 & LO4 & LO5 & LO6)

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no textbook for students to purchase. Readings are assigned for each week's topic. All readings will be uploaded to the course website in Canvas. It is students' responsibility to complete the assigned readings BEFORE the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Weight	Due Date
Midterm Exam	20%	October 20 (TH)
Final Exam	20%	December 16 (F)
Analytic Paper	25%	December 20 (T)
Research Project & Presentation	25%	on your assigned date
In-Class Activities	10%	every class
Total:	100%	

Note: Students MUST complete all required work in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. **You do NOT have the option to “take a zero” on each assignment.** Not submitting all required work will result in either an F for the course or in a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted (however, this option is rarely permitted to students). Late submission is not accepted unless you receive permission from the instructor in advance. Please read the attendance policy on page 4 for more information about the excusable absence.

GRADING SCALE

Grades will be determined according to the university’s standard scale. There is no curve, so you receive what you earn.

Criteria						
Outstanding	A	94-100	A-	90-93		
Above average	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
Average	C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
Below average	D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
Unsatisfactory	F	Below 60				

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

A. Online Exams (20% per each)

There are TWO ONLINE exams, which will take place on the course site in Canvas. Each exam will be open at 9 AM and closed at 11:59 PM on the scheduled day. You will be given **two hours** to take the test. Once you start the test, you are not allowed to take a break for return. If you are given the accommodation for the exam, please send me a DATC letter (Disability and Assistive Technology Center) as soon as possible.

The midterm exam covers the first part of subjects, and the final exam will cover the topics addressed in class after the first exam. That is, the second exam is NOT cumulative. The format of exams is a combination of multiple-choice questions, true-or-false questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short-answer questions. A **study guide** will be distributed one week before each exam.

B. Analytic Paper (25%)

You will analyze One film shown in class in light of the lecture materials and assigned readings for this course. You are free to write on any topic related to politics and the media addressed in the documentaries, as long as they are able to incorporate and demonstrate your thorough understanding of the different assigned course readings. Film showing occurs in class during the designated class time (Nov. 22). A **separate worksheet** will be distributed in class for more details.

C. Research Project & Presentation (25%)

You are asked to conduct in-depth research on one of the topics covered in the latter half of classes. You will apply the concepts, theories, and perspectives to analyze topics in Politics and the Media. On the second week of the semester, you will sign up for up to two topics and I will try to respect your preference when assigning your presentation topic/date. For each assigned date, up to 3 students are invited to present their research projects. You are not required to write a paper, but you must present PowerPoint slides and work-cited page. Your presentation should not be longer than 10 minutes. You have to upload the slides to the course site two days before your presentation date. The **complete guideline** will be shared by the end of September.

Topics	Presentation Date	Lecture Day
Media, Poverty & Minority Representation	10/25	10/27
Campaign & Election Coverages	11/1	11/3
Media Effects: Agenda-Setting & Priming	11/8	11/10
Media Effects: Framing	11/15	11/17
Media Bias: Commercial, Corporate & Political Bias	11/29	12/1
Social Media & Fake News	12/6	12/8
Foreign Affairs Coverage	12/13	12/15

D. Class Activity (10%)

You are required to attend all class sessions. It is in your best interest too. Students who regularly attend class generally enjoy the course more, learn more, and get the most out of their education with higher grades. In addition, you are expected to enrich the learning experience of fellow students and teachers through regular attendance and active participation in class. For most class times, you will be invited to complete a brief activity that help you better understand the topic of Politics and the Media. For example, you will be assigned class activity after we discuss the topic and cover the readings. Activities include small group discussion, debate, news ombudsman role-play, the one-minute paper, the press conference simulation, and more. Your contribution and completion to each activity will be graded.

Please be aware that there will be no make-up opportunity for the missed class activity unless you are excused for the legitimate reasons. We will have about 28 class sessions throughout the semester. Please keep in mind that only few cases are considered as the excusable absences:

1. UWSP-sponsored activities (sport game, organization events, etc.)
2. The university-recognized religious holidays
3. The serious and extraordinary circumstances of your medical issues or your immediate family members

In the above-mentioned cases, you are required to submit the proof of evidence to the instructor in advance. For the 1st and 2nd case, you are supposed to know the schedule already or by the beginning of the semester. Please check your schedule and the course calendar to see if any conflicts occur. Make sure to submit the official documents (letters, emails from the coach, etc.) by the third week of September. For the 3rd case, you should inform your instructor immediately and provide the documentation within 48 hours of the event. I reserve the right to review the document and determine if your absence is excusable. If you are simply sick or under the weather, that is not considered excusable. Please remember that students are NOT allowed to have more than one make-up opportunity for the missed class activity.

COURSE POLICIES

Readings: Students are required to complete each week's required readings BEFORE that lecture. You need to bring assigned readings and lecture notes to each class.

Assignments: online submission through Canvas is required for all assignments. Late submission or email submission is NOT accepted except for a very rare case as written in the previous section. You must faithfully follow the instruction regarding the format, style, and length of these assignments.

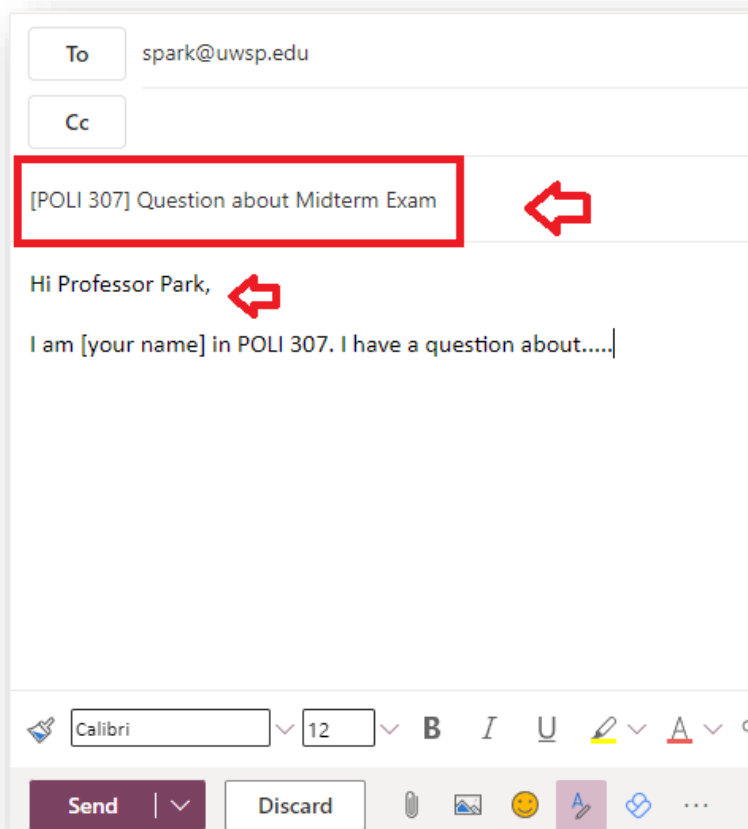
Excused Late Work: for extremely rare cases, your late submission may be excused without penalty. As I explained, all activities will be open in advance so that you will have enough time to complete them. Nonetheless, you may not be able to complete the module activities in advance if university-sponsored activities (ROTC, UWSP athletic teams, etc.) are recurring events. If you have MAJOR medical treatments/surgery that requires an extensive recovery time, you may not be able to complete the module activities in advance. If it is the case, you must explain what happens and request a make-up opportunity in writing with proof of document. Then, I will verify your request on a case-by-case basis and notify you of my permission for a late submission. If your proof of document contains private information when you encounter unforeseen medical and/or personal emergencies, you may want to contact UWSP DATC and/or the Dean of Student to submit your document. Then, the office will verify your excuse for me. Then, I will determine if you will be granted excused late submission. There is NO exception for this policy.

Unexcused Late Work: I understand that you may encounter unforeseen circumstances that prevent you to complete the assignments on time. To ease your burden with the dues, I will accept your late submission within 5 days from its original deadline. Unexcused late submission of course work will incur a 10% deduction per day. Nonmajor sicknesses that do not require your surgery and/or hospital admission will be an example of unexcused late submission. In this case, I will NOT require proof of document so that you can simply complete the module activity when it is possible within 5 days from its original due.

Canvas: This course will have a site on Canvas. The site will be used to share course materials including, but not limited to, lecture note, and additional readings. Make sure that you check this site before every class.

Office Hours: I will have regular office hours in two different ways. I will be in my office (Science Building D335) on every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM. And, you can reach out to me via Zoom on every Monday from 1 PM to 3 PM. Please utilize this opportunity for your study. If my regular office hours do not work for you, you can certainly schedule a meeting for the different time and date. Just email me to set up the appointment. The Zoom link will be post in the course site.

Email Communication: Email is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and student outside of class. Email is best for 1-2 sentence responses, and conceptual questions do not lend themselves well to email. If you have any questions regarding your papers, please visit my office hours for in-depth consultation. I will NOT consult on your written assignment via email. While students should take advantage of this email communication opportunity with me, you should also do so in a professional manner. I will NOT reply to emails that do not include a salutation (“Dear Prof. ...” or “Hello Dr. ...”).



I will also NOT respond to emails that ask for answers to questions that can easily be found on the syllabus or the lecture notes. If you have a question regarding lectures or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, or come to me during office hours. I will only respond to questions about coursework or academic requirements, and I will not respond to questions of a personal nature. I will be able to respond your email within 24 hours during weekdays (not weekend), but please email me again if you do not receive my response within 48 hours.

Technology Policy: Technology devices are NOT allowed to use in class. Out of respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process, all technology devices (iPad, Kindle, cell/smartphones, Laptop, etc.) must be powered down and put away, not on the desk or in your hoodie pocket, or on your lap, during class. If texting, using social media, and attending to tasks other than the class material are more important than paying attention for 75 minutes, please do not come to class. If you feel you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on vibrate, please clear this with the professor before class begins. Students who disregard the policy will be asked to leave class.

Honesty: Any instance of academic misconduct will be taken seriously and may result in failure of the course. Misconduct will result in notification to the Dean of Students. If you are having a problem, it is much better to talk to me about it. Do not struggle by yourself. I want you to learn and do well in this course, not punish you with a lower grade. Talk to me if you are having a problem so I can try to help you work out a solution. In addition, there is a great resource for your study in the campus. The Tutoring-Learning Center provides a variety of services to support your needs such as Writing Lab and One-On-One Assistance for Study Skills. Please contact Learning Resource Center (715-346-3568 & tlctutor@uwsp.edu & www.uwsp.edu/tlc) for more information.

Academic Coaching: if you feel you need help with any of the following skills - time management strategies, note-taking, study skills, communication on campus, or preparing for mid-terms, please consider scheduling an appointment with an Academic Coach on campus or virtually. They are here to help you be successful in your online courses when you feel you need extra support. Email Kari Van Den Elzen (kvandene@uwsp.edu) to schedule an appointment or use the Navigate student app by selecting Tutoring Learning Center. You can meet as many times as you need. Coaches are also available to review campus technology platforms with you. (Canvas, AccesSPoint, Office 365, Navigate, etc.)

The Course Calendar

(Topics, readings, and schedule subject to announced change by instructor.)

Topic	Tentative Dates	Note
Introduction	9/6 & 9/8	
Media & Democracy	9/13 & 9/15	
American Journalism in Historical Perspective	9/20 & 9/27	no class on Sept. 22
The Marketplace Idea & Regulations	9/29 & 10/4	
Going Public: POTUS Governing through the Media	10/6 & 10/11	
Entertainment Media & Soft News	10/13 & 10/18	
Midterm Exam	10/20	
Media, Poverty & Minority Representation	10/25 & 10/27	Presentation begins
Campaign & Election Coverages	11/1 & 11/3	
Media Effects: Agenda-Setting & Priming	11/8 & 11/10	
Media Effects: Framing	11/15 & 11/17	
Film Presentation	11/22	
Media Bias: Commercial, Corporate & Political Bias	11/29 & 12/1	
Social Media & Fake News	12/6 & 12/8	
Foreign Affairs Coverage	12/13 & 12/15	
Final Exam	12/16	tentative

The List of Assigned Readings

(Topics, readings, and schedule subject to announced change by instructor.)

Introduction

- “Why is everyone mad at the mainstream media?” by Jonathan M. Ladd in *Why Americans Hate the News Media and How It Matters* (2012)

Media & Democracy

- “Democratic theory and the history of communications” by Paul Starr in *Explorations in Communication and History* (2008)
- “What Democracy Requires of the Media” by James Curran in *The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press* (2005)

American Journalism in Historical Perspective

- “American Journalism in Historical Perspective” by Michael Schudson and Susan E. Tifft in *The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press* (2005)
- “Media Regimes and American Democracy” by Bruce Williams and Michael Delli Carpini in *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment* (2011)

The Marketplace Idea & Regulations

- “The Market Place of Ideas” by Robert Schmuhl and Robert G. Picard in *The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press* (2005)
- “The First Amendment Tradition and Its Critics” by Bruce W. Sanford and Jane E. Kirtley in *The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press* (2005)

Going Public: POTUS Governing through the Media

- “Going Public” by Shanto Iyengar in *Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide* (2019)
- “Going Public as Political Strategy: The Bush Administration, an Echoing Press, and Passage of the Patriot Act” by David Domke, Erica S. Graham, Kevin Coe, Sue Lockett John, and Ted Coopman in *Media Power in Politics* (2011)

Entertainment Media & Soft News

- “Hard and soft news: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings” by Carsten Reinemann, James Stanyer, Sebastian Scherr, and Guido Legnante from *Journalism* (2011)
- “The Oprah Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive Citizens Vote Consistently” by Matthew A. Baum and Angela S. Jamison from *The Journal of Politics* (2006)

Media, Poverty & Minority Representation

- “Picturing immigration: how the media criminalizes immigrants” by Emily M. Farrisa and Heather Silber Mohamed from *Politics, Groups, and Identities* (2018)
- “Victim or Villain? Racial/Ethnic Differences in News Portrayals of Individuals with Mental Illness Killed by Police” by Emma Frankham from *The Sociological Quarterly* (2020)

Campaign & Election Coverages

- “Campaigning through the Media” by Shanto Iyengar in *Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide* (2019)
- “Political Advertising Online and Offline” by Erika Folwer et al. from *American Political Science Review* (2021)

Media Effects: Agenda-Setting & Priming

- “Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models” by Dietram Scheufele and David Tewksbury from *Journal of Communication* (2007)
- “Agenda Setting through Social Media: The Importance of Incidental News Exposure and Social Filtering in the Digital Era” by Jessica T. Feezell from *Political Research Quarterly* (2018)

Media Effects: Framing

- “Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance” by Thomas E. Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zo M. Oxley from *The American Political Science Review* (1997)
- “The End of Framing as we Know it ... and the Future of Media Effects” by Michael A. Cacciatore, Dietram A. Scheufele, and Shanto Iyengar from *Mass Communication and Society* (2016)

Media Bias: Commercial, Corporate, and Political Bias

- “Changing Owners, Changing Content: Does Who Owns the News Matter for the News?” by Allison M. Archer & Joshua Clinton from *Political Communication* (2018)
- “Hostile News: Partisan Use and Perceptions of Cable News Programming” by Coe et al. from *Journal of communication* (2008)
- “All the News That’s Fit to Click: The Economics of Clickbait Media” by Kevin Munger from *Political Communication* (2020)

Social Media & Fake News

- “Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media” by Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Maria Petrova and Ruben Enikolopov from *Annual Review of Economics* (2020)
- “Real Solutions for Fake News? Measuring the Effectiveness of General Warnings and Fact-Check Tags in Reducing Belief in False Stories on Social Media” by Katherine Clayton et al. from *Political Behavior* (2020)

Foreign Affairs Coverage

- “Foreign Affairs Coverage” by Doris Graber and Johanna Dunaway in *Mass Media and American Politics*
- “International TV News, Foreign Affairs Interest and Public Knowledge: A Comparative Study of Foreign News Coverage and Public Opinion in 11 Countries,” by Toril Aalberg et al. from *Journalism Studies* (2013)