

POLS Y321: MEDIA AND POLITICS

Summer 2020

Instructor:	Rita Nassar	
Email:	rnassar@iu.edu	
Office Hours:	By appointment	Office: Woodburn Hall 364

Course Description and Objectives

The press is often referred to as the fourth branch of government given its importance in spreading information necessary for citizens to make political decisions. However, media organizations currently face numerous challenges ranging from decreasing public trust to hostile political elites. The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the role of the media in the political system. We will examine several broad topics including how the media can influence public opinion and its role in political campaigns and social movements. We will also address the changes to the media environment that have occurred in the last two decades and examine their repercussions on media trust, the spread of fake news, and democratic society in general.

The course has three main goals:

- To help students understand the role of mass media in public opinion and political life.
- To give students a broad understanding of how political scientists study media and politics.
- To help students become savvy consumers of political news, in this class and beyond.

Grading policy

Grading will be based on two exams. There will be no extra-credit assignments offered in this course. I will use the following grading scale:

97-100%	A+	77-79%	C+
93-96 %	A	73-76%	C
90-92 %	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89 %	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86 %	B	63-66%	D
80-82 %	B-	60-62%	D-

Grade Allocation

First Examination	50%
Second Examination	50%

Important Dates:

Exam #1	July 10
Exam #2	July 31

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require disability-related accommodations or assistance, please let me know early in the semester so that your needs may be appropriately met. As per IUB policies, you must have established your

eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students located in Wells Library W302, (812) 855-7578. Please see <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/disability-services-students/index.shtml> for additional information.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct. Academic misconduct is defined as any activity that tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution. Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, violation of course rules, and facilitating academic dishonesty. When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. All suspected violations of the Code will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Student Conduct) and handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, and a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification from your instructor in advance.

Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/study guides to their classmates. Selling the instructor's notes/study guides in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct (violation of course rules). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

Other Course Policies

- *Religious holy day observance* Please contact me in advance if an exam falls on a day when you are observing a religious holy day. I will work with you to find an acceptable alternative time to complete the exam.
- *Medical needs, illnesses, and other emergencies* If a medical need or other emergency will result in missing exams, please communicate with me ahead of time. I am willing to be accommodating but communication and documentation is necessary.
- *Deviations from syllabus and course outline only with advance warning.* You may treat this syllabus and course outline as final, I will only make deviations or adjustments with advance warning to the entire class via email.

Course Outline

Week 1 (June 22): Media effects

- Dunaway, Johanna, Regina P. Branton, and Marisa A. Abrajano. "Agenda setting, public opinion, and the issue of immigration reform." *Social Science Quarterly* 91.2 (2010): 359-378.
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. 2010. *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 12

Week 2 (June 29): Media choice

- Charles Taber and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3): 755-769.
- Stroud, Natalie Jomini. "Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure." *Political Behavior* 30, no. 3 (2008): 341-366.

Week 3 (July 6): Media and political polarization

- Prior, Markus. "Media and political polarization". *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16 (2013): 101-127.
- Arceneaux and Johnson. 2013. *Changing minds or changing channels?: Partisan news in an age of choice*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1

Exam 1: July 10

Week 4 (July 13): Media and political campaigns

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. "Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate?." *American political science review* 88, no. 4 (1994): 829-838.
- Hayes, Danny, and Jennifer L. Lawless. "A non-gendered lens? Media, voters, and female candidates in contemporary congressional elections." *Perspectives on Politics* 13.1 (2015): 95.

Week 5 (July 20): Media and social movements

- Jost, John T., Pablo Barberá, Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Jonathan Nagler, Joanna Sterling, and Joshua A. Tucker. "How social media facilitates political protest: Information, motivation, and social networks." *Political psychology* 39 (2018): 85-118.
- Chenoweth, Erika. "How Social Media Helps Dictators." *Foreign Policy* 16 (2016).

Week 6 (July 27): Fake News & Social media

- Lazer, David MJ, et al. "The science of fake news." *Science* 359.6380 (2018): 1094-1096.
- Taub, Amanda. "The Real Story About Fake News Is Partisanship". *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/11/upshot/the-real-story-about-fake-news-is-partisanship.html>
- Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. "Social media and fake news in the 2016 election." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (2017): 211-36.

Exam 2: July 31