

JOUR 790

Political Communication

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Office Hours: *Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:10pm – 3:10pm and by appointment. Journalism 324*

Fall 2021

Tuesdays, 9:00am – 12:00pm. Journalism 316

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the role of communication in politics. We will explore research from the fields of communication and political science concerning the content of a variety of “legacy” and “new” forms of political communication. We will discuss the role of traditional print and television news media, entertainment media forms with political relevance, online media, face-to-face interpersonal communication, and various forms of technologically mediated social interactions in politics (e.g., social media, discussion forums, news article comment spaces). Our emphasis will be considering the role these can play – good and bad – in democratic functioning. Although the primary emphasis of this course will be on American politics, we will take the time to consider where the U.S. stands from a broader perspective, and I welcome hearing from students with interests in other specific political systems.

This course will expose students to a breadth of scholarship on political communication from both communication and political science (and sometimes, other related fields). Students will become familiar with theoretical, methodological and pragmatic issues in political communication scholarship. Students will learn to evaluate original empirical research and how to chart future directions to advance theory and evidence.

Required Materials

Textbooks and readings

There is no required text for this course. All readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Technology requirements

The links to articles, assignments, quizzes, and other materials are located on Blackboard. To participate in learning activities and complete assignments, you will need:

- Access to a working computer that has a current operating system with updates installed, plus speakers or headphones to hear lecture presentations
- Reliable Internet access and a UofSC email account
- A current Internet browser that is compatible with Blackboard (Google Chrome is the recommended browser for Blackboard)
- Microsoft Word as your word processing program
- Reliable data storage for your work, such as a USB drive or Office365 OneDrive cloud storage

If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, Office 365 ProPlus package is available to you free of charge and allows you to install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on up to 5 PCs or Macs and Office apps on other mobile devices including tablets. Office 365 also includes unlimited cloud storage on OneDrive. To download Office 365 ProPlus, log into your student (University) email through a web

browser, choose Settings (top right corner), and select software. If you have further questions or need help with the software, please contact the Service Desk (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/servicedesk.php).

Minimal technical skills needed

Minimal technical skills are needed in this course. Most course work will be completed and submitted in Blackboard. Therefore, you must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the Internet. The minimal technical skills you need to have include the ability to:

- Organize and save electronic files
- Use UofSC email and attached files
- Check email and Blackboard daily
- Download and upload documents
- Locate information with a browser
- Use Blackboard.

Evaluation

This class will use the standard USC grading scheme:

A	90-100%	B+	85-89.99%	B	80-84.99%
C+	75-79.99%	C	70-74.99%	D+	65-69.99%
D	60-64.99%	F	0-59.99%		

Assignments

The final grade in the class will tentatively consist of the following:

Discussion Leading	150 / 15%
Participation	250 / 25%
Integration/extension papers (x4) <i>or</i> Final paper	600 / 60%
Total	1000 / 100%

Leading Discussion

Each student will sign up to serve as a discussion leader for one week during the course of the semester. In addition to reading the required readings, discussion leaders will read (and be prepared to discuss) additional work on the same general topic that builds upon, contradicts, or fills gaps in the assigned reading. To do so they must seek out this additional relevant material, probably in consultation with the instructor.

In order to structure the discussion in the class, discussion leaders should develop a number of questions — and for themselves, the answers to those questions — that will serve as the fodder for class discussion. Questions are likely to pertain to some combination of the theory, method, or connections across papers and topics in the assigned readings — including across topics/weeks when relevant. Discussion leaders should distribute their questions via email at least 24 hours before class so that students can think about them in advance and bring copies to class. In addition to these questions, discussion leaders should include in the mailing the list of additional readings they did for the topic (for reference).

And, of course, discussion leaders will play a major role in moderating class discussion. I will collect student preferences on which class sessions they would like to lead. I will assign students to weeks to maximize the number of students getting topics ranked high on their lists.

Discussion leaders will be evaluated based on: (1) the quality of their questions; (2) the apparent depth of their reading, both of assigned and additional readings; and (3) their performance in leading the discussion.

Participation

Just as discussion leaders will be evaluated on their preparation and development of questions for the class, students not serving as a discussion leader for a given class session will be evaluated on their participation and ability to intelligently discuss the assigned readings. More than mere attendance, students are expected to ask and answer questions in the course of our discussions. There will be some alternate opportunities to participate

Paper Choice

Students may choose whether to complete a conventional research paper, perhaps for future submission to an academic conference or journal, or to instead complete a series of shorter papers. These shorter papers are referred to as “Integration/Extension” papers below.

Integration/Extension Papers

For four weeks/topics over the course of the semester, students will write 5-7 page “integration/extension” papers. These papers will be focused on evaluating and integrating the evidence in the assigned readings for that topic, along with a modest amount of additional reading to be done beyond the assigned readings that allow the student to extend what they’ve learned from assigned readings. These papers should NOT be simple summaries of what the assigned (or new) articles have said or found. Rather, they should be original thoughts by students about how the ideas of the assigned (and additional) papers may be pulled together for greater understanding, and to offer directions for future scholarship.

Integration papers are due by the start of class on that week’s meeting for that topic; that is, students should be writing these papers before class interactions on the topic rather than after, and using the ideas they have developed to help advance class discussion. Integration papers are each worth 15% of the week.

The first week for which you may write one of these papers is [Week 3](#).

You can and are encouraged to write one of these papers on the week you are leading discussion.

Final Research Paper

More details will be shared on the conventional research paper option at a later date.

Grade Disputes

Any dispute about a grade must be done within one week of the grade posting. You should compose an email, making clear that you are challenging the grade, with information about the assignment and details (using the rubric and guidelines) of why you feel you should receive a different score. There is no guarantee of a grade change in response to such a challenge, but you can rest assured that you will not be penalized even if additional errors are discovered.

Course Policies

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sasds@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.

Late policy

Late work may be accepted with full credit under most circumstances. Communication with the instructor is essential for receiving credit on late work. The goal is to be flexible, but not fall behind in the course. This policy may be changed at short notice if students are struggling to keep up without the motivation of late penalties.

Faculty feedback and response time

Allow 10-14 days for grades on major assignments, although sometimes you will receive feedback sooner. In general, expect a response to emails within 24 hours on business days. If you haven't gotten a response after a couple of days, feel free to reach out again.

Written assignments

All written work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>).

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on the assigned due date.

Academic misconduct

Honor Code

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code. Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

Your enrollment in this class signifies your willingness to accept these responsibilities and uphold the Honor Code of the University of South Carolina. Please review the Honor Code Policies. Any deviation from this expectation can result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

Copyright

Lectures and course materials (which is inclusive of my presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and lecture notes) may be protected by copyright. You are encouraged to take notes and utilize course materials for your own educational purposes. However, you are not to reproduce or distribute this content without my expressed written permission. This includes sharing course materials to online social study sites like Course Hero and other services.

Students who publicly reproduce, distribute or modify course content maybe in violation of the university's Honor Code's Complicity policy, which states: sharing academic work with another student (either in person or electronically) without the permission of the instructor. To best understand the parameters around copyright and intellectual property review <http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf133.pdf>.

Collaboration

A student's grades are to represent to what extent that individual student has mastered the course content. You should assume that you are to complete course work individually (without the use of another person or un-cited outside source) unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. It is your responsibility to seek clarification if you are unclear about what constitutes proper or improper collaboration. For skills assignments, you will be given a

more specific definition of what constitutes collaboration because seeking outside help is one of the skills you should develop.

Reusing course materials

The use of previous semester course materials is not allowed in this course. This applies to homework, projects, quizzes and tests. Because these aids are not available to all students within the course, their use by any individual student undermines the fundamental principles of fairness and disrupts your professor's ability to accurately evaluate your work. Any potential violations will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for review.

Diversity and inclusion

The university is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolinian Creed. To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected at all times to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect.

Changing nature of this syllabus

The assignments, policies, and readings in this syllabus are subject to change at any time. If this occurs, the changes will be announced and an updated version of the syllabus will be posted to Blackboard.

Unless otherwise specified, quizzes, discussion posts, and other assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date they are due.

If the information on Blackboard contradicts this syllabus, assume the information on Blackboard is correct.

This schedule is tentative and provides a broad overview. Before reading ahead, please check with the instructor – once the readings are posted on Blackboard, you can consider them finalized. More details will be available on Blackboard, where you will access the lectures and other materials.

Week 1 (August 31): Course Introduction

Jamieson, K. H., & Kenski, K. (2017). Political communication: Then, now and beyond. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 3-12). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jamieson, K. H. (2017). Creating the hybrid field of political communication: A five-decadelong evolution of the concept of effects. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 15-46). New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 2 (September 7): Normative Foundations

Gurevitch, M., & Blumler, J. G. (1990). Political communication systems and democratic values. In J. Lichtenberg (Ed.) *Democracy and the mass media: A collection of essays* (pp. 269-289). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2000). Evaluating media performance. In *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies* (pp. 22-35). Cambridge University Press.

Morrell, M. (2018). Listening and deliberation. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. Warren (Eds) *The Oxford handbook of deliberative democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Althaus, S. L. (2012). What's good and bad in political communication research? In H. A. Semetko & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of political communication* (pp. 96-111). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Week 3 (September 14): Framing

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 51–58. doi: [10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x)

Lecheler, S., & de Vreese, C. H. (2011). Getting real: The duration of framing effects. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 959–983. doi: [10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01580.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01580.x)

Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal*, 13, 51–62. doi: [10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre](https://doi.org/10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre)

Week 4 (September 21): Content of Legacy News Media

Bennett, W. L. (2007). News content: Four information biases that matter. In *News: The politics of illusion* (pp. 32–72). New York: Pearson.

Soroka, S. N. (2012). The gatekeeping function: Distributions of information in media and the real world. *Journal of Politics*, 74, 514–528.

Sobieraj, S., & Berry, J. M. (2011). From incivility to outrage: Political discourse in blogs, talk radio, and cable news. *Political Communication*, 28, 19–41.

Budak, C., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Fair and balanced? Quantifying media bias through crowdsourced content analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 250–271.

Patterson, T. E. (2016). *News coverage of the 2016 general election: How the press failed the voters*. Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy.

Week 5 (September 28): News Selection and Effects

Stroud, N. J. (2017). Selective exposure theories. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 531–547). New York: Oxford University Press.

Garrett, R. K., & Stroud, N. J. (2014). Partisan paths to exposure diversity: Differences in pro- and counterattitudinal news consumption. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 680–701.

Levendusky, M. S. (2013). Why do partisan media polarize viewers? *American Journal of Political Science*, 57, 611–623.

Jerit, J., Barabas, J., Bolsen, T. (2006). Citizens, knowledge, and the information environment. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50, 266–282.

Eveland, W. P., Jr. & Garrett, R. K. (2017). Communication modalities and political knowledge. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 517–530). New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 6 (October 5): Political Advertising

Gelman, A., & King, G. (1993). Why are American presidential election campaign polls so variable when votes are so predictable? *British Journal of Political Science*, 23, 409. doi: [10.1017/S0007123400006682](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400006682)

Gerber, A. S., Gimpel, J. G., Green, D. P., & Shaw, D. R. (2011). How large and long-lasting are the persuasive effects of televised campaign ads? Results from a randomized field experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 105, 135–150. doi: [10.1017/S000305541000047X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541000047X)

Huber, G. A., & Arceneaux, K. (2007). Identifying the persuasive effects of presidential advertising. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51, 957–977. doi: [10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00291.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00291.x)

Jacobson, G. C. (2015). How do campaigns matter? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18, 31–47. doi: [10.1146/annurev-polisci-072012-113556](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-072012-113556)

Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2018). The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, 112, 148–166. doi: [10.1017/S0003055417000363](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000363)

Week 7 (October 12): Entertainment Media

Prior, M. (2005). News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 577–592.

Mutz, D. C. (2016). Harry Potter and the Deathly Donald. *Political Science & Politics*, 49, 722–729.

Delli Carpini, M. X. (2017). The political effects of entertainment media. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 851–870). New York: Oxford University Press.

Young, D. G. (2017). Theories and effects of political humor: Discounting cues, gateways, and the impact of incongruities. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 871–884). New York: Oxford University Press.

Long, J. A., & Eveland, W. P., Jr. (in press). Entertainment use and political ideology: Liking worldviews to media content. *Communication Research*.

Week 8 (October 19): Political Networks, Conversation and Deliberation I: Selection and Content

Eveland, W. P., Morey, A. C., & Hutchens, M. J. (2011). Beyond deliberation: New directions for the study of informal political conversation from a communication perspective. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 1082–1103.

Cowan, S. K., & Baldassarri, D. (2018). “It could turn ugly”: Selective disclosure of attitudes in political discussion networks. *Social Networks*, 52, 1–17.

Druckman, J. N., Levendusky, M. S., & McLain, A. (2018). No need to watch: How the effects of partisan media can spread via interpersonal discussions. *American Journal of Political Science*.

Settle, J. E., & Carlson, T. N. (2019). Opting out of political discussions. *Political Communication*, 36, 476–496.

Eveland, W. P., Jr., Appiah, O., Long, J. A., & Kleinman, S. B. (under review). *How race affects simply having versus actually choosing cross-race political discussion partners*. Unpublished manuscript.

Week 9 (October 26): Political Networks, Conversation and Deliberation II: Effects

Rolfe, M., & Chan, S. (2018). Voting and political participation. In J. N. Victor, A. H. Montgomery, & M. Lubell (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political networks* (pp. 357–382). New York: Oxford University Press.

Bello, J. (2012). The dark side of disagreement? Revisiting the effect of disagreement on political participation. *Electoral Studies*, 31, 782–795.

Thorson, E. (2014). Beyond opinion leaders: How attempts to persuade foster political awareness and campaign learning. *Communication Research*, 41, 353–374.

Eveland, W. P., Jr., & Schmitt, J. B. (2015). Communication content and knowledge content matters: Integrating manipulation and observation in studying news and discussion learning effects. *Journal of Communication*, 65, 170–191.

Kim, N. (2016). Beyond rationality: The role of anger and information in deliberation. *Communication Research*, 43, 3–24.

Week 10 (November 2): Selecting News Online

Kobayashi, T., & Inamasu, K. (2015). The knowledge leveling effect of portal sites. *Communication Research*, 42, 482-502.

Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348, 1130-1132.

Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 298-320.

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31, 211-236.

Garrett, R. K. (2019). Social media's contribution to political misperceptions in U.S. presidential elections. *PLoS ONE*, 14(3), e0213500.

Week 11 (November 9): Sharing and Talking Politics Online

Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D. I., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489, 295-298.

Graham, T., Jackson, D., & Wright, S. (2016). 'We need to get together and make ourselves heard': Everyday online spaces as incubators of political action. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19, 1373-1389.

Neubaum, G., & Krämer, N. C. (2017). Opinion climates in social media: Blending mass and interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research*.

Settle, J. E. (2018). The END framework of political interaction on social media. In *Frenemies: How social media polarizes America* (pp. 50-77). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*, 5, eaau4586.

Week 12 (November 16): Misinformation

Edgerly, S., Mourão, R. R., Thorson, E., & Tham, S. M. (2020). When do audiences verify? How perceptions about message and source influence audience verification of news headlines. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97, 52-71. doi: [10.1177/1077699019864680](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699019864680)

Garrett, R. K., Long, J. A., & Jeong, M. S. (2019). From partisan media to misperception: Affective polarization as mediator. *Journal of Communication*, 69, 490-517. doi: [10.1093/joc/jqz028](https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqz028)

Holman, M. R., & Lay, J. C. (2019). They see dead people (voting): Correcting misperceptions about voter fraud in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 18, 31-68. doi: [10.1080/15377857.2018.1478656](https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2018.1478656)

Nyhan, B., Porter, E., Reifler, J., & Wood, T. J. (2020). Taking fact-checks literally but not seriously? The effects of journalistic fact-checking on factual beliefs and candidate favorability. *Political Behavior*, 42, 939-960. doi: [10.1007/s11109-019-09528-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09528-x)

Pasquetto, I., Swire-Thompson, B., & Amazeen, M. A. (2020). Tackling misinformation: What researchers could do with social media data. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. doi: [10.37016/mr-2020-49](https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-49)

Week 13 (November 23): Comparative Political Communication

Rojas, H., & Valenzuela, S. (2019). A call to contextualize public opinion-based research in political communication. *Political Communication*, 36,652-659.

de Vreese, C. H. (2017). Comparative political communication research. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political communication*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nir, L. (2012). Cross-national differences in political discussion: Can political systems narrow deliberation gaps? *Journal of Communication*, 62, 553-570.

Brüggemann, M., Engesser, S., Büchel, F., Humprecht, E., & Castro, L. (2014). Hallin and Mancini revisited: Four empirical types of Western media systems. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 1037-1065.

Week 14 (November 30): Wrapping Up

Readings, if any, TBA