POLI 102F - Media and Politics

Summer Session 1 2021

Instructor:	Mackenzie Lockhart (he/him)	**Time:**	M/W 14:00 – 16:50
Email:	mwlockha@ucsd.edu	**Zoom:**	[redacted]

Course Pages: All materials will be posted on Canvas, including links to assigned materials and digital copies of readings (where appropriate). Slides will be posted in advance of lecture when possible.

Office Hours: Mondays 10-12 or by appointment (Zoom: 94698565312 pass: media)

Teaching Assistant: Rachel Skillman - available by appointment or by email (rskillma@ucsd.edu)

Course Description: Mass media play an increasingly important role in politics, and are a central feature of modern representative democracy. Much of our exposure to politics, as well as other important information, comes not from direct experience, but from stories mediated by the press. This course provides an introduction to the themes in the study of mass media and politics, a thriving field of academic research at the time when the media landscape is undergoing immense changes driven by technological progress. In this course, we will examine the interactions between media and political institutions, actors and processes, primarily in the United States in light of theories of journalism, communication and political practice.

Learning Objectives: A major objective of this course is to learn to think in systematic and nuanced ways about the media's coverage of the political world instead of relying on oversimplifications that pervade public thinking about the media and their role in politics. We will carefully examine what the media do well and where they fail. The key objectives are:

1. Describe the role that media plays in a functioning democracy
2. Analyze how media has impacted politics and how that has changed
3. Synthesize academic literature into concise arguments
4. Evaluate the quality of evidence in empirical research (how do we know what we know about the media?)
5. Communicate the results of scholarly research for a non-academic audience

Readings and materials: This course will not be based on a textbook but instead will engage with a variety of sources that are freely available to you.

- Journal Articles: As an upper division course, the readings will draw from academic articles to expose you to academic writing and political science research. These articles can be dense and so we will walk through them in class.
- Podcasts: Podcasts are a great resource and I'll assign a few of them that I think are interesting.
- News coverage: I'll also assign some news coverage - you should engage with the real thing while taking this course!

Course Format: Each class, we will meet for approximately 2 hours. Class will blend lectures with discussions with ample opportunity for student participation. Because of this, I encourage all students to

attend lecture as often as possible and come ready to discuss the topic. Recordings will also be posted to the course Canvas page for asynchronous viewing.

Grading Policy: This course is designed to provide multiple points of feedback, despite the condensed nature of summer courses. Late assignments will be accepted until July 30th at a penalty of one letter grade per day (A+ to A, B- to C+, etc). If a student knows an assignment will be late, they should submit a request for an extention before the assignment is due. Extensions will be granted only until July 30th.

Weekly quizzes ..... 4 * 5% = 20%,
Short Assignment 20%,
Term project 30%,
Take home final ..... 30%.

Weekly quizzes will be due on the Friday of each week (for only the first four weeks). These quizzes will be pass/fail and are designed only to keep students engaged during the course. The material will be easy if you have viewed the lectures and hard if you have not. They will take no more than 10 minutes.

Academic Honesty: Academic integrity is all of our responsibility. All of your graded work must be done by you without assistance from others, unless otherwise stated. If you are unfamiliar with the University's policy on academic integrity, please see https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html.

Accomodations: All students are entitled to an accessible and welcoming learning environment. Students who need accomodations should email the instructor as early as possible.

Respectful Classroom: This is a university course. Students are expected to be challenged, but this does not mean that students should feel disrespected, insulted, or unsafe in the classroom. While some of the material presented might challenge students beliefs and expectations, students are expected to be respectful about their disagreements to create a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable participating. Harassment, discrimination, and disruptive behaviour has no place in the classroom.

Course Policies: Other course policies are at the discretion of the instructor.

Important Dates:

Short Assignment Due ..... July 15
Term Project Due ..... July 28
Final Exam ..... Assigned July 28 @ 12pm (noon)
..... Due July 30 @ 6pm

Tentative Course Outline

Date	Topic	Assigned Material
June 30	Role of Media in Democracy	Zaller (2003) on Media Bennett (2003) A Response to Zaller Crash Course of Media in Politics Jon Stewart on Crossfire
July 7	Political Knowledge & Information Processig	Chong & Druckman (2007) On Framing Effects Hidden Brain Ep 64 Julia Galef's Ted Talk
July 12	Media Effects: Old News	Gentzkow et al. 2011 - Newspaper Impacts TBD
July 14	Media Effects: Changing News Landscape	Prior (2005) - News or Entertainment? John Oliver on Newspaper tbd
July 19	Media Effects: Social Media	Fowler et al - Voter Turnout Through Facebook Malcolm Gladwell - Revolution Will Not be Tweeted Clay Shirky Ted Talk
July 21	Media Bias + Fake News	Thorson - Belief Echos Freakonomics Ep. 62 - Biased Media John Oliver on Conspiracy Theories

July 26	Echo Chambers	Bakshy et al - Echo Chambers on Facebook Right Wing Media Ecosystem Podcast Eli Pariser - Ted Talk
July 28	Election Campaigns and the Media	Hill et al - Election Advertising OPTIONAL - Media and 2016 Election
July 30	**TAKE HOME FINAL DUE**	