New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication

MCC-UE 1013

Political Communication

Course Description
Politics is a fundamentally communicative and highly mediated form of citizen engagement in the public sphere. Within a vast network of media, interest groups, elected representatives, legal institutions, and bureaucratic agencies, citizens struggle to acquire, distribute and exercise power, ostensibly for the ends of achieving the public good. Focusing on the intersection of politics and communication, this course introduces students to, and provides a broad overview of some of the foundational theories, concepts, methods, scholars and cutting edge research that has and continues to develop the broad field of political communication. It advances an understanding of the practices, processes, and policy implications of political communication in all its forms.

Course Objectives

1. Develop an understanding for the historical and contemporary issues of political communications;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of seminal concepts, theories and personalities in the field of political communication;
3. Develop a basic understanding of the various research methods used to develop knowledge in the field of political communication;
4. Prepare for more focused and in-depth study of political communication.

Required Readings

All other required readings are included in the course schedule.

Assignments/Learning Activities

Midterm & Final Exam (35 Points Each)
Exams will assess your knowledge of and facility with the concepts dealt with throughout the course.

Final Essay (30 Points)
Each student will write a 1200 to 1500 word essay, presenting, arguing and substantiating and specific thesis regarding some aspect of political communication.
Evaluation Rubric

A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 65-69
D = 60-64
F = 0-59

Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

General Decorum
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.
**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

“Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do…you violate the principle when you: cheat on an exam; submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home that calls for independent work; or plagiarize. Plagiarism, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions…” (see [http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity))

**Student Resources**

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for students with disabilities ([http://www.nyu.edu/csd/](http://www.nyu.edu/csd/))

Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233. Schedule an appointment online at [www.rich15.com/nyu/](http://www.rich15.com/nyu/) or just walk-in.

**Course Expectations**

*Preparation*

You are expected to come to class each week fully prepared, which means having read all assigned readings, and having done so in a way that demonstrates adequate comprehension of the material, not just a mere surface reading. It also means that you should come to class having spent some time having carefully reflected on course material, lectures and discussion in a way that allows you to develop a set of questions, critiques, and discussion points related to course material.

*Participation*

In line with the last point, I expect your preparation to be the basis for your full participation in each course. Participation includes contributing insights, questions, explanations, etc. to class discussions, contributing outside material at times, taking detailed notes on any class lectures, etc. Since each student will take some responsibility for the conduct of the course, I expect that you will be prepared to engage with both me and your fellow classmates who, I will assume have valuable knowledge and perspectives on the course material being covered. I reserve the right to penalize students who routinely are unprepared and/or unwilling to fully participate in class.

*Attendance*

Attendance is mandatory. After two unexcused absences, students will be penalized 5% points off your participation grade for every absence. If you miss class for any reason, YOU are solely responsible for getting caught up about lecture material, notes, assignments, announcements, etc. Do not expect your professor to fill you in, explain course material, assignments, etc. to you. If you have a specific question about something you missed, you should feel free to ask.

*Late Assignments*

A hard copy of each assignment is to be turned in at the end of class the day the assignment is due in order to be considered on time. Papers not turned in at this time, or turned in to my box by the end of the due date will be considered late. Late assignments will be penalized 10% points for each day it is late. The only exception for late assignments is a documented approved absence from class.
Course Schedule

***Schedule subject to change

Part I – Rhetoric, Politics & Public Policy

9/4 NO CLASS
9/6 NO CLASS
9/11 Reading: Aristotle, “The Art of Rhetoric,”
9/13 Reading: “The Politics of Aristotle”
9/20 Reading: Jeffrey Tullis, “The Rhetorical Presidency”
9/25 Reading: cont.

Part II. The Public Sphere

9/27 Reading: Jurgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere”
10/2 Reading: Michael Warner, “Publics & Counter Publics”
10/4 Reading: Nicholas Garnham, “The Mass Media & the Public Sphere”
10/11 Reading: Cont.
10/16 Reading: Cont.
10/18 MIDTERM EXAM

Part III. Mass Persuasion & Propaganda

10/23 Reading: Ellul, Jacques. “Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes”
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<td>11/1</td>
<td>Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Packaging the Presidency.</td>
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<td>11/6</td>
<td>Noam Chomsky, “Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda”</td>
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**Part IV. Identity Politics & Social Movements**

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<tr>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Craig Calhoun, “The Modern Discourse of Identity”</td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Sidney Tarrow, “Contentious Politics &amp; Social Movements”; Robert Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements”</td>
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<td>11/22</td>
<td>Judith Butler, “Gender Trouble”</td>
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<td>11/27</td>
<td>Simi Linton, “Reassigning Meaning”</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Rosemarie Garland, “Staring”</td>
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<td>12/4</td>
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<td>12/6</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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