Media and Politics
Political Science 3511

Mondays 7pm-9:30pm
Dr Kimberley Mullins

Course Description

Media and Politics will examine the significance of political communications in all aspects of the political process, from grassroots campaigns to international diplomacy. It will also investigate how various media influence these communications, and how audiences interpret that media.

Text

McNair, Brian An Introduction to Political Communications

Other Possible Readings

McChesney, Robert. Rich Media, Poor Democracy
Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Postman, Neil. Amusing Ourselves to Death
Chadwick, Andrew. Internet Politics
Kinsella, Warren. The War Room
Bell, Comers, Sheckells. Perspectives on Political Communication

Evaluation

Class Participation/Discussion – 10%
In-Class Test – 25%
Assignment – 25%
Exam – 40%
A) Class Participation will be graded with the following criteria in mind:
- Willingness to engage in discussion topics
- Ability to refer to reading material during discussions
- Willingness to learn
- Demonstrated effort to understand concepts, terms and theories
- Ability to compare and contrast concepts discussed in class with reading materials and personal experiences.

B) The In-Class test will cover several definitions and key concepts covered in the first 4 classes.

C) The assignment will be comprised of an analysis of a particular documented political communication. It may be an advertisement, a website posting, an image in a newspaper or online, a print or televised interview or a televised address, or another approved communication. The analysis will include a description of the communication, information relating to its form, content and goals. The assignment will be discussed in detail during Week 7.

The Report will be graded on the following criteria:
- Writing skills and presentation of document
- Use of references
- Observation skills
- Ability to apply knowledge learned in class

Class Timetable

Week 1, January 12: **Introduction and Course Overview**

Week 2, January 19: **Communication Theory**
- Overview of several key theories in communications and media as they relate to the study of political communication

Week 3, January 26: **Forms of Political Communication**
- Discussion of how Mediated communication differs from Interpersonal, Ritualized and Public communication
- Discussion of demand for communication

Week 4, February 2: **Methods of Political Communication**
- Exploration of various practices, skills and expertise required,

Week 5, February 9: **Communicating with the Electorate**
- More in-depth discussion of communication processes between publics and politicians and the media that is used to communicated
- In-Class Test
Week 6, February 16: Political Journalism and Media
- The influence of journalists and gatekeepers on the information disseminated through media

Week 7, February 23: Communicating within Government
- Discussion of process involved in intergovernmental or intra-party communications
- Discussion of Assignment

Week 8, March 2: Campaign Communications
- Discussion of how media is used during campaigns
- Exploration of planning and strategies for campaign communications

Week 9, March 9: Communicating Internationally
- Exploration of the role of mediated communication in international diplomacy and conflict
- Assignment Due

Week 10, March 16: Lobby Groups and Political Activist Communication
- Tools and methods of communication by groups attempting to influence political agendas

Week 11, March 23: Goals and effects of political communication
- Exploration of what organized political communication attempts to achieve
- How do audiences perceive political communication and how do media analyse it?

Week 12, March 30: Conclusion and overview for exam