

# Analysis of Media Messages

Communication 143

206 Olson, T R 10:30 – 11:50 am

Professor: Jaeho Cho ([jaecho@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jaecho@ucdavis.edu))

Office: 375 Kerr Hall

Office hours: Thursdays 1 – 3 pm; by appointment

## General Information

### Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to theories and research on media messages. The goal of this course is to provide students with a critical framework for evaluating communication messages and channels.

### Required Readings:

- Shanto Iyengar (2011). *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: Norton.
- Some additional readings will be available on this course's website at SmartSite.

### Evaluation:

- There will be three exams: two midterms and the final exam. Each exam will constitute 1/3 of the course grade. The exams will *not* be cumulative. An exam that is not taken will receive a grade of "0".
- You will be given one hour and twenty minutes to complete each test. If you show up late on an examination day, your tardiness will cut into your allotted time. If you have a *documented* learning disorder that makes this time frame or testing situation unfair to you, please see me in the first week of classes for appropriate accommodations.
- Bring a scantron and a #2 pencil to class on all test days.
- Final letter grades will be assigned based on a curve applied to the total number of points you have earned on the three exams. However, a final grade of F will be assigned if the total points from the three exams is less than or equal to one-half of the point total earned by the top student(s) in the class. Otherwise, the following breakdown provides a guideline for the assignment of final grades.

A: Top 15th percentile

B: 15th – 50th percentile

C: 50th – 90th percentile

D: Bottom 10th percentile

F:  $\leq$  1/2 of the highest score

- No student will be allowed to take a test before the regularly scheduled testing date. Make-up tests will be given ONLY in exceptional cases, and valid proof must be presented to the professor.
- Exam grades will be posted as soon as possible following each exam. Although you will not be allowed to keep a copy of the exam, you may come to my office hours to review your exam. Please be sure to check your exam grade promptly; grade appeals must be submitted within two weeks of the date the exam grades were posted.
- Opportunities for earning extra-credit *might* be available during the quarter. One point will be given for participation in a research project, and up to three points may be earned in the quarter. Extra-credit will be added to your final class score *after* the final grade breaks have been established. This way, participation in extra credit activities can only help your final grade; a decision not to participate cannot hurt your grade.
- Instructor reserves the right to make changes on this syllabus as needed.

#### Course Policies:

- You are expected to attend all class sessions. While attendance will not be tracked, each test will contain questions specifically designed to reward class attendance.
- E-mail will be used for taking care of course matters. Please use your UC Davis e-mail account to make sure your email is not classified as spam. I will try to reply to your emails within 24 hours of reading them.
- I expect that you will devote yourself to the learning process during class time. If you want to read the newspaper, sleep, talk with friends, or study for a pending exam, I ask that you do it *outside* of the classroom. These activities are distracting to students around you and to me. If I see you engaging in these activities, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the room.
- Occasionally, I will set aside the last five minutes of lecture to collect feedback about this course. During this time, you can write questions/concerns regarding course material or offer suggestions about how to make the class better. Feedback *can* be anonymous. I welcome your ideas and suggestions and will seriously consider their feasibility as they relate to the objectives of this course.
- Cheating is a serious violation of your contract as a student. I expect you to know and follow the University's policies on cheating (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu>). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University regulations.

Course Schedule:

- This schedule may be altered during the quarter due to a new class interest, instructor availability, or other issues. Any changes will be announced in class and via e-mail. An up-to-date version of the syllabus will always be available upon request and on the web.

- (1) January 6 – Course introduction
- (2) January 8 – The press and the democratic process
  - *Media politics* Ch. 1 & 2
- (3) January 13 – Media marketplace and journalism
  - *Media politics* Ch. 3 & 4
- (4) January 15 – Media marketplace and journalism (continued)
  - *Media politics* Ch. 3 & 4
- (5) January 20 – News bias
  - [Online Reading 1] News content: Four information biases that matter
- (6) January 22 – New media
  - *Media politics* Ch. 5
- (7) January 27 – Midterm 1**
- (8) January 29 – Campaigning through the media
  - *Media politics* Ch. 6
- (9) February 3 – Campaign discourse and democracy
  - [Online Reading 2] Dialogue and its effects in contemporary American elections
- (10) February 5 – Governing through the media
  - *Media politics* Ch. 7
- (11) February 10 – News and public opinion
  - *Media politics* Ch. 8
- (12) February 12 – News and public opinion (continued)
  - *Media politics* Ch. 8
- (13) February 17 – Midterm 2**
- (14) February 19 – Campaigns and voting behavior
  - *Media politics* Ch. 9

- (15) February 24 – Soft news and entertainment programming
  - [*Online Reading 3*] I heard it on Oprah
  
- (16) February 26 – Women in campaign coverage; Evaluating media politics
  - [*Online Reading 4*] How women campaign for the U.S. senate
  - [*Online Reading 5*] Running as a woman: Gender stereotyping in women’s campaigns
  - *Media politics* Ch. 10 & 11
  
- (17) March 3 – Comparative analysis of journalism and news messages
  - [*Online Reading 6*] Political news journalists
  - [*Online Reading 7*] Political communication messages
  
- (18) March 5 – Convergence of media systems
  - [*Online Reading 8*] Media and political systems, and the question of differentiation
  - [*Online Reading 9*] Americanization, globalization, and secularization
  
- (19) March 10 – Global media system
  - [*Online Reading 10*] Global political communication
  - [*Online Reading 11*] Mapping global media flow and contra-flow
  
- (20) March 12 – Review
  
- (21) March 18 (Wednesday) at 3:30 pm – Final exam**