Political Communication (CMN145)  
Spring 2015  
293 Kerr, TR 9:00 – 10:20 am

Professor: Jaeho Cho (jaecho@ucdavis.edu)  
Office: 375 Kerr Hall  
Office hours: T R 10:30am – noon

Course Description  
This course is designed to introduce students to theories and research on the connection between mass media, citizens, and politics in the digital age. Specifically, the course will focus on the complex inter-relationships between production of political news, political elites’ campaign strategies, and the motives, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of democratic citizens. The goal of this course is to provide students with a critical framework for understanding the nature of mediated politics, identifying the roles played by news media in contemporary politics, and analyzing elite discourse and campaign messages.

Required Readings  
Readings for the class will be available on this course’s website at SmartSite.

Evaluation  
a. There will be one midterm (in-class) and one final (take-home) exam throughout the quarter. Each exam will constitute 30 percent of the course grade. The exams will cover material presented in class and readings.

b. Class project is worth 40 percent of your grade. Each of you will be in a group of 4 or 5 members and do a class project. The main task is two fold. First, as a group, you follow the detailed class project schedule including a class presentation (15-20 minutes) at the end of the quarter. This will account for 20 percent of your grade. Second, as a group, you submit a class project report, which is worth 20 percent of your grade. Detailed instructions about the class project will be provided later.

Note: Students will have a chance to evaluate the performance of each member of your group, including yourself, over the period of the group project. Further, the instructor will closely communicate with each group to consult about issues concerning the group work, if any.

Course Policies  
You are expected to be active learners in this class. Asking questions when appropriate and participation in sessions is a must. If you missed a class it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes and relevant assignments from other class members.
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 expect that you will devote yourself to the learning process during class time. If I see you engaging in activities distracting to students around you and to me, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the room.

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 including plagiarism will be handled according to University regulations.

Course Schedule
This schedule may be altered during the quarter due to a new class interest 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.

March 31: Course Introduction

April 2 & 7: Nature of political communication and media effects
  o [Class Project] Grouping and orientation (4/7)

April 9: Construction of news

April 14 & 16: News coverage of politics and its effects

*Class Project* Research Question Due (4/16)

April 21: Campaign tone and democracy

April 23: Emotional appeals in political messages

*Class Project* Bibliography Due (4/23)

April 28: Televised debates

April 30: Midterm exam

May 5 & 7: Campaign geography and the voter

*Class Project* One-page Project Outline Due (5/7)

May 12: Candidate images
May 14: Communication modality

May 19: Newspaper endorsement

May 21: No Class (Instructor at ICA)

May 26-28: Media and an informed citizenry

June 2: Class Presentations

June 4: Class Presentations
  o [Class Project] Final Report Due by 10 pm (PST) [6/4]

June 6: Final Exam (Take-home) Due by 10 pm (PST)