

Political Science 424 (Winter 2013)

## Media and Politics

Instructor: Prof. Stuart Soroka

Office: 3610 McTavish, Rm 26-2

Email: [stuart.soroka@mcgill.ca](mailto:stuart.soroka@mcgill.ca)

Mass media play an increasingly important role in domestic and international politics, and are a central feature of modern representative democracy. This course provides an introduction to themes in the study of mass media and politics. Weekly topics include the role of mass media in a democracy, political economy approaches to media analysis, institutional studies of news-making, effects of mass media on the public and politics, the political significance of entertainment media, media and foreign policymaking, propaganda and campaign advertising, and the internet and politics.

The course is open to upper-year undergraduates with some past coursework in the Canadian or comparative developed field, typically including PoliSci 211. Many readings are quantitative, so having completed PoliSci 311 will be helpful. There are two 1.5-hour lectures per week. Group discussions will be a part of lectures. Lectures are mandatory.

The class grade is based on six assignments: four weekly assignments, one Prezi assignment, and one social media assignment. These are described in more detail below. There is no final exam, but weekly assignments will require a thorough understanding of readings on the syllabus. They will also require a knowledge of additional readings covered in lectures and discussions. Lecture slides will not be available on MyCourses.

All course readings will be available electronically through MyCourses, and are listed in the lecture schedule that follows. Twenty-two topics are scheduled in advance, but we will move through topics at our own pace, and may add topics along the way.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

### **Assignments**

**Weekly assignments.** These are 3-page papers that must respond to questions posted on MyCourses on Thursdays after class. They are due the following Tuesday before class. Questions will ask you to read additional papers related to the current week's theme, and then discuss those alongside what you have read for class, and discussed in lectures.

You must complete three weekly assignments before the end of term, but you can choose which ones. No late papers will be accepted – you will simply have to write one of the next weeks' assignments instead. Each of your weekly assignments – whichever three you choose to submit – will be worth 20% of your final grade. In total, then, weekly assignments make up 60% of your grade.

**Prezi assignment.** This is simple: pick a weekly topic and create a multi-media Prezi for it. The Prezi must be self-standing – it must be readily interpretable (it must tell its own story), using a combination of class materials alongside online readings, videos, etc. Lectures will use Prezi, so you will get used to the format. You will need a public Prezi account, which is free (at [prezi.com](http://prezi.com)). You will need to produce the Prezi, and send me to it through MyCourses. This must be submitted online through MyCourses before March 20th, and it will be worth 15% of your final grade.

**Social media assignment.** This is an 8-page paper, the objective of which is to connect the academic work in class with current events. You must use course readings, but should incorporate other academic work as well. You will use those readings to interpret and discuss any of the links posted by the professor on Twitter ([twitter.com/s\\_soroka](https://twitter.com/s_soroka)) throughout the course. Again, no late papers will be accepted. This must be submitted online through MyCourses before April 15th, and it will be worth 25% of your final grade.

**Submission and formatting guidelines.** All papers must be **single-spaced**, with **one-inch margins**, using **12-pt Times New Roman font**. They must use **in-text citations**, and must include a **bibliography**. The bibliography is not included in the page length, but any other text that goes over the limit will not be read. Do not create a separate title page, just put the title and your name at the top of the first page of text. Papers submitted in **pdf format** only (not Word!), online via MyCourses. There will be no exceptions to these rules, and grades will be reduced when these guidelines are not followed.

Additional information on assignments will be made available through MyCourses.

### **Lectures & Readings**

**Topic 1:** Introduction to the course

**Topic 2:** The importance of media I

Harold A. Innis. 1951. "Introduction," and "The Bias of Communication" in *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press): 33-60.

Marshall McLuhan. 1964. "The Media is the Message" in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet):23-35.

**Topic 3:** The importance of media II

Plato. 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC. "The Allegory of the Cave." In Book VII of *The Republic*.

Walter Lippmann. 1922. "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" in *Public Opinion* (New York: The Free Press):3-20.

**Topic 4: Media, democracy and democratization**

Jeffrey B. Abramson, F. Christopher Arterton and Gary R. Orren. 1988. "The New Media and Democratic Values" in *The Electronic Commonwealth: The Impact of New Media Technologies on Democratic Politics* (New York: Basic Books Inc.).

James Curran. 2000. "Rethinking Media and Democracy," in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, eds., *Mass Media and Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Arnold):120-148.

**Topic 5: Public Journalism**

Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema. 1991. "Investigative Journalism and the Moral Order," Pp. 203-225 in R.K Avery and D. Eason, eds., *Critical Perspectives on Media and Society*, (New York: Guilford).

Theodore L. Glasser. 1999. "The Idea of Public Journalism." Chapter 1 in *The Idea of Public Journalism* (New York: Guilford):3-18.

William A. Gamson. 2001. "Promoting Political Engagement," in W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman, eds., *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 56-74.

**Topic 6: Political economy perspectives on the mass media I**

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky. 1988. Chapter 1 in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon): 1-35.

Robert W. McChesney. 2004. "The Political Economy of International Communications," in Prdip N. Thomas and Zaharom Nain, eds., *Who Owns the Media: Global Trends and Local Resistances* (Southbound, Penang, Malaysia): 3-22.

**Topic 7: Political economy perspectives on the mass media II**

Steven Wildman. 1994. "One-way Flows and the Economics of Audiences," in J. Ettema and D.C. Whitney, eds., *Audience-making: How the Media Create the Audience* (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

**Topic 8: Media effects?**

William J. McQuire. 1986. "The Myth of Massive Media Impact: Savagings and Salvagings." in George Comstock, ed., *Public Communication and Behavior*, vol. 1 (Boston: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch):173-257.

Jay G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch. 1988. "The Political Effects of Mass Communication." Pp. ??? in *Culture, Society and the Media*, M. Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woolacott, eds. (London: Routledge):236-267.

**Topic 9: Public Agenda-setting**

Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36(2): 176-187.

Roy L. Behr and Shanto Iyengar. 1985. "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49(1): 38-57.

**Topic 10: Gatekeeping**

David Manning White. 1964. "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study In the Selection of News," Pp 160-172 in Lewis A. Dexter and David M. White, eds., *People, Society and Mass Communications* (London: The Free Press).

P.J. Shoemaker. 1991. Pp. 27-32 and 70-75 in *Gatekeeping*. (Newbury Park: Sage).

**Topic 11: Making news**

Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan. 1987. "Newsrooms and Journalist's Cultures" in *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

Joshua Meyrowitz. 1994. "The (Almost) Invisible Candidate: A Case Study of News Judgment as Political Censorship," in M. Aldridge and N. Hewitt, eds., *Controlling Broadcasting* (Manchester: Manchester University Press):93-107

W. Lance Bennett. 1997. "Cracking the News Code: Some Rules that Journalists Live By," in Shanto Iyengar and Richard Reeves, eds., *Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters, and Reporters in America* (Thousand Oaks: Sage):103-117.

**Topic 12: Rhetoric and issue frames I**

Murray Edelman. 1985. "Political Language and Political Reality." *PS*. 1985; 18(1):10-19.

Deborah Stone. 1989. "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas," *Political Science Quarterly* 104(2):281-300.

David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb. 1994. "Problem Definition: An Emerging Perspective." Pp. 1-31 in David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, eds., *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the Policy Agenda* (Lawrence KS, University Press of Kansas).

**Topic 13: Rhetoric and issue frames II**

Shanto Iyengar. 1996. "Framing Responsibility for Political Issues." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 546:59-70.

Nayda Terkildsen and Frauke Schnell. 1997. "How Media Frames Move Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women's Movement." *Political Research Quarterly* 50(4): 879-900.

**Topic 14: Mass Media and Foreign Policy**

Robert M. Entman. 2000. "Declarations of Independence: The Growth of Media Power After the Cold War." Pp. 11-26 in Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro and Pierangelo Isernia, eds., *Decisionmaking in a Glass House: Mass Media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield).

Stuart Soroka, 2002, "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy," *Harvard International Journal of Press and Politics* 8(1): 27-48.

**Topic 15: Mass Media and Terrorism**

Brigitte L. Nacos. 2003. "Terrorism as Breaking News: Attack on America." *Political Science Quarterly* 118(1): 23-52.

David Altheide. 1987. "Format and Symbols in TV coverage of Terrorism in the United States and Great Britain." *International Studies Quarterly* 31(2): 161-176.

**Topic 16: Does entertainment matter? I**

Daniel J. Boorstin. 1975. "From News Gathering to News Making: A Flood of Pseudo-Events." Chapter 1 in *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum): 7-45.

Robert P. Hawkins and Suzanne Pingree. 1983. "Television's Influence on Social Reality," in *Mass Communication Review Yearbook 4* (Beverly Hills, Sage): 53-76.

Thomas J. Volgy and John E. Schwartz, 1980. "TV Entertainment Programming and Sociopolitical Attitudes," *Journalism Quarterly* 57(1): 150-55.

William J. Brown and Michael J. Cody. 1991. "Effects of a Prosocial Television Soap Opera in Promoting Women's Status." *Human Communication Research* 18(1): 114-142.

**Topic 17: Does entertainment matter? II**

Stuart H. Surlin and Eugene D. Tate. 1976. "All in the Family: Is Archie Funny?," *Journal of Communications* 26: 61-68.

John C. Brigham and Linda W. Giesbrecht. 1976. "All in the Family: Racial Attitudes," in *Journal of Communications* 26: 69-74.

Stuart N. Soroka. 2000. "Schindler's List's Intermedia Influence: Exploring the Role of 'Entertainment' in Media Agenda-Setting," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 25:2.

**Topic 18: Celebrity Politics**

Neil Postman. 1985. "The Age of Show Business" in *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin): 83-98.

Darren M. West and John Orman. 2003. "The Evolution of Celebrityhood." Pp. 1-16 in *Celebrity Politics* (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall).

Mathew A. Baum. 2005. "Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit". *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 213-234.

Michael P. Marks and Zachary M. Fischer. 2002. "The King's New Bodies: Simulating Consent in the Age of Celebrity". *New Political Science* 24(3): 371-394.

**Topic 19: Hard News, Soft News**

David Schultz. 2005. "Lights, Camera, Action! Ethics and the California Recall". *Public Integrity* 7(1): 57-65.

Mathew A. Baum. 2002. "Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 91-109.

**Topic 20: Campaign Advertising**

Stephen Ansolabehere, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?," *American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829-838.

**Topic 21: Advertising/ Public Diplomacy/ Propaganda**

Joral B. Manheim. 1994. "Strategic Public Diplomacy: Managing Kuwait's Image During the Gulf War." Pp. 131-148 in W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, eds., *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago).

John Zaller. 1994. "Strategic Politician, Public Opinion, and the Gulf Crisis." Pp. 250-276 in W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, eds., *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago).

**Topic 22: Digital democracy?**

Pippa Norris. 2001. Pp. 26-67 in *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Marcus Prior. 2005. "News vs Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.