University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Curriculum Proposal Form #3

## New Course

**Effective Term:**

**Subject Area - Course Number:** **Political Science 314 Cross-listing:** **n/a**

(See Note #1 below)

**Course Title:** (Limited to 65 characters) Media and American Politics

**25-Character Abbreviation:** Media and Politics

**Sponsor(s):** Christopher Chapp

**Department(s):** Political Science

**College(s):**

# **Consultation took place**: NA Yes (list departments and attach consultation sheet)

Departments: Communication

**Programs Affected:** **Political Science**

**Is paperwork complete for those programs?** (Use "Form 2" for Catalog & Academic Report updates)

NA  Yes  will be at future meeting

**Prerequisites:** Three units of Political Science

**Grade Basis:**  Conventional Letter  S/NC or Pass/Fail

**Course will be offered:**  Part of Load  Above Load

On Campus  Off Campus - Location

**College:**  **Dept/Area(s):** Political Science

**Instructor:** Chapp

*Note: If the course is dual-listed, instructor must be a member of Grad Faculty.*

**Check if the Course is to Meet Any of the Following:**

Technological Literacy Requirement  Writing Requirement

Diversity  General Education Option:

Note: For the Gen Ed option, the proposal should address how this course relates to specific core courses, meets the goals of General Education in providing breadth, and incorporates scholarship in the appropriate field relating to women and gender.

**Credit/Contact Hours:** (per semester)

Total lab hours: n/a Total lecture hours: 48

Number of credits: 3 Total contact hours: 48

**Can course be taken more than once for credit? (Repeatability)**

No  Yes If "Yes", answer the following questions:

No of times in major:       No of credits in major:

No of times in degree:       No of credits in degree:

Proposal Information: ([***Procedures for form #3***](http://acadaff.uww.edu/UCC/Curriculum_Handbook_09/Procedures_form3.docx))

**Course justification:**

There is growing recognition that media use profoundly impacts the political, civic, and social attitudes and behaviors of the public at large. In an age of increasing choice in media outlets and rapidly changing mediums of political communication, it is important that students (as citizens) develop a framework to make informed choices, ask critical questions of the media they consume, and even become producers of informed debate in the public sphere. A course offering in “Media and Politics” will accomplish all these goals by providing an overview of how political media (from the evening news to campaign ads) is produced, and how citizens typically make sense of political communication. The course will begin with a theoretic framework for the place of a free press in democracies, with considerable discussion of free speech, public space, and the role of markets in American news production. Students will then learn about the changing norms involved in print and broadcast political journalism, and how this affects political attitudes and behaviors. Finally, we will explore the role of media in three substantive areas: paid media (especially campaign advertising), alternative media (ranging from Twitter to talk radio), and governance (such as the role of the White House Press Secretary).

**Relationship to program assessment objectives:**

This course will serve to enhance the principle aims of the political science major, and was self-consciously designed to be consistent with several of the LEAP essential learning outcomes. First, given that media plays a substantial role in providing the public with basic information about public affairs, this course will help students become more informed consumers of political information. Students will gain an appreciation for how the media affects the operation of American political institutions. Second, the course aims to stimulate critical thinking about how media shapes ones’ own political attitudes and predispositions, an important LEAP learning outcome. For example, students will write a paper analyzing the probable political effects of a campaign ad, based on theories of persuasive influence. Third, insofar as much of the course is dedicated to a close study of written and oral communication, the material will help students become more effective communicators themselves. Students will also analyze different communications styles (from journalistic pyramid style writing to the talk radio genre), providing for reflection on what makes communication effective. The subject matter is highly interdisciplinary, stressing relationships between political science, communication, psychology, marketing, and journalism. Finally, the main term paper for the course will require substantial research. Students will have the option to conduct one of two projects: (1) research on how a change in media production has enhanced or inhibited the functioning of American democracy, or (2) an original content analysis, addressing a similar question. Each of these projects requires relating ongoing political changes to scholarly developments in the field of political communication, and will promote analytic and inferential skills.

**Budgetary impact:**

This course will have a minimal budgetary impact, as it will be a part of the professor’s normal rotation.

**Course description:** (50 word limit)

This course will examine the principles of media and politics, and how the media impacts American public’s political attitudes and behaviors. Topics will include campaign advertising, alternative media, public space, bias, and persuasion.

**If dual listed, list graduate level requirements for the following:**

Not applicable.

**Bibliography:**

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Baum, Matthew and Angela Jamison. 2008. “The *Oprah* Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive

Citizens Vote Consistently.” *The Journal of Politics*68 (4): 946–959.

Baum, Matthew A. and Samuel Kernell. 1999. “Has Cable ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television.” *American Political Science Review* 93(1):99 – 114.

Bartels, Larry M. 1993. “Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure.” *American Political Science Review* 87(2):267 – 285.

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D’Alessio, Dave and Mike Allen. 2000. “Media Bias in Presidential Elections: A Metaanalysis.” *Journal of Communication* 50(4): 133-156.

Druckman, James N. 2005. “Media Matter: How Newspapers and Television News Cover Campaigns and Influence Voters,” *Political Communication* 22:  463-481.

Druckman, James N. 2001. “The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence. Political Behavior 23(3): 225 – 256.

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Farnsworth, Stephen J. and S. Robert Lichter. 2011. *The Nightly News Nightmare*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Geer, John G. 2006. *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Graber, Doris, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris (Eds.). 2007. *The Politics of News, The News of Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Graber, Doris A. 2009. *Mass Media and American Politics (8th Ed.).* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Hart, Roderick P. 2000. *Campaign Talk: Why Elections Are Good For Us*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hibbing, John R. and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 1995. *Congress as Public Enemy: American Attitudes Toward Public Institutions.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine and Todd Shields. 2005. “Moral Issues and Voter Decision Making in the 2004 Presidential Election.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38(2): 201-209.

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Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, Shanto and Jennifer A. McGrady. 2007. *Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall and Paul Waldman. 2003. *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories that Shape the Political World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Kernell, Samuel. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington: CQ Press.

Kinder, Donald R. 1998. “Communication and Opinion.” *Annual Review of Poltiial Science* 1: 167 – 197.

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Marcus, George E., Russell W. Neuman, and Michael MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mayer, Jeremy D. 2008. *American Media Politics in Transition*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Mendelsohn, Matthew. 1996. “The Media and Interpersonal Communications: The Priming of Issues, Leaders, and Party Identification.” *Journal of Politics* 58: 112 – 125.

Overby, L. Martin and Jay Barth. 2006. “Radio Advertising in American Political Campaigns: The Persistence, Importance, and Effects of Narrowcasting.” *American Politics Research* 34(4): 451 – 478.

Prior, Markus. 2007. *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rozell, Mark J. and Jeremy D. Mayer (Eds.). 2008. *Media Power, Media Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Semiatin, Richard J. (Ed.). 2008. *Campaigns of the Cutting Edge*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Course Objectives and tentative course syllabus** with [mandatory information](http://www.uww.edu/acadaff/UCC/Mandatory_Info_Course_Syllabi.docx)(paste syllabus below):

Political Science 314: Media and American Politics

Professor Chris Chapp

MW 3:45 – 5:00 Hyer 0324

Office: 310 White Hall

Phone: x1676

Email: chappc@uww.edu

Monday 8:30 – 9:30; Tuesday 9:00 – 12:00; Wed 12:30 – 2:00; OR BY APPOINTMENT

Course Description:

On the role of newspapers in American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote “We should underrate their importance if we thought they just guaranteed liberty; they maintain civilization.” Since Tocqueville’s 1840 observation, the scope, size, and role of media in American politics have been radically altered time and time again. While in Tocqueville’s time newspapers were the only thing that could “put the same thought at the same time before a thousand readers,” today an audience of a thousand would be considered insignificant, and newspapers are fighting with cable news, network news, the internet, and radio for a slice of the market. Yet, despite these dramatic changes, Tocqueville’s observation still resonates with theories of democratic citizenship and the healthy functioning of government. In a democratic state, the media do play an important role in linking the people to elected officials and political institutions. This class will be principally concerned with this connection. By analyzing broad and varied forms of political communication, and studying scholarship on the role of media in society, we will explore the organization of American media organizations with respect to political institutions, the effects media can have on individuals’ political attitudes, and the role the media plays in political campaigns and governance. The main objective of this course is that you become more informed consumers of political information, and that you gain a comprehension for how the media (broadly defined) impacts the functioning of American democracy).

Course Schedule:

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|  | Assignment |
| **Topic 1: Understanding the role of media in American democracy** | |
| Week 1.1 |  |
| Week 1.2  History of the American Press  Press ownership and regulation | Iyengar and McGrady, chs. 1-2 |
| Week 2.1  The American news audience and market pressure  Norms in news production | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 3 |
| Week 2.2  The American news audience and market pressure  Norms in news production | Read selection from “The Politics of News: The News of Politics” (Graber et al., 2008) |
| **Topic 2: Mainstream media and coverage of public affairs** | |
| Week 3.1  Reporting the news | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 4 |
| Week 3.2  Indexing and press independence | Selection from Bennett et al. (2007)  “The Times and Iraq” (May 26, 2004) |
| Week 4.1  The question of media bias: Gatekeeping bias, coverage bias, and statement bias | *Read the PEJ weekly content analysis for this week (*[*http://www.journalism.org/*](http://www.journalism.org/)*)*  (also review pages 59 – 60 of I & G chapter 3) |
| Week 4.2  The question of media bias (continued) | Selection from Mayer (2008)  In class debate: Are the media really biased? If so, what type of bias should we be most concerned with?  *Bring an example of gatekeeping, coverage, or statement bias to class and be prepared to discuss* |
| **Topic 3: Media Effects** | |
| Week 5.1  Models of preference formation:  Minimal effects, memory based, online processing  Heuristics  Motivated reasoning | Zaller (1998)  Selection from Lau and Redlawsk (2006) |
| Week 5.2  Priming, Framing, and Agenda Setting | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 8  *Find an example of contrasting frames from two different media accounts of the same event and be prepared to discuss in class* |
| Week 6.1  Priming, Framing, and Agenda Setting | Druckman (2001) |
| Week 6.2  Emotion and media effects  Political persuasion and the public agenda | Selection from Brader (2006)  *Find one example of emotive communication and be prepared to discuss in class* |
| Week 7.1 | **Midterm exam, no assigned readings** |
| **Topic 4: Campaigns and the Media** | |
| Week 7.2  Paid advertising: Strategies and effects  Paying for advertising and the effects of the *Citizens United* decision | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 6 |
| Week 8.1  Negative advertising and democracy: Does negative advertising demobilize the electorate? | Selections from Geer (2006)  Debate on role of negative advertising in elections  *Find one example of a negative ad and be prepared to discuss in class* |
| Week 8.2  Campaign effects on turnout and vote choice | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 9 |
| Week 9.1  Wedge and issue appeals  Microtargeting | Selections from Hillygus and Shields (2008)  **CAMPAIGN AD ANALYSIS DUE** |
| Week 9.2  Other campaign strategies: Direct mail, radio advertising, internet communication, email, social media | Reading TBA  *Bring an example of social media or mass email campaigning* |
| **Topic 5: Alternative Media** | |
| Week 10.1  Introducing alternative media | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 5  *Read at least one “liberal” and one “conservative” political blog before class.* |
| Week 10.2  The internet and political blogs  The net neutrality debate | Mayer and Cornfield selection  *Debate: Is the internet good or bad for American democracy?* |
| Week 11.1  Soft news and The Daily Show | Baumgartner and Morris (2006) |
| Week 11.2  Talk radio | Selection from Jamieson and Cappella (2008)  *Listen to at least a few minutes of political talk radio before class. Does Jamieson and Cappell’s argument ring true?* |
| Week 12.1  Emerging legal issues: The net neutrality debate, the fairness doctrine | Reading TBD |
| Week 12.2  The age of media choice | Selection from Prior (2008)  *Debate: What are the pros and cons of an age of increased media choice?* |
| **Topic 6: Media and Governance** | |
| Week 13.1  The public presidency | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 7 |
| Week 13.2  The public presidency | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 10  *Bring an example from a presidential press briefing and be prepared to discuss* |
| Week 14.1  The public congress (and why Americans hate congress so much) | Selection from Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995)  *Examine the difference between a .gov and .com congressional website for the same candidate. Be prepared to discuss these differences in class.* |
| Week 14.2  The media and political institutions: the courts, the military, diplomacy, state and local government, and bureaucracy | Graber (2009) |
| Week 15.1  Media politics and democracy | Iyengar and McGrady, ch. 11  **TERM PAPER DUE** |
| Week 15.2  Review day | Review – no assigned readings |
| FINAL EXAM | See final exam schedule |

Texts:

The main book for this course is *Media Politics: A Citizen’s Guide* by Iyengar and McGrady. This is an excellent book, and it comes with a DVD illustrating relevant examples of media. You should consider this DVD “required viewing” along with the assigned book chapters. In addition, we will be reading a number of current journal articles and book chapters by scholars of media and politics (selections on D2L).

In addition, since this is a course on media and politics, there is also an expectation that you are “keeping up” with media coverage of current events, and applying the analytic framework we will be learning in class. The syllabus regularly asks that you come to class with examples of media, and that you are prepared to discuss how this media relates to the course. When the syllabus asks you to have examined a particular piece of media, you should come prepared to discuss. Your participation grade will be factor in how prepared you are to discuss contemporary media using the framework established in class.

Grading and assignments:

1. Participate in classroom discussion. You are expected to be a regular an active participant in classroom discussion. The syllabus notes several days in which you are responsible for finding at least one piece of media (broadly defined) relevant to the day’s discussion topic to discuss in class. Depending on the day, this might be a short newspaper article, a political advertisement, a political leaflet, a speech excerpt, part of an evening news broadcast, a webpage, a transcript from a press briefing, or whatever. If you find video with a web link, send it to me in advance and I can try to incorporate it into class. Be prepared to link your media selection to the important discussion points you wish to make. (10%)
2. Midterm exam. Non-cumulative, short essay. (20%)
3. Term paper (8-10 pages). You will have the option to write one of two different “types” of paper. The first option is a fairly standard research paper, requiring you to research the political communication literature to respond to a question involving the media’s role in American democracy. The second option will require less in the way of researching scholarly sources, but instead will involve performing a content analysis of one or more media sources to respond to a “gap” in the empirical literature on media and politics. More details on both these options are forthcoming. (30%)
4. Campaign ad analysis (4-5 pages). This paper involves using readings from the class to analyze a campaign advertisement for its probable effects on voters (Will it stimulate turnout? Will it persuade undecided voters? Et cetera). More details provided in class. (20%)
5. Final exam. Non-cumulative, short essay. (20%)

Grading scale:

100-93 A 76-73 C

92-90 A- 72-70 C-

89-87 B+ 69-67 D+

86-83 B 66-63 D

82-80 B- 62-60 D-

79-77 C+ Below 60 F

Expectations:

*"The UW System standard for work required per credit is that students are expected to invest at least 3 hours of combined in-class and out-of-class work per week for each academic unit (credit) of coursework; thus, a 3-credit course will typically require a minimum of 9 hours of work per week (144 hrs./semester).*"

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students are expected to take the final at the scheduled date and time, turn in all writing assignments at the start of class on the day due, keep up with all scheduled reading, and attend every lecture, no exceptions! All written assignments must be typed, and are to be turned in as a paper copy, not emailed. Class attendance is mandatory. If you do happen to miss a class, you are strongly encouraged to contact me to discuss what was missed. If you have special needs regarding testing or writing assignments, please see me immediately to make appropriate arrangements. You are encouraged to stop by my office with any questions or concerns.

Deadlines:

The final exam must be taken at the scheduled time. If some sort of serious time conflict exists (like conflict with another exam, not like having to work), you must approach me at least one week prior to the scheduled exam time to make other arrangements. If no prior arrangements are made, the exam will be counted as a “0.” In general, I am not flexible about paper deadlines. Late papers will not be accepted. My suggestion is to look over the entire syllabus now, and if you foresee time conflicts (like a lot of papers due at the same time) plan accordingly. The only exceptions to this policy are, of course, health and family-related emergencies.

Final exam:

You are expected to attend every class session, and keep up with assigned reading. The final will be drawn from both reading and lecture material. **You are responsible for all of the reading material, even if it is not discussed in class, and all lecture material, even if it is not discussed in the book.**

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Don’t do this.  All acts of cheating and academic dishonesty will be handled in strict accordance with UW-Whitewater policy. In short, I always expect you do your own work, and I always expect you cite your sources. Please contact me directly if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating. For guidelines on cheating and plagiarism, see <http://www.uww.edu/icit/olr/stu/researchwriting/olr_asset_layout_6_19519_20839.html>

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding Special Accommodations, Academic Misconduct, Religious Beliefs Accommodation, Discrimination and Absence for University Sponsored Events (for details please refer to the Schedule of Classes; the “Rights and Responsibilities” section of the Undergraduate Catalog; the Academic Requirements and Policies and the Facilities and Services sections of the Graduate Catalog; and the “Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures (UWS Chapter 14); and the “Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures") (UWS Chapter 17).