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## COMPARATIVE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION in Fall 2018 (PO3011)

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| <b>Course Code</b>    | PO3011                  | <b>Professor(s)</b>     | Jayson Harsin                                                                                                         |
| <b>Prerequisites</b>  | None                    | <b>Office Number</b>    | G-305                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Class Schedule</b> | MR: 15:20-16:40 in SD-6 | <b>Office Hours</b>     | Mondays<br>5h00pm-7h30pm or by appt. Please make appt. by email regardless of day to insure availability, and no wait |
| <b>Credits</b>        | 4                       | <b>Email</b>            | jharsin@aup.edu                                                                                                       |
| <b>Semester</b>       | Fall 2018               | <b>Office Tel. Ext.</b> | N/A                                                                                                                   |

## Course Description

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**TL;DR:** Welcome! Politics, Media and Communication (no, these last two are overlapping but not the same). The eminent sociologist Manuel Castells has said Communication Studies is the most important social science of the 21st century. What are its implications for politics? Looking forward to exploring this question with you, especially with regard to the future of democracy.

**The Real deal:** this course explains and applies political communication concepts, theories, which will give you tools to make sense of the public aspect of politics today (as it appears in news media and/or social media, campaigns, social movements, protests, etc.). Particular emphasis will be given to recent examples in the U.S. 2016 presidential election, Brexit, French 2017 presidential election and various social movements such as La Manif Pour Tous, Nuit Debout, Taksim Square (Turkey), #MeToo and #Blacklivesmatter. We will cover prevalent political communication theories and trends, the relationship between political institutions and the press (both in the US and in other countries, and how they have historically changed), elections, debates, political campaigning and advertising, new, especially social media and politics (and various levels of participation therein), political socialization, education, popular culture as they all impinge on the political. Students will follow news and political rhetoric closely, and gradually use course concepts and theory to analyze it. IN particular, we will focus on the widely discussed question/problem of so-called post-truth or post-factual politics, what it is, where it came from, how might we get rid of it (do we want to?). Finally, we will consider actually existing political communication in the context of philosophies of democracy, asking what democracy is and to what degree we are seeing democracy live or some form of political communication that is better explained by references to oligarchy, plutocracy, or elite competitive democracy.

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## Course Learning Outcomes

Discuss basic concepts of political communication, such as agenda-setting, public opinion formation, selective exposure, selective perception, confirmation bias, political branding, micro-targeting, the public sphere, and political neuromarketing

Explain the latest research and trends in political communication research

Practice and think about political communication theory and research critically (for example, news coverage, frames and professional political communication strategies).

Prepare work that makes a contribution to the scholarship/knowledge in political communication studies.

Explain with critical rigor the relationship of the 2016 political communication to philosophies of democracy and citizenship

## General Education

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[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

## Course Outline

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1. Participation grade should not be taken lightly. You can insure a participation grade of A by
  - Doing the reading and coming to class ready to discuss it and pose questions about it.
  - Showing up on time to class; you cannot get full participation credit if you walk into class more than ten minutes late MORE THAN ONCE.
2. Show up to class with the reading we're covering. It's a sure sign that you're unprepared or not serious if you come in without the text for that meeting.
3. If you have problems with speaking in groups, you can come to class with a one-page

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summary of the reading to demonstrate you're prepared for class even if you don't speak that day.

4. Be respectful to everyone in the classroom. Practice an ethic of listening, attempting to understand others before you speak.

### **QUESTIONS We Will try to answer...**

1. **WHAT IS POLITICS?**
2. **WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WE WILL TALK ABOUT ITS ORIGINS AND TRANSFORMATIONS NEXT TIME.**
3. **WHAT DOES COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA HAVE TO DO WITH IT (OR DOES IT?)**
  - a. **WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OR THINGS (?) COMMUNICATING, MEDIATING, AND MAKING POLITICS?**
  - b. **WHAT DO YOU THINK "EFFECTIVE" POLITICAL COMMUNICATION MIGHT MEAN TODAY?**
  - c. **WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT POPULAR CULTURE HAVE TO DO WITH IT? (TV, FILM, MUSIC, YOUTUBE, ETC. CELEBRITY)**
4. **WHAT IS POWER? WHAT MIGHT COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA HAVE TO DO WITH POWER? (RELATIONSHIP OF COMM/MEDIA TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THEORY/PHILOSOPHY)**
5. **WHAT IS CITIZENSHIP? WHAT IS A "GOOD CITIZEN"?**
6. **WHAT ARE THREATS TO DEMOCRACY (A "SWOT" ANALYSIS?)**
7. **ARE YOU "POLITICALLY ACTIVE"? WHAT MIGHT THAT MEAN? HAVE YOU EVER PROTESTED ANYTHING? DO YOU DISCUSS "POLITICS" WITH FRIENDS AND/OR FAMILY? ONLINE?**
8. **DOES IT MATTER IF WE KNOW ANY BASIC THINGS ABOUT POLITICS AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION, OR IS OKAY IF WE IGNORE IT?**

### **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Note1:** I reserve the right to make slight changes to the syllabus regarding readings.

**Note 2:** *You are responsible for printing out website texts and bringing them to class. If you have some problem obtaining them (I suggest you print them out prior to the day of class), or are confused about book chapters assigned, please contact me immediately:*  
[\*\*\*jharsin@aup.fr\*\*\*](mailto:jharsin@aup.fr)

**IT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO SHOW UP TO CLASS SAYING, "I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE ASSIGNMENT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE." YOU MUST COME TO CLASS WITH THAT DAY'S READINGS IN HAND.**

**Note 3:** This course will be taught with a Blackboard component. You **MUST** make sure you are able to access the course website; that is your responsibility. If you do not understand how to use it, you should see Ann Borel at the writing lab. On course days you should check for announcements designed to help you with your reading. Important links to background reading will be posted there as well.

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FIRST CLASS ATTENDANCE CREDIT, MUST READ SYLLABUS AND SIGN/EMAIL INDICATING YOU UNDERSTAND COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES.

**Depending on the level of difficulty, readings are designed to be between 15 and 30 book pages per class.**

M 9/10 Welcome, introduction to the course. And some questions. Students as stakeholders: what makes a good class? What is politics? What is communication? What is Media? What is Democracy?

Th 9/13 **Must read both of these:** 1. <http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/features/10-things-you-should-know-about-democracy-ancient-greece> ; 2. McNair "Politics, Democracy, and the Media," ch. 2, *Introduction to Political Communication*

- 30mn inclass writing exercise based on the two readings
- Plus, Vote on Final Exam/Project

M 9/17 Fallacies of Logic (Basis for Good/Bad political reasoning)

Th 9/20 Resources of Argument (deductive/inductive logic, etc.)

M 9/24 "Agenda setting," and News Values. Questions: How is news produced? Why is agenda setting important for democracy? What are the potential anti-democratic dangers of it? What is the agenda today?

Th 9/27 "Framing," "Priming,"—Read both; they're short. Andrew

M 10/1 Lippmann, Walter. From *Public opinion*. "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads," link available here: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/lippman/ch01.html> Leona

Th 10/4 **Online Discussion:** Political Knowledge in *Encyclopedia of Political Comm* AND the two links below (or if you're not American, see what you can find about political knowledge/ignorance in your country, if it's a democracy). What do you know out about political/public knowledge, ignorance in your own country? Be ready to offer your NEW KNOWLEDGE in the discussion.

- [http://www.salon.com/2014/06/18/the\\_shocking\\_numbers\\_americans\\_are\\_dangerously\\_ignorant\\_on\\_politics\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2014/06/18/the_shocking_numbers_americans_are_dangerously_ignorant_on_politics_partner/)
- "Brexit and Political Ignorance"  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/06/26/brexit-regrexit-and-the-impact-of-political-ignorance/>

M 10/8 Political Cognition: Read half-way through: Lilliker chapter, "Strategic Political Communication" from *Political Cognition* (2015) Presentation: Madeleine

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Th 10/11 **Read Second half of chapter** Lilliker, D., “Strategic Political Communication” political marketing/branding. **Presentation : Dora**

M 10/15 **ONL Discussion**: Read very short articles: “Organizing Chaos” ch. 1 from *Propaganda*, Edward Bernays, review of Bernays book in *The Nation*, and “Public Opinion” in *Encyclopedia of Political Comm.*

Th 10/18 Civic Engagement/Participation/Political Involvement. Presentation: social movements and politics: Matthieu

M 10/22 Campaigns (U.S. vs. Other countries) Presentation: Anthony

Th 10/25 Big Data Analytics, Microtargeting, etc. 2 short readings:

1. How Big Data Broke American Politics <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/how-big-data-broke-american-politics-n732901>

2. Lapowsky, Issie. “Did Trump’s Data Team Help Russians? Facebook Might Have the Answer.” *WIRED*, July 14, 2017. <https://www.wired.com/story/trump-russia-data-parscale-facebook/>.

3. Presentation: Noella fatuma

M 10/29 Midterm

11/1 No class Fall Break

M 11/5 (**Online Discussion**) Context of Media Habits in Attention Economy. Two articles.

- “How people read online: why you won’t finish this article” by Farhad Manjoo  
[http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2013/06/how\\_people\\_read\\_online\\_why\\_you\\_won\\_t\\_finish\\_this\\_article.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2013/06/how_people_read_online_why_you_won_t_finish_this_article.html)

- Sonya Song, “Sharing Fast and Slow” (on attention and social media “shares”)  
) Nieman Lab, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/11/sharing-fast-and-slow-the-psychological-connection-between-how-we-think-and-how-we-spread-news-on-social-media/>

TH 11/8 Media/Politics/Entertainment mixing, “introduction” to *Media and the RE-styling of Politics*, Corner and Pels. Presentation: Ava

M 11/12 Politics and Popular culture II; comedians; talk shows, etc. Presentation: Mohammad

Th 11/15 Pressure Group Politics (McNair) Presentation: Thomas

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M 11/19 The Rise of the Global Professional Political Communication Industry Presentation: Aaron

TH 11/22 Outrage, Incivility, Polarization: ch 1 from *The Outrage Industry*, by Berry and Sobieraj. Presentation: Hannah

M 11/26 Facts, Truths, lies, news, politics. Two articles and a student presentation:

1.  
<http://www.niemanlab.org/2017/06/brits-and-europeans-seem-to-be-better-than-americans-at-not-sharing-fake-news/>
2.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/26/robert-mercier-breitbart-war-on-media-steve-bannon-donald-trump-nigel-farage>
3. In class (preview if you want): Jake Tapper and Kellyanne Conway exchange on CNN: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flyW41U7XPw> key part starts at 11:20 in the video; or try it in written form, the transcript: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/02/08/kellyanne-conway-vs-jake-tapper-annotated/> February 8, 2017. Also, Bill O'Reilly and Tedd Koppel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpIsIcH-eBE>

- Presentation: Leily

TH 11/29 Facts, contd. Online Discussion, Harsin "Post-truth" from *Oxford Encyclopedia of Communication and Critical Studies*.

M 12/03

Our Brand is Crisis (Global Influence industries in politics): Reading, *Alpha Dogs*

TH 12/6 Online discussion Th 12/7 *Century of the Self* documentary in-class (watch pt I and pt. 4 on Youtube, and then join in discussion in evening from 6 to 8:30pm)

M 12/10 LAST CLASS QUIZ SHOW, FINAL REVIEW (LAST 10MN COURSE EVALUATION) EVENING, 6:30-9: END OF COURSE AND HOLIDAY APERO HOSTED BY PROF. HARSIN, PLACE/TIME TBA

Final Dec 18 2017 3:30PM

**I HOPE YOU READ THIS. You need to have read and signed it for attendance credit next time**

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I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE POLICIES OF THIS COURSE CM 3011 2016, PROF HARSIN, OUTLINED IN THIS SYLLABUS.

DATE\_\_\_\_

NAME AND SIGNATURE\_\_\_\_

## Textbooks

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This course doesn't have any textbook.

## Attendance Policy

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### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

After 3 absences the Final grade will be reduce 1 tier for each successive absence (e.g. A becomes A-, etc.)

**Attendance at all exams is mandatory.**

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if

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absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT:** As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

## Grading Policy

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### **GRADING:**

- **Final Projects or Exam 25%** We will vote on this the second day of class, and you'll see how much you like or dislike democracy. Get ready to make arguments for or against your choice for the final. Is democracy dank politics? Or does it suck beyond belief? See below.
- **Extra Research Assignment and Presentation 15%** (each student will get an assigned topic from Prof. Harsin, which takes the readings/topics for the particular class meeting to a greater critical depth): YOUR DATE WILL BE ASSIGNED IN THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASSES. PRESENTATIONS BEGIN THURSDAY 9/20
- **Midterm 20%**
- **Participation 20%**, this includes attendance at special talks (See guidelines below for participation grades)
  - **Includes reading and being able to discuss each class (if called upon) current stories from major news site from your country (or LeMonde, New York Times, The Guardian)**
  - **Includes 3 online discussions 5% (more details to follow in separate set of instructions)**
- **Quizzes 20 %** (beginning second week of classes)

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## Final Exam Options to Vote on During our Second Class Meeting

Vote on final assignment: 4 choices. Be ready to defend/argue your choice in class.

IN Well-supported/argued (see reasoning and fallacies of logic) essay using course concepts and original research,

1. Write an essay, arguing that democracy in terms of news media coverage, citizen participation (say Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, social movements in public view, etc.), party politics, candidates and surrogates' speech, organization of "debates" and spectacle of primaries, and nominating convention—are or are not evidence that democracy is alive and well, hanging by a thread, or a rotting carcass. 8-10 double-spaced 12 pt. pages
2. Traditional Final: Composed of Multiple choice, Short Answer, and Short essay (essay part 2-3 pages)
3. Oral Final. I give the class a list of all possible questions I could ask (study guide), and then at final I spring the mystery selected questions on you in 1-1 meeting, 15mn.

## Other

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### CONDUCT/CLASSROOM POLICY

- Please be courteous and respectful at all times. You may disagree with someone, but please do so politely (a good way to start is by saying "I can see your point").
- Please use restroom **before class**, except in an emergency (routine departures in the middle of the class dare unacceptable). Frequent departures and arrivals *distract* the flow of class each time they happen. That said, of course emergencies happen. If you do get up for such an emergency, do not take your phone with you do take a break for personal calls and texting. If violation of this policy is repeated, you will receive a C participation grade for the day.
- **Avoid conversations with people sitting around you.** They are DISTRACTING to all those around you.
- **You must check your AUP email once per day for important announcements**
- **LAPTOPS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES: NO LAPTOPS, IPADS, CELL PHONES, ETC ALLOWED DURING CLASS, UNLESS I ASK YOU TO BRING THEM FOR AN EXERCISE IN CLASS:** If you bring a laptop, close it before the start of class. Please turn your cell phones and other communication devices off during class.
  - **STUDENTS WHO DISREGARD THIS POLICY WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE CLASS** and will receive an F participation grade for the day.
- **Why do I have a no laptops policy? I LOVE laptops. That's not the reason. It's about learning. Because research says such devices in the classroom often**

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**impede learning. See here, for example:**

- <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hot-thought/201007/banning-laptops-in-classrooms-0>
- <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>
- Prepare work that makes a contribution to the scholarship/knowledge in political communication studies.