
COMPARATIVE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION in Fall 2019 (PO3011)

Course Code	PO3011	Professor(s)	Jayson Harsin
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-307
Class Schedule	MR: 13:45-15:05 in PL-3	Office Hours	3:30-6:30 pm M (available Wednesday and Thursday by Appointment). Always make appointment, in case someone else has already taken one and you won't get time as walk-in
Credits	4	Email	jharsin@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	828

Course Description

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. 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 *Le Manif Pour Tous*, *Nuit Debout*, Taksim Square (Turkey), the Umbrella Movement (Hong Kong) and Occupy. In the process, the course serves as an introduction to how communication scholars study politics and the media (and how you can do that too!). 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), 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.

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

Course Outline

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*

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.

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

M 9/2 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 9/5 2 readings: Paul Cartledge, "10 Things You Should Know About Democracy in Ancient Greece". *Oxford*

Today <http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/features/10-things-you-should-know-about-democracy-ancient-greece> ; Where do you think media and communication fit in these accounts of democracy?

- Plus, Vote on Final Exam/Projec

M 9/9 McNair "Politics, Democracy, and the Media," ch. 2, *Introduction to Political Communication*

Th 9/12 Analyzing and Making Political Arguments. Reading: "Resources of Argument" (deductive/inductive logic, etc.)

M 9/16 Fallacies of Logic (Normative critiques of Good/Bad political reasoning)

Th 9/19 "Agenda setting," and News Values. Questions: What is news? 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? **Presentation:**

M 9/23 "Framing," "Priming,"—Read both; they're short. **presentation: selective exposure, selective perception**

Th 9/26 Political Cognition: Read half-way through: Lilliker chapter, "Strategic Political Communication" from *Political Cognition* (2015) ; **Presentation**

M 9/30 Read **Second half of chapter** Lilliker, D., "Strategic Political Communication" political marketing/branding. **presentation:**

Th 10/3 Political Knowledge in *The Encyclopedia of Political Communication* **AND ALSO be able to discuss 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 discuss it when called upon.**

- 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/>

- Recommended

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/15/democracy-authoritarianism-media-spotlight-viktor-orban>

M 10/7 The role of communication and media in “Mass Democracy”: Read very short articles: “Organizing Chaos” ch. 1 from *Propaganda*, Edward Bernays and “Public Opinion” in *Encyclopedia of Political Comm.* **Online Discussion** (see separate instructions for grading)

Th 10/10 Campaigns and Debates

Campaigns (U.S. vs. Other countries): Read these two short articles: “Electoral Campaigns,” in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*,”

“Debates” in *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*

Recommended for A and B students “Trends in Political Campaigning, *Campaigns & Elections* <https://www.campaignsandelections.com/europe/7-trends-in-political-campaigning>

M 10/13 Civic Engagement and Political Participation. In *Encyclopedia of Political Communication* **Presentation:**

(10/15-16 Fourth Democratic Party Presidential Debates) We will watch these Tuesday 10/14 18h30. Refreshments provided, followed by discussion. Attendance Required.

Th 10/17 Quiz Show, Exam Study Session

M 10/23 Midterm

Th 10/26 Campaigns (U.S. vs. Other countries): Read these two short articles: “Electoral Campaigns,” in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*,” and “Trends in Political Campaigning, *Campaigns & Elections* <https://www.campaignsandelections.com/europe/7-trends-in-political-campaigning>

M 10/30 Fall Break No class

M 11/4 Pressure Group Politics (McNair)

Th 11/7 Media/Politics/Entertainment mixing, “introduction” to *Media and the RE-styling of Politics*, Corner and Pels. **M 11/13** Politics and Popular culture II; comedians; talk shows, etc.

M11/11 **No class Armistice Day**

Th 11/14 Outrage, Incivility, Polarization: ch 1 from *The Outrage Industry*, by Berry and Sobieraj.

Th 11/18 Facts, Truths, Persuasion lies, news, politics. Two articles:

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-mercere-breitbart-war-on-media-steve-bannon-donald-trump-nigel-farage>

Presentation ch. 1 from *Blur*.

M 11/21 Power: Professional Political Communication, Big Data Analytics, etc. Cambridge Analytica and others.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-year-on-lesson-in-institutional-failure-christopher-wylie>

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/07/the-great-british-brexite-robbery-hijacked-democracy>

Th 11/25 Harsin "Post-truth" from *Oxford Encyclopedia of Communication and Critical Studies*.

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>

M 11/28 Our Brand is Crisis (Global Influence industries in politics): Reading, *Alpha Dogs*

Th 12/1 *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)

Final Dec 12 2019 12PM Room TBA

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

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.

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 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.

Grading Policy

GRADING:

- **Final 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 10%** (each student will get an assigned topic from Prof. Harsin by end of week 2, which takes the readings/topics for the particular class meeting to a greater critical depth)
- **Midterm 25%**
- **Participation 20%**, this includes attendance at debate night (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 2 online discussions 5% of grade (more details to follow in separate set of instructions)**

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- Quizzes 20 % (beginning second week of class)

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.

1. IN Well-supported/argued Essay using course materials, argue that democracy is alive and well, hanging by a thread, or a rotting carcass. You must explain how media and communication support your position. 5-7 double-spaced 12 pt. pages
2. Traditional Final: Composed of Multiple choice, Short Answer, and Short essay (essay part 2-3 pages)

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.

Other

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 are 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 impede learning. See here, for example:**
- <https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces->

[brain-power](#)

- <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>
- https://www.huffingtonpost.com/naomi-s-baron/read-on-screen-learning_b_6681500.html

Participation Grade:

The purpose of this page is to articulate the standards for oral participation at the beginning of the semester. At the END of the semester, I will ask you to print this page out, fill it out, and hand it in. You will not automatically receive the grade you give yourself.

A -----I was attentive during **every** class and came to class **fully prepared** to participate in class activities; I made substantial contributions **each class period** and participated **enthusiastically** in all group work. I went "above and beyond" to add to the atmosphere of the class by being friendly, supportive, and encouraging to my peers and instructor.

B -----I came prepared to almost every class; I was on time and attentive almost every class; my contributions were frequent; I participated with good will in most group work; I added to the atmosphere of the class by being friendly and courteous to my peers and instructor.

C -----My effort was average; I was sometimes late; I could have added more to the class; I was frequently not fully prepared for class activities; I did not participate in discussions or group work with any enthusiasm. I came to class with an indifferent attitude that did not help create a positive learning environment.

D -----I often came to class unprepared; I was frequently late; I rarely added anything to discussions; I did not pay attention to class discussions or activities.

F -----I worked against the common welfare of the class by not participating, or by disrupting or dominating, or by failing to do assigned work and so hindering group activities. I missed more than three classes without a legitimate reason.

I deserve Grade__.

Name:_____, **Signature**_____

How to succeed in this class

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 to pose questions about it.
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 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 (AND ME) 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?**