Political Science 321  
Fall Semester 2013

Instructor: Richard Davis  
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Description
The mass media's power in American politics has been one of the most debated topics in political discussion. This course will systematically analyze the media's relationship with political institutions and organizations, policies, and the public. In this course, we will examine the basis for the media's power. We will discuss the historical relationship between the press and political institutions and processes, the news gathering process, the role of the news media in electoral campaigns, the legislative process, presidential decision making, and judicial behavior. By the conclusion of this course, you should understand how the media's role in politics has evolved historically, what criteria the press uses for newsworthiness and how others attempt to use that criteria for their political ends, how the media in the United States compare with other nations, and to what extent the news media intersect with various aspects of American politics - campaigns and elections, the policymaking process, formation of political attitudes.

Instructor Expectations

1. Enrollment in this class implies a willingness to invest the effort needed to learn the subject and do well in the course.  
2. Frequent usage will be made of the opportunity to interact with the professor in order to discuss research paper subjects, assignments, or the class topics generally.  
3. Assignments must be completed on time. One letter grade is subtracted from the grade for each day late. No work will be accepted after the beginning of the final exam period.  
4. Students will be expected to participate fully in the class discussion. That requires prior study of the assigned readings for the day.

Learning Outcomes

- **Political Process, Theory, and Thought**  
Students will analyze media's relationship with political institutions and organizations, policies, and the public.

- **Political Process, Theory, and Thought**  
Understand how the media's role in American politics has evolved over time.

- **Political Process, Theory and Thought**  
Know what criteria the press uses for newsworthiness and how others attempt to use that criteria for their political ends.

- **Political Process, Theory and Thought**  
Students will analyze the basis for the media's power.

- **Political Process, Theory, and Thought**  
Students will discuss the historical relationship between the press and political institutions and processes, the news gathering process, the role of the news media in electoral campaigns, the legislative process, presidential decision making, and judicial behavior.

- **Political Process, Theory, and Thought**  
Appreciate how the media/political system in the United States compares and contrasts with media/political systems in other nations.

- **Politics, International Relations, and Political Philosophy**  
Understand the legal structure of media regulation of the press.
• Political Process, Theory, and Thought
  Know how news media affect electoral campaigns.

• Political Process, Theory, and Thought
  Understand media role in shaping individual’s political attitudes and behavior.

• Political Process, Theory, and Thought
  See how the news media’s interact with institutions in order to shape public policy.

• Critical Thinking and Analysis
  Appreciate the varying sides of current debates over the role of the news media

Course Requirements

1. A term research paper of no less than 20 pages on a topic of your choosing, but approved by the professor in advance. (25 percent)

   A three-page prospectus with a bibliography (at least 15 relevant academic sources) is due by September 16 in class. One page should be a description of the paper. The second page should be an outline for the paper. The third page should include the bibliography. Do not count Internet sources or popular sources as one of your 15 relevant academic sources. They must be scholarly books or journal articles.

   The final paper will be due November 22 by 5 p.m.

   The research paper should be an exhaustive undergraduate treatment of a topic related to the role of the media in American politics. The paper should prove a thesis or answer an empirical question. The thesis or question will be of your choosing and the process of choosing is critical to the development of analytical skills. Make sure the thesis or question is narrow enough to address in a paper of this length.

   Some examples of theses:

   Social media have caused greater inactivity between candidates and voters during electoral campaigns.

   Exposure to a political talk radio program causes individual attitude change in the direction of the host’s ideological views.

   Empirical Questions:

   How did journalists gain independence from politicians in the early 1800s?

   How do the political attitudes of news media professionals differ from those of the general public?

   If you decide to change the topic, alert me no later than November 1. Following that date, your chosen topic will be the topic of your paper. Do your research early in order to assure that you are not caught at the end with an unmanageable paper. This paper must be unique to this class, unless approved by the instructor in advance.

   Some hints about grading:

   1. The minimum page length is mandatory. I will not even read a paper of less than 15 pages. It will be returned with a grade of zero.

   2. Please thoroughly proofread your written work. Spell checkers and grammatical programs make this task easy. There is no excuse for these mistakes. If there are more than three mistakes of this character on a page, I will reduce the grade by one half letter grade (for example, A to A-) for each page.

   3. Any information used from other sources must be fully cited, not just direct quotations. The paper should draw on at least 20 relevant academic sources. Again, these must be scholarly journal articles and books. In addition to that number, you may include other sources such as interviews, public opinion surveys, speeches, Congressional reports, etc. Popular sources such as newsmagazines and newspapers should be used only when no better source is available (for example to cite some very recent event). Avoid Internet sites, particularly wikipedia.

2. Two midterm examinations in the Testing Center - (20 percent each)
3. A final examination in the Testing Center (20 percent)

4. Participation in a Debate (10 percent) -
   Topics:
   * Online Political Discussion Degrades Political Discourse in the United States
   * The Private Lives of Public Officials or Candidates Should Not Be Reported by the Press Unless That Behavior is Illegal
   * News Media Organizations Should be Prohibited from Publicizing Classified Government Documents During Wartime, News Media Coverage of U.S. Military or Foreign Policy Decisions or Actions Should Be Subject to Government Censorship

5. Class Participation (5 percent)

**Texts**

*Graber, Mass Media and American Politics, 8th ed.*
*Rozell, Media Power, Media Politics, 2nd ed.*
*Fox and Ramos, Ipolitics.*

**Course Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W – Sep 4</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>M – Sep 9</td>
<td>Global Perspective/Regulating the Press</td>
<td>Online Readings, pp. 87-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Sep 11</td>
<td>The Media Culture</td>
<td>Online Readings, pp. 111-120.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Sep 16</td>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>Fox and Ramos, pp. 1-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Sep 18</td>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>Fox and Ramos, pp. 1-99; Rozell, chp 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Sep 23</td>
<td>Historical Development</td>
<td>Online Readings, pp. 25-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>W, M - Sep 25, 30</td>
<td>Newsgathering</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 4; Fox and Ramos, pp. 76-99</td>
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<tr>
<td>W – Oct 2</td>
<td>News Making</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 7</td>
<td><strong>First Midterm Exam</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 9</td>
<td>Effects on the Media Audience</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 7; Rozell, chap. 12</td>
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<td>M - Oct 14</td>
<td>Media and Electoral Roles</td>
<td>Rozell, chap. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 16</td>
<td>Media and Campaigns</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 8; Rozell, chps 7 and 8; Fox and Ramos, pp. 103-124.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 21</td>
<td><strong>Debate: Digital Media Discussion Degrades American Political Discourse</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 23</td>
<td><strong>Debate: The Privates Lives of Public Officials Should Not Be Reported by the Press Unless That Behavior is Illegal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 28</td>
<td>The Presidency</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 9; Rozell, chap. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 30</td>
<td>Covering Congress</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 9; Rozell, chap. 2; Fox and Ramos, pp. 206-232.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M – Nov 4</td>
<td>The Supreme Court in the News</td>
<td>Graber, chap. 10; Rozell, chps 3 and 4</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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<td>W- Nov 6</td>
<td>Bureaucratic News</td>
<td>Rozell, chp. 5</td>
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<td>M- Nov 11</td>
<td><strong>Second Midterm Exam</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>W - Nov 13</td>
<td><strong>One-on-One Discussion of Papers</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>M - Nov 18</td>
<td><em>Debate: News Media Organizations Should be Prohibited from Publicizing Classified Government Documents</em></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>W - Nov 20</td>
<td>Getting Publicity: Interests Groups</td>
<td>Rozell, chp. 9</td>
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<td>M - Nov 25</td>
<td>The Policy Role of the Press</td>
<td>Graber, chp. 6; Fox and Ramos, pp. 233-258</td>
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<td>W - Nov 27</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>M – Dec 2</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs Coverage Covering War</td>
<td>Graber, chp 11; Rozell, chp. 11</td>
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<td>W – Dec 4</td>
<td>Covering War</td>
<td>Graber, chp. 11; Rozell, chp. 11</td>
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<td>M - Dec 9</td>
<td><em>Debate: During Wartime, News Media Coverage of U.S. Military or Foreign Policy Decisions or Actions Should Be Subject to Government Censorship</em></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>W - Dec 11</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM in Testing Center</strong></td>
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**BYU Honor Code**

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

**Preventing Sexual Discrimination and Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university, but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

**Students with Disabilities**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of
disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

**Academic Honesty Policy**

The first injunction of the BYU Honor Code is the call to be honest. Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. President David O. McKay taught that 'character is the highest aim of education' (The Aims of a BYU Education, p. 6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

**Plagiarism Policy**

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.