



CM/PO 330 Media, Politics and Political Communication in the US and France
IES Abroad Paris BIA Program

DESCRIPTION:

The media from radio to print and television, as well as new digital media, are sometimes called the fourth branch of government in the United States. Whether in France or in the US, much of our exposure to politics comes not from direct experience but from mediated stories. This course is designed to help you think about this relationship looking at both political communications and news, the two-way channel between the mass media and political actors, and the relationship between the news media and politics as major issues in modern society. We will explore how news organizations decide what is news, how they report it, how those reports have an impact on viewers or readers, and ultimately, the political system, legitimizing local, national, and international issues. Essentially, this media and communications focused course emphasizes the ways in which news media shape everything we know about politics. Like all journalism disciplines today, political journalism is rapidly changing with the Internet. A portion of the course will be dedicated to new media and how online reporting and social networking have altered modern society and politics.

CREDITS: 3

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Elizabeth Sheppard, Associate Professor, University of Tours, elizabeth.sheppard@univ-tours.fr

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English

PREREQUISITES: Previous classes in political science or communications and a serious interest in politics

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

This class will be an interactive seminar based:

- Class lectures by the professor
- Class discussions and analyses of ongoing events in the media using audiovisual materials (French and American tv news, blogs, newspapers, polls)
- Presentations by students of their ongoing works (short assignments, group presentations)

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation and Quizzes- 10%
- Midterm Written Exam - 30%
- In class présentations - 30%
- Final Exam - 30%

Course Participation , weekly newsbriefs(10%)

Lectures and assigned readings are designed to complement each other, and I recommend doing the readings for each class in advance since this will allow you to get more out of lecture. You should read each item on the list closely and come to class each week prepared to discuss them in detail. These questions may help you prepare for the discussion:

- What outcome(s) is the author seeking to explain?
- What is this author(s) main argument?
- Where does this reading fit into the literature and how does it seek to contribute?
- What is the nature of this reading's empirical research design and findings?
- What are paper's strengths and weaknesses?

We will also discuss and analyze case studies in class for which your participation is important...

Class participation includes:



- ✓ Asking questions and or commenting on the weekly readings and topics of the day
- ✓ Responding to questions on the readings, on class discussions
- ✓ Presentation of your simulation and personal work to the class

In addition, Weekly News Briefs will facilitate your participation and be included in the grade.

Objective: To keep students informed and engaged with current events while developing their analytical and presentation skills.

Format:

- Rotation: Each week, 1-2 students deliver a brief (5-minute) news update on a recent event related to media, politics, and political communication in France and the U.S.
- The brief should summarize the event, analyze how it was reported across different media outlets (e.g., conservative vs. liberal perspectives), and highlight any significant media communication strategies used.

Preparation:

- Source Requirements: Students must use at least two different media outlets (one French, one American) to compare perspectives.
- Outline Submission: Students submit a short outline 48 hours before their presentation, detailing the chosen event, the media outlets used, and a brief analysis.
- Question/Discussion Point: The presenting student must end their brief with a thought-provoking question for the class, encouraging a short discussion.

Rules & Guidelines:

- Timeliness: Students must select news events that occurred within the past week to keep the discussions current and relevant.
- Critical Analysis: Presentations should go beyond summarizing; students must analyze media coverage, highlighting differences in framing, language, or bias.

---For your own benefit I have provided below a rubric of how you are graded on participation.

Grading Rubric for Student Participation

Developed by Sam Viroslov, IES Abroad San Jose

A	Excellent participation The student's contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he or she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. He/she respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions and is capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities.
B	Very good participation The student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.
C	Regular participation The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.
F	Insufficient participation Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.

Midterm Exam (30 %) and Final Exam (30%)

Your exam will be based both on class lectures and discussions as well as your readings. It will be in short answer format. A midterm exam review will be held the week prior to the exam in order to allow for questions concerning format and/or content.

Student Led Lectures Presentation and Responding/Questions (30%)

Objective: To engage students in active learning by having them teach a section of the course, focusing on specific topics related to media, politics, and political communication in France and the U.S.

Format

- Each student (or a pair) is assigned a topic of the week aligned with the syllabus and including the readings of the week (e.g., "The Role of Social Media in Political Campaigns" or "French vs. U.S. Media Bias").
 - The student(s) must prepare a 15-minute lecture followed by a 10-minute Q&A/discussion segment with the class.
- Preparation:
- Research & Sources: Students must consult at least three academic sources (e.g., journal articles, books) as well as reputable news outlets to support their presentation.
 - The work must be your own.
 - Slides: Students are encouraged to use slides (e.g., PowerPoint)

Rules & Guidelines:

- Relevance: Content must directly relate to the course theme and provide insights into media and political communication, referencing both French and U.S. contexts.

-Engagement: Students must prepare at least two open-ended questions to stimulate class discussion during the Q&A segment.

- Evaluation Criteria:

- Content (40%): Clarity, depth, and relevance of information.
- Presentation Skills (30%): Delivery, use of visual aids, and ability to engage the class.
- Discussion Facilitation (30%): Quality of questions posed and ability to manage the discussion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

You should gain from this course

- A better understanding of the importance of political communications and the news media today
- Learn tools for analyzing and assessing both current trends and historical evolutions
- Improve your skills in critical thinking and writing which is an essential tool
- Identify major issues in political communications and media in both France and the US and analyze them according to given frameworks and be able to formulate a clear and well-structured analysis and opinion on these topics.
- Express clear and well-structured analyses on these topics

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Readings
Week 1: Introduction Jan 20/22	• <i>Introduction:</i> • The legal framework of the freedom of the press in the US and France	• Required readings: ○ Chapter 1, MCNAIR, B. An introduction to political communication, Routledge, 2011. ○ Oates, S. (2008) introduction, IN Media and Politics SAGE, London, UK (p1-21) ○ KUHN, R. The Media In Contemporary France, Open University Press, 2011 pp. 96-99(Media Regulation)
Week 2 Jan 27/29	• Analyzing the Modern Media: How Does the Media Make the News? • Theories: Feeding Frenzy, Out of Order, etc.	• Required Reading: ○ KUHN, R. The Media In Contemporary France, Open University Press, 2011 pp29-34 (formative influences), ○ Knight Foundation-IPSOS, Survey, Free Expression in America Post 2020, p1-10 (The Executive Summary) on Moodle
Week 3 Feb 3/5	• What's Wrong with Modern News Media? • Problems & Possible Solutions • Types of Media Bias	• Article on Media Bias (moodle) • UH Hobby School of Public Affairs, "Texas Election 2020: Information Sources and Perceptions of Media Bias," Nov. 2020.
Week 4 Feb 10/12	• Trends in Political News • Coverage of War	• Required readings or viewing: ○ Chapter 9, MCNAIR, B. An introduction to political communication, Routledge, 2011.

	• Censorship, the US government and War	○ Video: Reporters at war, War Lies and Videotape, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAJBxJTSNkU ○ Link will be provided on moodle
Week 5 Feb 17/19	• Propaganda, Misinformation and the war in Ukraine • Exam Review	• Newline PBS film in class and video Documentary • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tR_6dibpDfo • https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-russia-is-using-artificial-intelligence-to-interfere-in-elections • Required readings: ○ Chapters 6 and 7, MCNAIR, B. An introduction to political communication, Routledge, 2011. ○ Olga Lautman, “We’re Winning, Say Russia’s Fake News Manufacturers”, CEPA (moodle)
SPRING BREAK		
Week 6 March 3/5	• News Coverage of Elections (1) • Comparison of the last French and US Presidential Elections	ings: nd T. Rogers and “Political Campaigns and Big Data” Harvard Kennedy School, g Paper Series, Nov; 2013. Media In Contemporary France, Open University Press, 2011pp72-79 (Political
Week 7 MIDTERMS MARCH 10 (Exam)/ 12	Elections and Media (2) • The June European Elections • The Last French Election/ French Candidates • Case studies on advertisements and debates	• Required readings: ○ P Hamby, “Did twitter kill the boys on the bus? Searching for a better way to cover a campaign” , Shorenstein Center Paper, Harvard University, 2013, http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/d80_hamby.pdf. ○ Pew Research Center. 2010. “Distrust, Discontent, Anger and Partisan Rancor: The People and Their Government.” (Sections 1-3) emma and olivia
Week 8 March 17/19	• Gender bias and politics • Similarities and differences between countries	○ Required readings: ○ Daphne Joanna Van der Pas, Loes Aaldering, Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis, Journal of Communication, Volume 70, Issue 1, February 2020, Pages 114–143, https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqz046 MIRIAM ○ In Class videos and discussions: Why aren’t more women in Politics; (DW Documentary), Conquete du pouvoir; Quelle place pour les femmes en Politique (Public Senat)
Week 9 March 24/26	• <i>How Much Influence Does the Media Have on Political Behavior?</i>	• Required reading: ○ Chapter 5, MCNAIR, B. An introduction to political communication, Routledge, 2011.

	• Mass Media and agenda setting • Theories of Agenda setting, Framing and Priming	○ Nic Newman, RISJ, Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and predictions 2022. Read Executive Summary and Section 3 on the practice of journalism. (moodle) ○ Walgrave Agenda setting (moodle)
Week 10 March 31st /April 2	• Communications revolutions: The Impact of Cable TV and the Internet on Political Communications • CNN effect	• Required reading: ○ Post Industrial Journalism (Shirky) http://towcenter.org/research/post-industrial-journalism-adapting-to-the-present-2/ ○ "The political power of social Media"(Shirky) https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2010-12-20/political-power-social-media Addis Kathleen
Week 11 April 7/9	• late night comedy and politics • How Social Media has changed Political communications after 2012 • Social Network, behavior and elections	• Required readings: The internet and American Political Campaigns," (Karpf) http://www.cfinst.org/pdf/papers/08_Karpf_Technology.pdf • Pew Research (2016) Election 2016: Campaigns as a Direct Source of News. Washington. D.C.: Pew Research Center. Jen
Week 12 April 14/16	• News and Democracy: What Should Be the Role of the Media in a Democracy? • construction and use of polls in the media in France and the US • Case study on recent polls	• Required Reading : ○ Recent polls (check on line at CNN, Politico or any major news source for US elections, as well as GALLUP or PEW, for French sources in English France24 and IPSOS or Le Monde in French) ○ Mohammed, S.N. & Trumbour, R.C. 2021, "Polls and Elections: "The Carnavalesque in the 2016 US Presidential Campaign"", Presidential studies quarterly, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 884-903. (on moodle) Mlriam
Week 13 April 23rd	Exam Review	• Come to class with questions. We will go over themes, any last questions on readings • If any one has not done a presentation we can catch up as well.
Week 14 April 28-May 2nd	Final Exam 1,5h	Exam date TBD by IES



REQUIRED READINGS:

MCNAIR, B. An introduction to political communication, 5th ed. Routledge, 2011. The 6th edition is good as well but you will have to get it on your own. (on moodle)

KUHN, R. The Media In Contemporary France, Open University Press, 2011. (ON RESERVE AT IES)

Students are REQUIRED to read a French and a US daily newspaper and watch the news before coming to class and be able to discuss in an analytical fashion the media from that week.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Alger, Dean. 1998. *Megamedia: How Giant Corporations Dominate Mass Media, Distort Competition, and Endanger Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN# 0-8476-8389-3. Hardcover.

Chomsky, Noam. 1997. *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*. Seven Stories Press.

Enli, G (2015) Mediated Authenticity: How the Media Constructs Reality. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

-and Naper, AA (2016) Social media incumbent advantage: Barack Obama's and Mitt Romney's Tweets in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election Campaign. In: Bruns, A, Enli, G, Skogerbo, E (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 364–377.

Graber, Doris A. 2000. *Media Power in Politics*, 4th ed. Congressional Quarterly.

Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. 2002. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Media*. Pantheon/

Kreiss, D (2012) Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

-And D, Jasinski, C (2016) The tech industry meets presidential politics: Explaining the democratic party's technological advantage in electoral campaigning, 2004–2012. *Political Communication* 33: 544–562.

KUHN, R. *Political Journalism: New challenges, new practices*, (co-edited with Erik Neveu), London, Routledge (Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science), 2002.

-‘The Public and the Private in Contemporary French Politics’ *French Cultural Studies*, 18/2, 2007, 185–200.

-‘Where’s the Spin? The Executive and News Management in France’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 13/3, 2005, 307–322.

- ‘“Be Very Afraid” Television and l’Insécurité in the 2002 French Presidential Election’, *European Journal of Communication*, 20/2, 2005, 181–198.

McLuhan, Marshall and Quentin Fiore. 2001. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. Gingko Press.

Nichols, John and Robert W. McChesney. 2000. *It’s the Media, Stupid*. Seven Stories Press.

Parenti, Michael. 1993. *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the News Media* 2nd ed. Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Parry-Giles, SJ (2014) Hillary Clinton in the News: Gender and Authenticity in American Politics. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence and Steven Livingston. 2007. *When The Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media From Iraq to Katrina*. University of Chicago Press.

George Edwards. 2006. *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit*. Yale University Press.



Doris A. Graber. 2010. *Mass Media and American Politics*. 8th Edition. CQ Press.
Media Power in American Politics. (6th edition). 2010. Doris A. Graber, ed. CQ Press.
Lance Bennett. 2012. "The Political Economy of News and the End of a Journalism Era" in *News: The Politics of Illusion*, Ninth Edition
New York: Pearson Longman.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Dr. Elizabeth Sheppard holds a PhD in International Public Policy from Sciences Po Paris and a BSFS from the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Tours, where she has headed the politics and international relations Program since 2013. She teaches seminars on international terrorism, American foreign policy, and International security. Current research areas focus on cyberjihadism, terrorist financing and international security policy.

IES Paris Attendance Policy

Your academics are a priority, and regular class attendance class is mandatory, respectful, and essential to academic success. Being absent from class will prevent you from maximizing your learning and will negatively affect your participation grade.

Lateness

Please arrive on time for each class meeting. Arriving late for class is disruptive for faculty members and students alike and will prevent you from maximizing your learning.

- 0 to 15 minutes = late
- Over 15 minutes = 1 absence

If you arrive late 3 times, it will be counted as an absence.

Absences

If you must be absent, please email both your professor and the academic team as soon as possible (mfedon@iesabroad.org) and (emaines@iesabroad.org). Absences for medical reasons and/or emergencies will be considered excused, but justification will be required. In this case, we will need:

- a *certificat médical*,
- from a French doctor,
- must be submitted within 24 hours of the absence,
- or proof of upcoming medical appointment.

If you are absent for an exam, presentation, or other graded in-class assignment, you must provide justification for the absence, or you will receive an automatic F.

Our attendance policy allows each student to miss one 3h course and two 1.5h class sessions without it affecting the final grade of the class. Above that, your final grade will be lowered. The following example is for a 1.5h class:

Final grade: A-
1 unexcused absence: A-
2 unexcused absences: A-
3 unexcused absences: B+
4 unexcused absences: B
And so on...

Lastly, an important reminder!



For any and all absences students are required to fill out the **ABSENCE FORM**, which can be found using the following link:

<https://airtable.com/appwRScHoi8XeQUhz/shrkeAL2VXGdy1RH5>

Any documentation FOR AN EXCUSED ABSENCE must be uploaded to this platform.