



CM/PO 350 MEDIA & UK POLITICS
IES ABROAD LONDON

DESCRIPTION:

The British public is offered full coverage of political issues and events with half a dozen national daily 'broadsheet' and several tabloid newspaper, satellite and terrestrial broadcasting networks including the well-respected BBC. This number of British media means that political stories are told in multiple versions and are submitted to multiple interpretations. While journalists claim that they seek to report the facts, politicians' gripe that the facts take second place in the media race to report 'news.' This stimulating course examines a number of issues and current topics in the news that demonstrate the long-term struggle for power between the conventional media (press, TV, radio news media as well as social media and digital channels), UK politicians and political institutions. Additional questions to be explored are: How does this struggle affect the delivery of news to the British public; what are the opportunities and challenges of media coverage of parliament's proceedings, and whether the UK model of public service broadcasting has a future.

Drawing on topics from current affairs, students will be encouraged to probe the consistency and contradictions of Britain's political leaders, appraise party political agendas and explore how interest groups exercise influence in a mature democracy. In addition to acquainting students with key aspects of contemporary British politics, students will examine the structure and function of British national media.

Students will be expected to read and comment about British domestic political developments featured in the national press and other media. After they have become generally familiar with the UK's political system, the class will proceed to explore a succession of topics, collectively intended to illuminate and define the changing relationship between politicians and the news media.

CREDITS: 3 Credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures (including video and other visual materials);
- Seminar discussions,
- Student presentations
- Field study visit.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation - 10%
- Midterm Exam – 20%
- Final Exam – 30%
- Research assignment – 30%
- Seminar presentation -10%

Research Assignment

The research assignment involves students adopting a comparative approach or examining contrasting perspectives about a specific issue, policy or political development or testing an aspect of the actual relationship between news reportage and domestic UK politics against one or more established theories about the role of the news media. The text may be in the form of an essay or report, 1,500 words long, excluding notes, bibliography and appendices. The topic and title must be negotiated in advance and approved by the instructor.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who complete the course will develop:

- A general empirical understanding about British politicians, democratic institutions and the political system
- An advanced understanding of the dynamic relationship that exists between politicians, communication managers and the news media
- A critical appreciation of the theory and practice of political news generation, acquisition, interpretation, communication and dissemination by print, broadcast and on-line media
- Some knowledge about challenges and opportunities

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action. The IES Abroad London class attendance policy does not allow for unexcused absences, and grades will be docked one-half letter grade for each such absence. Rare exceptions will be made for the following reasons:

- The student is too sick to attend class. In this instance, the student must call the IES Abroad Centre before class to notify any of the IES Abroad staff. It is not sufficient either to email, send a message with a friend or call the Centre after the class has started.
- A serious illness or death in the immediate family requiring a student to travel home. This requires written approval from the Centre Director before departure.

Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class may count as an unexcused absence. Immigration laws in the UK are extremely strict, and we jeopardize our legal status in hosting students who do not regularly attend class. Students who do not attend class regularly will be reported to the appropriate officials and risk dismissal from the program and deportation from the UK. If a student incurs absences representing 25% of the total class hours, they will be contacted by the Academic Programme Manager (APM) and Centre Director (CD). If these absences are made up exclusively of unexcused non-attendance, this will trigger a disciplinary review. If these absences are made up of excused non-attendance, a meeting will be held to discuss the underlying reasons for lack of attendance, and to discuss ways it can be maintained for the duration of the term. If the 25% threshold is reached due to a mixture of excused and unexcused absences, students will also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss.

Content

Class	Content	Assignments/Reading
<p>Class 1</p>	<p>Introduction to the course I: The UK’s political system and how it works</p> <p>The British political system is a peculiar one: The country lacks a written constitution, is ruled by a Monarch, managed by a caste of mandarins, governed by a “First Lord of the Treasury” and legislated for in a parliament whose members are elected or appointed in recognition of their lifetime achievements, carefully nurtured friendships or financial support for one or the other political party. Today we will be examining who is who in the Westminster village, listen to the voices of those who call the shots and uncover where the power lies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jones, B., Norton P. (2018) ‘ The House of Commons’ in (Jones, Norton, Daddow, eds.) <i>Politics UK</i>. Routledge, London, pp. 297-322

<p>Class 2</p>	<p>Introduction to the course II: Understanding the British media</p> <p>The razzmatazz of British politics is reported on by studiously unbiased public broadcasters and a rabidly partisan press. Who are the correspondents on the screen, the hacks in the news rooms and the shady figures that pull the strings behind the scenes? We will learn how the British media makes and breaks political leaders, try and understand the constraints, pressures and aspirations that drive journalists and hear about their troubled relationship with truth, ideological bias and the political arena.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jones, B., Norton, P. (2018) 'The Mass Media' in (Jones, Norton, Daddow, eds.) <i>Politics UK</i>. Routledge, London, pp. 138-155
<p>Class 3</p>	<p>"Mad men & bad men" - British politics and advertising</p> <p>"Mad men & bad men. What happened when British politics met advertising" is the title of a recently published book by Sam Delaney which encapsulates the theme of today's class. The advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi is credited with having rebranded the Conservative Party and their prime ministerial candidate Margaret Thatcher since the late 1970s. Ever since both leading parties - Labour and the Conservatives - have drawn on PR and marketing advice to build and maintain their respective brands. What has the involvement of advertising and branding experts done to party politics, political ideologies and intra-party democracy? Do political leaders still pursue their convictions or - by contrast - do they stick to the lines provided by pollsters and brand strategists? Is the British development unique or reflective of similar phenomena elsewhere? To what degree have promotional tactics in the course of 40 years changed the style and the content of the political discourse. This session familiarises you with issues, ideological debates and leaders that have left their marks on British politics in recent decades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowley, P., Kavanagh, D. (2018) From Miliband to Corbyn in (Cowley and Kavanagh, eds.) <i>The British General Election of 2017</i>, London, Palgrave Macmillan • McNair, B. (2018) Party political communication: Advertising in (McNair, ed) <i>An introduction to Political Communication</i>. London. Routledge, pp. 101-137

<p>Class 4</p>	<p>Image or ideology?</p> <p>There is broad recognition that the communication of politics places limited attention on the substance of policies, the content of manifestos, ideologies or parliamentary deliberations. Instead the personality of leaders attracts most interest – or rather their “public persona”, i.e. what we perceive to be a politician’s personality. In response to this development public relations managers develop strategies aimed at fabricating images and building the reputation of parties and politicians. In order to widen the audiences beyond the confined circles of political pundits and public affairs anoraks, spin doctors have recognised popular culture and celebrity style politics: Associating a candidate with a high-profile artist or athlete or – even better – using celebrity style tactics to present a leader has proven to be an opportunity. But at which cost? A question often raised is: What does celebrity politics do to our democracy? Also we need to reflect critically on the responsibility journalists have for this development as they stand so much to gain from an entertaining, popular politician who draws readers and audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McNair (2018) Politics in the age of mediation in (McNair, ed.) <i>An introduction to Political Communication</i>. London. Routledge pp3-15
<p>Class 5</p>	<p>Interest groups and political influence</p> <p>“Lobbyist” is the widely used term for those who on behalf of corporations and a wide range of interest groups professionally seek to influence the agenda and decisions taken by political institutions. Success in lobbying is facilitated by someone’s network of contacts and connections as well as a profound understanding of decision-making processes and acquaintance with the men and women who call the shots in the corridors of Whitehall. Public affairs agencies in London engage in lobbying while at the same time they use visible public relations tools with a view to win over public sympathy and support for their respective policy goals. Today we will be exploring the public affairs / lobbying industry in the UK, seek to identify strategies deployed to sway decision makers one way or other and reflect if back-room deals are reconcilable with the nature of democracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McNair, B. Pressure groups and the oxygen of democracy in (McNair, ed.) <i>An introduction to Political Communication</i>. London. Routledge, 2018 pp 151-173

<p>Class 6</p>	<p>Information communication technology</p> <p>Information Communications Technology and UK Politics: How might digital media help reverse UK voter apathy and allow citizens to engage with the political process? To what degree do social media constitute a modern equivalent to the ancient Agora or the town square and local newspaper that in the days of our parents represented the centre of civic and political life in the community? How influential are UK political bloggers and which information sources and communication channels are about to set the political agenda in years to come? What is the relationship between traditional and new media?</p> <p>Field trip to Parliament</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curran, J., Seaton, S. (2018) The Rise of New Media in (Curran and Seaton, eds.) <i>Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain</i> London, Routledge, pp. 345-408
<p>Class 7</p>	<p>Government news management</p> <p>Control Freakery, Packaging and ‘Spin’: Government news management has proved highly controversial. Media advisers (e.g. Alastair Campbell and Andy Coulson), have been accused of undermining democratic process but historically, as Jo Moore’s resignation and the outcome of the Hutton Inquiry into WMD demonstrate, attempts to ‘bury bad news’ or to manipulate public opinion are not always successful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics home: All of today’s politics in one place: • https://www.politicshome.com/
<p>Class 8</p>	<p>Quality, diversity and autonomy in broadcasting: The BBC and OFCOM</p> <p>Public Service Broadcasting (the BBC and ITV) is far more influential in the UK than in the USA. We will be ascertaining the public service ethos, understand how it shaped political news reporting and learn about the external ideological and internal managerial pressures it has been exposed to in past decades. We will reflect on the controversial debate about future funding of the BBC and review issues that inform current debates whose outcome may influence news coverage in the future. Students will learn about the role of the Office of Communications (OFCOM) which was intended to consolidate, modernise and transform the relationship between the UK State and the Media. Critics say OFCOM undermines media independence but supporters insist it protects the UK from global super corporations, as well as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seaton, J. (2018) Broadcasting History in (Curran and Seaton, eds.) <i>Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain</i> London, Routledge, pp. 193-311

	maintaining quality, diversity and therefore choice for UK TV viewers.	
Class 9	<p>Media magnates and democracy</p> <p>Media Magnates and UK Democracy: Rupert Murdoch’s NewsUK (formerly NewsCorp) media interests extend across the Atlantic – and it has been claimed that Murdoch’s support secured Tony Blair’s election in 1997, and has provided vital support for the Conservative Party in 2010, last year’s General Election and this year’s Brexit campaigns. However, the demise of Robert Maxwell, Conrad Black and the 'Hackgate' crisis, investigations and ongoing judicial hearings also exemplify media magnates’ fragility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curran, J. (2018) Press History in (Curran and Seaton, eds.) <i>Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain</i> London, Routledge, pp. 1-172
Class 10	<p>Challenges ahead: The role of the media in a democratic society</p> <p>Restructuring the UK Media: Challenges and Opportunities. UK newspaper circulations are collapsing and TV advertising revenue has dwindled. Has government liberalisation policy exacerbated UK media vulnerability? Will <u>IPSO</u> curb unethical behaviour by journalists? In what ways do Edward Snowden's disclosures about state covert surveillance of communications present a challenge to the values customarily associated with the news media in a democratic society? Old and new: We will be discussing the uneasy working relationship between whistle-blower websites and traditional media, analyse the political clout of new media companies, social media giants and search engine operators. Real and fake: Fake News is not an invention of the 21st century, but its political consequences might well be of unprecedented dimensions. Finally, we consider how hidden influencers instrumentalise social media with a view to tip the balance in election as well as referenda campaigns and in doing so revolutionize our understanding of propaganda. How politics and old media address this challenge will be a theme in today's class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davis, E. (2017) Section 1. What? In (Davis, ed.) <i>Post-Truth</i>, London, Little-Brown, pp. 3-90

<p>Class 11</p>	<p>Manufacturing of consent in 21st century Britain</p> <p>Manufacturing Consent: Herman and Chomsky question the concept of pluralism in the media. Instead they identify collusion between the media proprietors, advertisers and the political elite to ensure journalism does not challenge economic and administrative power structures. This class will take a critical perspective and reflect on Herman and Chomsky's view that the media is the willing partner and supporter of an influential and entrenched social, economic and political class. We will be asking to what degree the media can mirror a broad range of voices and seek to reflect reality. Finally, we investigate if the avowedly non-partisan BBC may have an innate establishment slant.</p>	<p>(Deadline for the submission of term papers!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chomsky, N., Herman, E. (1995) A propaganda model in (Chomsky and Herman, eds.) <i>Manufacturing Consent</i>. New York, Vintage, pp. 1-37
<p>Class 12</p>	<p>End of course exam (no classes)</p>	

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Archetti, C., *Politicians, Personal Image and the Constitution of Political Identity: A comparative Study of the UK and Italy* London, Palgrave, 2014

Barnett, S. & Townend J., *Media Power & Plurality* London, Palgrave, 2015

Blair, T., *Text of speech on the media*, London, Reuters, 12.6.2007

Brock, G., *Out of Print; Newspapers, Journalism and the business of News in the Digital Age* London, Kogan Page 2013

Chomsky, N., Herman, E. *Manufacturing Consent*. New York, Vintage, 1995

Cottle, S. (ed.), *News, Public Relations and Power* London, SAGE 2003

Cowley, P., Kavanagh, D. *The British General Election of 2017*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018

Chambers, D. et al, *Women and Journalism* London, Routledge, 2004

Curran, James and Jean Seaton *Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain* London, Routledge, 2018.

Davies, N. *Hack: How the truth caught up with Rupert Murdoch* Chatto & Windus, London, 2014

Davis, A., *Media Promotional Culture: The rise and spread of Advertising, Public Relations marketing and branding* London, Polity, 2013

Davis, E. *Post-Truth*, London, Little-Brown, 2017

Delaney, S. *Mad men & bad men. What happened when British politics met advertising*, London, Faber & Faber, 2015

Dwyer, T. *Media Convergence* Maidenhead, McGraw Hill/Open University Press, 2010

Farrell, J. and Goldsmith, P., *How to lose a referendum: The definitive story of why the UK voted for Brexit*. London, Biteback, 2017

Fenton, N. (ed.), *New Media, Old News – Journalism & Democracy in the Digital Age* London, SAGE, 2010

Franklin, B., *The Future of Journalism* Routledge, London 2011

Freedman, D., *The Politics of Media Policy*, London, Polity Press, 2008

Hanning, J. & Mulcaire, G., *The News Machine: Hacking, the Untold Story*, London Gibson Square, 2014

Jones, B. & Norton, P., *Politics UK* London, Routledge, latest edition - 2018

Jukes, P., *Beyond Contempt: the inside story of the Phone Hacking Trial*, Canbury Press, Croydon, 2014

Kuhn, R., *Politics and the Media in Britain* London, Palgrave, 2007

Lloyd, J., *What the Media are doing to Our Politics* London, Constable, 2004

Louw, E., *The Media and Political Process*, London, SAGE, 2010
 McNair, B., *News and Journalism in the UK* London, Routledge, 2009 edn.
 Media Reform Coalition, *Who owns the UK media?* (Report, 2015):
<http://www.mediareform.org.uk/who-owns-the-uk-media>
 Murdoch, E., MacTaggart Memorial Speech Edinburgh 2012
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/mediatechnologyandtelecoms/9495850/Elisabeth-Murdoch-speech-in-full.html>
 Murdoch, J., *The Absence of Trust* Edinburgh 2009 <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Media/documents/2009/08/28/JamesMurdochMacTaggartLecture.pdf>
 Nunns, A. *The candidate. Jeremy Corbyn's improbable path to power.* OR Books, New York City (NY), 2018
 Papacharissi, Z.A., *Private Sphere: Democracy in a digital age*, London, Polity Press, 2010
 Ross, T., *Why the Tories won: The inside story of the 2015 election.* London. Biteback Publishing, 2015
 Ross, T. and McTague, T. *Betting the House: The inside story of the 2017 election.* London, Biteback, 2017
 Sarikakis, Katherine, *British Media in a Global Era* London, Arnold, 2004
 Shipman, T. *All out war: The full story of how Brexit sank Britain's political class.* New York. Harper Collins, 2016
 Washbourne, N., *Mediating Politics: Newspapers, Radio, Television and the Internet*, Open University Press, 2010
 Wring, D. and Mortimore, R., *Political communication in Britain: Polling, campaigning and the media in the 2015 general election*, London, Palgrave 2016

FURTHER READINGS:

Bartle, J. and King, A., *Britain at the Polls*, 2005 CQ Press, Washington, London, 2006
 Cave, T., Rowell, A. (2014) *A quiet word: Lobbying, crony capitalism and broken politics in Britain.* London. The Bodley Head
 Chippindale P. & Horrie, C., *Stick it up your punter!: The uncut story of the Sun newspaper* London, Faber & Faber, 2013 edn.
 Cottle, S., (ed.) *News Public Relations and Power*, SAGE, 2003
 Curran, J., & Gurevitch, M., *Mass Media and Society* London, Arnold, 2000
 Davies, N., *Flat Earth News* London, Chatto & Windus, 2008
 Greenslade, R., *Press gang – How newspapers make profits from Propaganda* London, Macmillan, 2004
 Greenwald, G. *No place to hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA and the Surveillance State*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 2014
 Griffiths, D. (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press 1422 –1992* London, Macmillan, 1992
 Howell, S. *Game changer. Eight weeks that transformed British politics: Inside Corbyn's election machine.* Cardiff. Accent Press, 2018
 McNair, B. *Journalism and Democracy* London, Routledge, 2009 edn.
 McNair, B. *And introduction to Political Communication.* London. Routledge, 2018
 Mair, J, Tait R. & Keeble, R.L. (eds.) *Is the BBC in Crisis?* Bury St. Eds., Abramis, 2014

http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/mediaWorkingPapers/MScDissertationSeries/Past/Markstedt_final.pdf

Media Reform Coalition, *The elephant in the room: a survey of media ownership and plurality in the United Kingdom* (2013),
<http://www.mediareform.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ElephantintheroomFinalfinal.pdf>

Murdoch, J., MacTaggart Lecture, Edinburgh, 2009
 Negrine, R. *The Communication of Politics* London, SAGE 2009
 Norton, P., *Parliament in British Politics* London, Palgrave, 2013 edn.
 Osborne, P. *Alastair Campbell – New Labour and the Rise of the Media Class* Aurum, London, 1999
 Sloam, J., Henn, M. *Youthquake 2017: The rise of young cosmopolitans in Britain*, Berlin, Birkhäuser, 2018
 Street, J. *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* London, Palgrave, 2001
 Underwood, G. *Mass Media: Broadcasting Systems* (www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/media/peacock.html)
 Wolff, M., *The Man who owns the news: Inside the secret world of Rupert Murdoch*, Vintage Books, 2010

Useful Internet Sites:

Catch up on the week's BBC news programmes via BBC1 TV iplayer: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>
 British Political Speech: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/index.htm>
 Politics home: All of today's politics in one place: <https://www.politicshome.com/>
 UK Parliament: www.parliament.uk

Live broadcasts from parliament <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/b99ce24b-7d37-4792-b808-3c5ffd9e741a>

British Government & Politics on the Internet (Keele University): <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/por/ukbase.htm>

BBC News: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Centre for Research in Communication and Culture. Loughborough University <https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/crcc/general-election/mediacoverage-2017-general-election-campaign-report-2/>

John Curtice's Blog. Centre on Constitutional Change.

<http://www.centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk/about/people/johncurtice/blog>

OFCOM: www.ofcom.org.uk

Almost all the UK newspapers, national and local, have on-line websites: <http://www.wrx.zen.co.uk/>

Northern Ireland/Conflict Archive on the Internet: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/>

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Oxford University. <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/page/resources>

TV/Radio: Politics / Media Coverage:

(Times may vary, check TV/Radio listings): Recommended viewing: BBC1 TV's News at 10 (10.00 p.m.); This Week (BBC1 TV); ITV1 London (Channel 3) News (10.30 p.m.); BBC2 Newsnight (10.30 p.m.), Channel 4 News (7.00 p.m.); BBC 1 TV Politics Live Show (weekdays and Sunday); BBC News 24; Sky News; The Andrew Marr Show (BBC1 TV, Sunday).

Recommended listening: BBC Radio 4 [92-95 fm & 198 lw] Today (Daily morning news programme, 6.00 – 9.00 a.m.; Talking Politics (Saturdays 11.00 – 11.30 a.m). When Parliament is sitting: BBC Radio 4: The Week in Westminster (Saturdays 11 - 11.30 a.m.); Today in Parliament (Weekdays 11.30 - 12.00 p.m.) or Yesterday in Parliament (Weekdays, Radio 4 .8.45-9.00 a.m.)