

SPC 425 Media Criticism and Politics

Credit Hours: 3

In-Class Instructional Hours: 3

Labs: 0

Field Work: 0

Catalog Description:

Prerequisite. Junior or Senior Standing

Critical analysis of mass media, including print, broadcast and digital; focus on the role of media in American presidential campaigns.

Reasons for Revision:

(Fall 2005) This course (formerly COM 422, Media Criticism and Presidential Campaigns) was last revised in 1993 as part of a departmental program restructuring. This new proposal is part of a general program review, through which Communication seeks to update its courses in light of departmental experience with the previous program version, evolving departmental needs, and expanding scholarship in the field. Additionally, the department is undertaking this revision to position itself for accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Note: As part of this overall revision, speech and criticism courses are being re-labeled as SPC rather than COM to distinguish between the humanistic base of the new SPC courses and the applied nature of the courses that will retain the COM prefix.

Student Learning Outcomes:	Course Content References:	Assessment:
Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to: 1. Articulate the critical perspective and persuasive impact of mass-mediated messages	I, II, III	1. Exams, research/writing projects, oral presentations
2. Demonstrate familiarity with contemporary literature in mass media criticism re: politics and electoral process	I, II, III, IV	2. Exams, research/writing projects, oral presentations
3. Explain key theoretical and critical approaches to mass media messages	I, II, III	3. Exams, research/writing projects, oral presentations
4. Demonstrate a critical perspective and analytical approach in evaluating mass media artifacts and messages	I, II, III, IV, V	4. Exams, research/writing projects, oral presentations
5. Critically analyze media presentation of politics and electoral process	I, II, III, IV, V	5. Exams, research/writing projects, oral presentations

Course Content:

- I. Theoretical premises
 - A. Role of media in democratic society
 - B. Characteristics of media criticism
 - C. Contemporary theories and principles of media communication
- II. Rhetorical perspective
 - A. Traditional approach
 - B. Contemporary approaches
- III. Media criticism
 - A. Critical-analytical framework of media criticism
 - B. Qualitative methods of research and analysis
 - C. Quantitative methods of research and analysis
- IV. Media artifacts
 - A. News
 - B. Documentaries
 - C. Political advertising
 - D. Film
 - E. Music programming
 - F. Television comedy and drama
- V. Media v/v politics
 - A. Media and government
 - B. Media and electoral process
 - C. Media and political parties

Resources:

Current Scholarship in the Field

- Alterman, E. (2004). *What liberal media? The truth about bias and the news*. New York: Basic [Reprint].
- Asa, A., & Berger, E. (2004). *Media analysis techniques* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
- Bagdikian, B.J. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon.
- Brock, D. (2004). *Misstating the state of the union: Right-wing media distortions about the Clinton and Bush presidencies*. New York: Akashic.
- Graber, D.a. (2002). *Mass media and American politics*. Washington: CQ Press.
- Hess, S., & Kalb, M.L. (2004). *Media and the war on terrorism*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- Leighley, J.E. (2002). *Mass media and politics: A social science perspective*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- McChesney, R. (2004). *The problem of the media: U.S. communication politics in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Monthly Review.
- McChesney, R., & Scott, B. (2004). *Our unfree press: 100 years of radical media criticism*. New York: New Press.
- Orlik, P.B. (2000). *Electronic media criticism: Applied perspectives* (2nd ed.). Mahway NH: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.
- Palmer, N. (ed.). (2004). *Terrorism, war and the press*. Cambridge MA: Harvard/Joan Shorenstein Center.
- Parry-Giles, T., & Parry-Giles, S.J. (2005). *The prime-time presidency: The West Wing and U.S. nationalism*. Champaign IL: University of Illinois.
- Sabato, L.J., Stencel, M., & Lichter, S.R. (2001). *Peepshow: Media and politics in an age of scandal*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Street, J. (2001). *Mass media, politics, and democracy* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke UK: Palgrave.
- Western, J. (2005). *Selling intervention and war: The presidency, the media, and the American public*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Periodicals

Communication Quarterly
Critical Studies in Mass Communication
Journal of Applied Communication Research
Journalism of Broadcasting and Electronic Media
Journal of Communication