Political Communication, Media and Public Policy
Option module on the Master of Public Policy
Trinity Term 2016

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Course scope

The purpose of this course option is to provide the students with an overview over what we know about the role of political communication and media in political processes and public policy formation. The course will deal with relationship between political actors, news media, and citizens, including how it has evolved in recent years as a result of political, social, economic, and technological changes. It will pay special attention to the differences and similarities in how political communication, media, and public policy interact in different contexts. The course will cover the role of campaign communication and news coverage in elections, the role of strategic communication and media in policy formation, and in international affairs. It will deal with both formal and informal political actors including governments, elected officials, political parties, interest groups, and social movements and will deal with the role of both established, legacy media and various newer forms of digital media.

Specific course aims

The course is intended to advance students' understanding of the role of media and communication in political processes, including theories and methods used for analyzing the effects of media and communication on public opinion, the practice and processes of political communication, factors influencing news production and dissemination, as well as the roles played by media in various domestic and international policy processes. Finally, the students should be equipped to critically evaluate the role of media and communication in relation to politics and society in a wide range of different settings globally.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to—

1. Independently analyze and assess the relative importance of communication and media in various political and policy processes.
2. Understand the most important differences and similarities in how communication, media, and politics interact in different contexts.
3. Identify the distinct role of communication and media relative to other factors (political, economic, social, etc.) in shaping policy formation and political outcomes.

Course topics by session

1. Roles, functions and influences of media and political communications
2. Effects of media/communication on public opinion and political processes
3. Media institutions and news
4. Campaigns and elections
5. Media, communication, and policy
6. Media, foreign policy, and international conflict
7. Media, social movements and collective action

Course delivery

The course will be taught in seven two-hour sessions including lectures, short presentations, discussions, and group exercises.

Relevant journals

European Journal of Communication
International Journal of Press/Politics
International Journal of Public Opinion Research
Journal of Communication
Journal of Information Technology and Politics
Journalism Studies
Media, War & Conflict
Political Communication
Public Opinion Quarterly

Recommended background readings for the whole course
Bennett, W. Lance, and Alexandra Segerberg. 2013. *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bennett, W. Lance, and Robert M Entman, eds. 2001. *Mediated Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Campbell, John L. and Ove K. Pedersen. 2013. *The National Origins of Policy Ideas.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Chadwick, Andrew. 2013. *The Hybrid Media System : Politics and Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Cook, Timothy. 2005. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press.
Norris, P. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Voltmer, Katrin. 2013. The Media in Transitional Democracies. Cambridge: Polity.

1. Roles, functions and influences of media and political communications

The first session presents an overview of the main themes of and approaches to political communication research today as well as a range of basic perspectives on the roles, functions, and influences of media in society and how they differ across the world.

Questions for discussion
- What are the roles and functions of media in society and politics?
- How are media similar and different in different systems? How do we best capture these differences conceptually and empirically? What are the consequences of these differences?
- What factors influence the role of media and communication in politics and policy making? How is that changing?

Essential Readings

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. 2005. 'Comparing Media Systems'. In *Mass Media and Society*, edited by James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, 4th ed., 215–33. London: Hodder Arnold.

Bennett, W.L. & Iyengar, S. 2008. A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication. *Journal of Communication*, 58(4), pp.707-731.

Strömbeck, J. 2005. In Search of a Standard: four models of democracy and their implications for journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 6(3), pp. 331-345.

Further readings

Dewey, John. 1991. *The Public and Its Problems*. Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini (eds.). 2012. *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lippmann, Walter. 1997. *Public Opinion*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers.

Newman, Nic, David A. L Levy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2015. 'Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015'. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/.

Schudson, Michael. 2008. *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Voltmer, Katrin. 2013. The Media in Transitional Democracies. Cambridge: Polity.

2. Effects of media/communication on public opinion and political processes

This session explores how media and communication affect public opinion about political issues and how choices and portrayals of issues affects the ways they are perceived.

Questions for discussion
- How do media framing affect public perceptions of issues and developments?
- To what extent do media influence public opinion? Are the media as powerful as perceived?
- What roles do media play in setting political agendas?

Essential readings

Entman, R. M. 1993. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 51-58.
Scheufele, D. A & Tewksbury, D. 2007. Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three News Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication* 57: 9–20.
Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Public Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 2 and 3.)

Further readings

Dearing, James W. and Everett M. Rogers. 1996. *Agenda-setting*. London: Sage.
Hill, Seth J., James Lo, Lynn Vavreck, and John Zaller. 2013. 'How Quickly We Forget: The Duration of Persuasion Effects From Mass Communication'. Political Communication 30 (4): 521–47. doi:10.1080/10584609.2013.828143.
Katz, E. and Paul Felix Lazarsfeld. 1955. *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*. New York: Free Press.
McCombs, Max. 2004. *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion.* Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing.
Mutz, Diana C. 1992. "Impersonal Influence: Effects of Representations of Public Opinion on Political Attitudes." *Political Behavior* 14 (2): 89–122.
Neuman, W. Russell, Lauren Guggenheim, S. Mo Jang, and Soo Young Bae. 2014. 'The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data.' *Journal of Communication*.
Prior, M. 2005. News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3: 577-592.
Walgrave, S. & P. van Aelst. 2006. The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 56, pp. 88-109.
Zaller, John R. 1993. Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion. In *Taken by Storm*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L Paletz, 186-209. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

3. Media institutions and news

This session explores the increasing role of news media in politics and policy processes in most developed democracies and the response of other political actors to that development.

Questions for discussion
- What are the characteristics of the relationship between media and politics in contemporary high income democracies and how does this relationship influence news production?
- How has mediatization affected politics? What are its logics?
- How do political image management and spin doctors after media portrayals of politics?

Essential readings

Cook, T. 1998. *Governing with the News*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 4 and 5.)
Chadwick, A. 2011. The Political Information Cycle in a Hybrid News System: The British Prime Minister and the "Bullygate" Affair. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 16 (1): 3 –29.
Strömbäck, Jesper. 2008. "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (3) (July 1): 228–246.

Further readings

Aelst, Peter Van, and Stefaan Walgrave. 2011. "Minimal or Massive? The Political Agenda-Setting Power of the Mass Media According to Different Methods." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 16 (3): 295–313.
Bennett, W. Lance. 2005. *News: The Politics of Illusion*. 6th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman.
Davis, Aeron. 2009. 'Journalist–source Relations: Mediated Reflexivity and the Politics of Politics'. *Journalism Studies* 10 (2): 204. doi:10.1080/14616700802580540.
Figenschou, Tine Ustad, and Kjersti Thorbjørnsrud. 2015. "Backstage Media-Political Elite Negotiations: The Failure and Success of A Government Pitch." *International Journal of Communication* 9 (0): 19.
Lück, Julia, Antal Wozniak, and Hartmut Wessler. 2016. 'Networks of Coproduction How Journalists and Environmental NGOs Create Common Interpretations of the UN Climate Change Conferences'. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 21 (1): 25–47.
Meyrowitz, J. 1985. *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Sellers, Patrick J. 2010. *Cycles of Spin: Strategic Communication in the U.S. Congress*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
Vesa, Juho, Helena Blomberg, and Christian Kroll. 2015. "Minimal and Massive! Politicians' Views on the Media's Political Agenda-Setting Power Revisited." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 20 (3): 279–96.

4. Campaigns and elections

This session focuses on the use of media and other forms of communications and their effects on elections, as well as on how campaigns and citizens' approach elections.

Questions for discussion
- What roles do campaign communications play in elections?
- How does media coverage affecting voting behaviour?
- How do citizens approach campaign communication?

Essential readings

Norris, P. 2000. *A virtuous circle. Political Communications in Post-industrial Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 7 and 8.)
Popkin, S.L. 1991. *The reasoning voter: communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 1, pp. 7-21.
Sides, John, and Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1 and 7.)

Further Readings

Coleman, Stephen. 2012. *How Voters Feel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Eliasoph, N. 1998. *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.
Hersh, Eitan. 2015. Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
Kenski, Kate, Bruce W. Hardy, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2010. *The Obama Victory : How Media, Money, and Message Shaped the 2008 Election*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kreiss, Daniel. 2012. *Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Miller, J. M. & Kronsnick, J. A. 2000. News media impact on the ingredients of presidential evaluations: Politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by a trusted source. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 301-315
Nielsen, K. 2012. *Ground Wars: Personalized Communication in Political Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Norris, Pippa, John Curtice, David Sanders, Margaret Scammell, and Holli Semetko. 1999. *On Message: Communicating the Campaign*. London: Sage.
Plasser, Fritz, and Gunda Plasser. 2002. *Global Political Campaigning : A Worldwide Analysis of Campaign Professionals and Their Practices*. Westport, Conn; London: Praeger.
Scammell, Margaret. 2014. *Consumer Democracy : The Marketing of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Media, communication, and policy

This session focuses on the relationship between media, communication, and policy-formation.

Questions for discussion
- How do media coverage influence policy formation?
- How does the role of media and communication in policy formation vary across different countries?
- How does media and communication influence citizens' perception of policies?

Essential readings

Jones, Bryan D., and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2005. *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1)

Campbell, John L., and Ove Kaj Pedersen. 2014. *The National Origins of Policy Ideas : Knowledge Regimes in the United States, France, Germany, and Denmark*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 1)

Mettler, Suzanne. 2010. 'Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenges of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era'. *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (03): 803–24.

Further readings

Aronczyk, Melissa. 2015. "Understanding the Impact of the Transnational Promotional Class on Political Communication." *International Journal of Communication* 9 (0): 20.

Crozier, Michael. 2007. 'Recursive Governance: Contemporary Political Communication and Public Policy'. Political Communication 24 (1): 1–18.

Delli Carpini, M.X., & Keeter, S. 1996. *What Americans know about politics and why it Matters.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Hajer, Maarten A. 2009. Authoritative Governance : Policy-Making in the Age of Mediatization. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Kepplinger, Hans Mathias. 2007. 'Reciprocal Effects: Toward a Theory of Mass Media Effects on Decision Makers'. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12 (2): 3–23.

Koch-Baumgarten, Sigrid, and Katrin Voltmer. 2010. *Public Policy and Mass Media: The Interplay of Mass Communication and Political Decision Making*. London: Routledge.

Melenhorst, Lotte. 2015. 'The Media's Role in Lawmaking A Case Study Analysis'. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 20 (3): 297–316.

Wolfe, Michelle, Bryan D. Jones, and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2013. 'A Failure to Communicate: Agenda Setting in Media and Policy Studies'. *Political Communication* 30 (2): 175–92.

Walker, Edward T. 2014. *Grassroots for Hire : Public Affairs Consultants in American Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. Media, foreign policy, and international conflict

This session focuses on the role of media and communication in foreign affairs and international conflict.

Questions for discussion
- What roles to media play in foreign policy and public diplomacy?
- How does media and communication influence domestic processes around foreign affairs?
- What are the effects of international broadcasters on foreign policy making, public diplomacy and international conflicts?

Essential readings:

Baum, Matthew A., and Philip B.K. Potter. 2008. 'The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (1): 39–65.

Entman, Robert M. 2004. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1).

Hoskins, Andrew, and Ben O'Loughlin. 2010. *War and media : the emergence of diffused war*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Introduction.)

Further readings

Baum, Matthew. 2010. *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gilboa, Eytan. 2005. 'The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations'. Political Communication 22 (1): 27–44.

Seib, Philip 2012. *Real Time Diplomacy: Power and Politics in the Social Media Era*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Soroka, Stuart N. 2003. 'Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy.' *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 8 (1): 27–48.

Wolfsfeld, Gadi (1997). *Media and political conflict; news from the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, D, and J Peake. 1998. The dynamics of foreign policy agenda-setting. *American Political Science Review* 92 (1): 173-183.

Youmans, William Lafi, and Shawn Powers. 2012. 'Remote Negotiations: International Broadcasting as Bargaining in the Information Age.' *International Journal of Communication* 6 (0): 24-.

Zaller, John, and Dennis Chiu. 1996. 'Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1945–1991.' *Political Communication* 13 (4): 385–405.

7. Media, social movements and collective action

This final session focus on the roles of media, especially digital media, in collective action, social movements, and popular mobilizations.

Questions for discussion
- What roles do media and communications play as organizing and mobilization tools?
- Does the affordances of digital media alter politics processes fundamentally?
- What does the rise of digital media mean for interest groups and social movements?

Essential readings

Bennett, W. Lance, and Alexandra Segerberg. 2013. *The Logic of Connective Action : Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Introduction plus chapters 1 and 6.)
Howard, Philip N., and Muzammil M. Hussain. 2011. "The Role of Digital Media." *Journal of Democracy* 22 (3): 35–48.
Wolfsfeld, Gadi, Elad Segev, and Tamir Sheafer. 2013. 'Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First'. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (2): 115–37.

Further readings

Benkler, Y. 2006. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Bimber, Bruce A., Andrew J. Flanagin, and Cynthia Stohl. 2012. *Collective Action in Organizations: Interaction and Engagement in an Era of Technological Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Bimber, Bruce. 2003. *Information and American Democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Gamson, William A. and Gadi Wolfsfeld. 1993. 'Movements and Media as Interacting Systems.' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (July): 114–25.
Gitlin, Todd. 1980. *The Whole World Is Watching : Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press.
Hindman, Matthew S. 2008. *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Karpf, David. 2012. *The MoveOn Effect: The Unexpected Transformation of American Political Advocacy*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1 and 7.)
Sobieraj, Sarah. 2011. *Soundbitten : The Perils of Media-Centered Political Activism*. New York ; London: New York University Press.