



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES

The Mass Media and Politics in Canada — POLS 313

Fall 2008

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Class Time: Monday 8:30 to 10 AM and Thursday 10 to 11:30 – Ellis 323

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities)

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar, on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/artsci/pg4.html>), and from the instructor of this course.

Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

One of the assumptions of a liberal democracy is that citizens have adequate knowledge of political events. Since the early twentieth century this has been fulfilled through the mass media. Few today in Canada can say that they do not have access to at least one form of the mass media, yet political knowledge is remarkably low. This course will examine how well the media, as our primary source of political information, fulfill the democratic demands made of them. It will explore how new events are shaped and packaged; how frames provide important short hand cues to how we understand the news. We will also explore the influence of ownership and the interplay between political actors and the media.

Course objectives:

1. Knowledge Objectives:

The course will seek to develop a critical understanding of the role of mass media in liberal democracies and help foster a critical awareness of the power of the media to shape political events and our understanding of them. Journalistic practices will be explored and different theoretical ways of understanding the media will be examined.

2. Skills Objectives:

Students will have the opportunity to develop oral skills, participate in group work and contribute to a collective, critical understanding of readings. Active participation will be encouraged throughout the course.

Evaluation:

Students will have the option of three marking schemes. Option 1 is the default. If students choose one of the other options they must notify me in writing by the second class. If no notification is given, I will assume that you will fall under option #1.

Option 1:

1. Mid-term exam (in class Monday, October 20) 30%
2. Final Exam 40%
3. One essay, 3000 words (due in class Thursday, November 20)

Option 2:

1. Mid-term exam (Thursday, October 20) 30%
2. Final Exam 40%
3. One twenty minute class presentation and 5 page written summary of presentation. (30%) Decision about this option must be made no later by September 18)

Materials required:

Paul Nesbitt-Larking, *Politics, Society and the Media* (2nd Ed.), (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2007)

Nick Russell, *Morals and the Media: Ethics in Canadian Journalism* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006)

David Murray, Joel Schwartz and Robert Lichter, *It Ain't Necessarily So: How the Media Remake Our Picture of Reality* (New York: Penguin, 2002) ✓To arrive at Campus Bookstore September 24.

There are a number of other readings that will be available from the course website. All readings are available in Stauffer on 3 hour reserve.

Class Format

1. Each class will begin with a 'warm up exercise' where a chapter of *It Ain't Necessarily So* will be discussed or a news story will be introduced and discussed. This is meant to be a collaborative exercise and I hope that students will bring interesting, current news stories to the class.

2. Each class will have a lecture component as well as full class discussion.

Throughout the course students will analyze news stories from a medium of their choosing to illustrate dominant frames, omissions and style of coverage.

September 8

Introduction, Evaluation and Expectations

September 11

What do the Media Do?

Warm Up Exercise: David Murray, Joel Schwartz and S. Robert Lichter, *It Ain't Necessarily So: How the Media Remake our Picture of Reality*, (New York: Penguin, 2002), Prologue, Introduction, Chapter 1. Hereafter this will be referred to as Murray, Schwartz & Lichter. This will be sent by e-mail.

Nick Russell, *Morals & the Media*, Chapter 2, "The Nature of News" and chapter 3, "The Role of the Media"

September 15

Media Models

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 2.

Paul Nesbitt-Larking, *Politics, Society and the Media* (2nd Ed.), Chapter one, "Why, How, What?"

David Taras, *Power and Betrayal in the Canadian Media*, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2001), Ch. 2, "Media, Citizens and Democracy"

September 18

Key Concepts and Terms: Agenda-setting, Priming, Gatekeeping

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 2.

Nesbitt-Larking, Ch. 13, "From Experience to Editorial: Gatekeeping, Agenda-setting, Priming, and Framing"

September 22

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 3.

The Importance of Sources

Nick Russell, Chapter 9, "Naming Names and Revealing Sources"

Richards, Trudie, and Danielle Rehberg-Sedo. 2004. "Journalists rely too heavily on spinmeisters" *Media* Fall 2004: 18-19.

D. Johnston, "The Anonymous-Source Syndrome", *Columbia Journalism Review*, November-December 1987. Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Oscar Gandy. 1982. *Beyond Agenda-Setting: Information Subsidies and Public Policy* (New Jersey: Ablex, 1982)

September 25**Framing and the Creation of A Narrative**

Joseph Capella and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Spiral of Cynicism, the Press and the Public Good* (New York, Oxford 1997), Chapter 3, Framing the News.

Brian Ott and Eric Aoki, "The Politics of Negotiating a Public Tragedy: Media Framing of the Matthew Shepard Murder" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5:3 (2002). Available through the library as an E-Journal

Douglas M. McLeod and Benjamin Detenber, "Framing Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest" *Journal of Communication* 49:3 (Summer 1999). Available through the library as an E-Journal

September 29

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 4.

Political Economy and the Mass Media: Does Ownership Matter?

Ch. 5, Nesbitt-Larking

Larry Patriquin, *Inventing Tax Rage: Misinformation in the National Post* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2004), Intro, Conclusion and one other chapter.

John A. Hannigan, "Canadian Media Ownership and Control in the Age of the Internet and Global Megamedia Empires," Craig McKie and Benjamin Singer, *Communications in Canadian Society* [5th ed.], (Toronto: Thompson, 2001)

October 2**The Practice of Journalism: Constraints and Imperatives**

Ch. 7, Nesbitt-Larking

Raymond Lau, "Critical Realism and News Production" in *Media, Culture and Society*: 26:5 (2004). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Jeffrey B. Abramson, "Four Criticisms of Press Ethics" in Judith Lichtenberg (ed.), *Democracy and the Mass Media* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

October 06**The Practice of Journalism: "Reality TV" and the News**

Media and the restyling of politics : consumerism, celebrity and cynicism John Corner and Dick Pels (eds.), Chapter 1, "The Restyling of Politics" and Chapter 5, "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture"

Geoffrey Baym, "The Daily Show": Discursive Integration and Re-invention of Political Journalism", *Political Communication* 22:3 (July-Sept. 2005). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

October 9**Media and Public Opinion Polls**

Ch. 12, Nesbitt-Larking

October 13: Thanksgiving, no class.

October 16**Election Report Card: How well did the media cover the campaign?**

Readings to follow.

October 20

Mid-term Exam

October 23

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 6

Regulating the Media: Theory & Practice in Canada

Ch. 6., Nesbitt-Larking

Thompson Newspapers vs. Canada, (Attorney General) S.C. R. 877. Online at:

http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/en/pub/1998/vol1/html/1998scr1_0877.html (or see course web page)

October 27

Regulating the Media: Jayson Blair, Stephen Glass and fraudulent reporting

Elizabeth Blanks Handman, "Jayson Blair, *The New York Times*, and Paradigm Repair, *Journal of Communication* (June 2005).

New York Times, "Correcting the Record: Times Reporter who Resigned Leaves Long Trail of Deception", May 13, 2003. Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Nick Russell, Ch. 11, "Playing Fast and Loose with the Truth"

Boston Globe, "The Jayson Blair Case and Newsroom Ethics", *Journalism Studies* (August 2004).

David L. Eason, "On Journalistic Authority: The Janet Cooke Scandal", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* vol. 3 1986. Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Eric Boehlert, "Fake news, Fake Reporter", 10 February 2005, *Salon*. Available from Salon Website.

October 30

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 7

Mass Media and Political Activism: Who has Access to the Media?

Steven Lingston and Douglas A. Van Belle, The Effects fo Satellite Technology on Newsgathering from Remote Locations, *Political Communication* 22:1 (2005)

W. Lance Bennett, Victor W. Pickard et. al., "Managing the Public Sphere: Journalistic Construction of the Great Globalization Debate in *Journal of Communication* (September 2004). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

November 3

How is Technology changing the News: The Power of Blogs

Daniel Drezner, "The Power and Politics of Blogs", paper presented to the 2004 American Political Science Association. Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Kathy Gill, "How can we measure the influence of the blogosphere?" in *WWW2004*, on line at: http://faculty.washington.edu/kegill/pub/www2004_blogosphere_gill.pdf

November 6**Media Reporting on Human Suffering**

Birgitta Höijer, "The discourse of global compassion: the audience and media reporting of human suffering", *Media Culture and Society* 26:4 (2004). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Carrie Rentschler, "Witnessing: US Citizenship and the Vicarious Experience of Suffering" in *Media, Culture and Society* 26: 2 (2004). Available on the course web site.

Susan Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (Routledge, 1999) Chapter 1.

November 10

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 8

Media and Representation

Augie Fleras "Couched in Compromise: Media-Minority in Relations in a Multicultural Society" in Singer and McKie, *Communications in Canadian Society* [5th ed.] (Toronto: Thompson: 2001)

Peter Braham, "How the Media Report Race" in Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, et. al., *Culture, Society and the Media* (New York: Methuen, 1982)

Alison Hayford, "From Chicago 1966 to Montreal 1989: Notes on New(s) Paradigms of Women As Victims," in Marc Grenier [ed.], *Critical Studies of Canadian Mass Media* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1992).

November 13**The Media As A Broker of Peace**

David Levin, "Framing Peace Policies: The Competition for Resonant Themes," *Political Communication* 22:1 (2005). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

Graham Spencer, "The Impact of TV News on the Northern Ireland Peace Negotiations," *Media Culture and Society* 26:5 (2004). Available through the library as an E-Journal.

November 17

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 9

We are what we watch, the Mass Media and Socialization

Ch. 4., Nesbitt-Larking (especially note the section on socialization)

John Zaller, "A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen", *Political Communication* 20, 2003

November 20**Media Coverage of War**

Andrew Calabrese, "Casus Belli: US Media and the Justification of the Iraq War," *Television and New Media*, May 2005.

Robert Entman, "Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame after 9/11" in *Political Communication* 20. Available on the course web site.

Eyal Zandberg and Motti Neiger, "Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of Contradictory Communities" *Media, Culture and Society* 27:1 (2005). Available on the course web site.

November 24

Pack Journalism and Celebrity Journalism

Nick Russell, Chapter 7, "Pack Journalism & Celebrity Journalism"

Corner & Pels, *Media & the Restyling of Politics*, Chapter 5, "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture"

November 27

Warm Up Exercise: Murray, Schwartz & Lichter, Ch. 10 and Conclusion

Curing the Media Malaise: Is Civic Journalism the answer?

Stephen Rosenfeld, "The Op-Ed Page: A Step to a Better Democracy," *Harvard Journal of Press & Politics* 5:3 (2000). Available on-line.

Theodore Glasser, *The Idea of Public Journalism*, (London: Guildford Press, 1999) chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-49

Diane Nicodemus, "Mobilizing Information: Local News and the Formation of a Viable Political Community", *Political Communication* 21:2 (2004)

Columbia Journalism Review (September/October 1995) Special Issue on Civic Journalism. Available on-line at: <http://archives.cjr.org/year/> (Read any two articles)