

POLS 3380
Mass Media & Politics
Summer 2018

Instructor: Dr. April A. Johnson
Office: Social Sciences room 5071 (Kennesaw main campus)
Class Time: N/A
Class Location: 100% Online (<https://d2l.kennesaw.edu>)
E-Mail (preferred): ajohn551@kennesaw.edu
Phone: 470-578-4973
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to familiarize students with the history, function, and impact of media in American politics. The specific topics in this course range from broad, macro-level perspectives on the media's role within a democratic society to the micro-level effects of the media on individual attitudes and behaviors. At the end of the semester students should be able to: (1) articulate the responsibilities of mass media and its relationship to government, (2) identify issues of fairness, objectivity and bias in media, (3) understand the media's influence on public opinion and electoral behavior, and 4) assess the changing nature of information dissemination.

Ultimately, the goal of this course is to provide students with the essentials necessary for becoming knowledgeable and savvy consumers of political news. Through the required readings, we will devote a significant amount of time to understanding how current political events are covered and portrayed by today's media. Because this is an online course, all materials (including quizzes, reaction posts and final paper instructions) are available to students beginning the first day of class. Working ahead of the designated course schedule is permitted.
Prerequisite Course(s): POLS 1101 American Government

Required Texts

- 1) Bennett, W. Lance. 2012. *News: The Politics of Illusion* (9th ed). Boston, MA: Pearson. (ISBN: 9780205082414)
- 2) Graber, Doris A. 2009. *Mass Media and American Politics* (8th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press. (ISBN: 9781604264609)
- 3) Required supplemental readings posted in D2L.

Evaluation of Course Objectives

Quizzes: There will be six quizzes given during the semester. Each quiz is non-cumulative and only covers material since the last quiz. There will be no makeup quizzes allowed under any circumstances, though the single lowest grade of the six quizzes will be dropped. Quizzes may be accessed through the Quizzes tab in D2L. *Note: Quizzes are generally due Sundays by midnight.*

Final Paper: Each student will be required to write one 5-8 page final paper in which they analyze and evaluate the concepts we've discussed. Papers should be uploaded to the Dropbox in D2L by the deadline listed. Late papers will not be accepted for any reason. The final paper

dropbox may be accessed through the Assignments tab in D2L.

Reaction Posts: One of the key objectives of this class is to make students critical consumers of information. Critical consumption means you are able to reflect on what has been presented to you and provide a thoughtful critique. During each module students will provide their written reactions to the module's required readings. There are no right or wrong answers here. Reaction posts are primarily graded on how deeply the student contemplates the issues, how thoroughly they address the prompts and whether each reaction is posted by the deadline. Responses should be anywhere from two to five paragraphs in length. Reaction posts may be accessed through the Discussions tab in D2L. To post, click on the desired module then click on Start a New Thread. *Note: Reaction posts are generally due Fridays by 5pm.*

Participation: Participation in this course requires each student to make ten (10) total comments throughout the semester on another student's reaction posts. I encourage you to respond to a different student for each of your five comments. Comments may include: shedding additional light on a topic, asking the student to clarify their position(s)/argument(s), providing a counterargument, citing supporting/opposing evidence, tying the post to a topic previously mentioned, and so on. Note that the professionalism with which students conduct themselves will be monitored by the instructor. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates when posting and commenting on reactions. Disagreement or criticism of another's point of view should be expressed in a civil and educated manner. To comment on another student's reaction post: Click on the Discussions tab, click on the desired module, click on the desired student's response, then click on Reply to Thread.

Distribution of Grades

Quizzes 35% (5 total quizzes worth 7% each)
Reaction Posts 25% (13 total posts worth ~1.92% each)
Participation 10% (10 total posts worth 1% each)
Final Paper 30%

Grading Scale

A	90-100	C	70-79	F	59 or below
B	80-89	D	60-69		

Policy for Missed or Late Work

Missing or late work will be accepted only under extenuating circumstances and with proper (medical) documentation. Students will generally not be allowed to make up missing coursework due to transportation, weather, technology, family and/or personal issues, though certain exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the instructor during the first week of the semester. The instructor shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate the request and not penalize the student for missing assignments. If coursework is due on the date of the religious observance the instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the assessment at an earlier date.

Disability Policy

Students who require accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams, designated note takers, etc.) to complete and participate in this course are welcome. However, in order for the instructor to recognize these accommodations students must officially document their disabilities with the office of Student Disability Services. *Note: Students seeking accommodations should do so within the first week of the semester, as testing and documentation often takes time. The instructor will not grant accommodations retroactively.* Please visit the Student Disability Services website at sss.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Electronic Communication

Communication for this course will be sent to your official university email address. It is your responsibility to read the email in your official university email account and to do so in a timely manner. ***Because this is a 100% online course it is recommended that students log into the course in D2L and check their KSU email at least three times per week.*** If you choose to forward your official university email to another off-campus account, faculty are *not responsible* for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts.

Contacting the Instructor: If a student has questions about the material, technical issues in accessing course elements on D2L, or needs to contact the instructor for any other reason, please email me at ajohn551@kennesaw.edu. All emails will get a response within two days (48 hours), though if an email is sent before 10pm students can usually expect a response before the end of the day. If for any reason the instructor will be unavailable on certain days the class will be notified in advance.

Grading Response Times: Reaction posts, quizzes, and the final paper will be graded within one week (7 days) of the submission deadline. Participation on reaction posts will be graded after midnight of the last day of the class (July 25, 2018).

Minimum Technical Skills Needed: You will need a high speed internet connection and knowledge of how to use email and Desire2Learn (D2L). Developing an understanding of the discussion board functions, the assignment functions (in order to turn in papers), and the content tabs (to access instructions, required readings, etc.) will be vital. You will also need access to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and the ability to open PDF files.

Writing Assistance

The KSU Writing Center helps students in all disciplines improve their written work. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you on topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty and adherence to KSU's Student Codes of Conduct is expected at all times. Any student found to have engaged in academic misconduct such as plagiarism, collusion, or submitting non-original work is subject to disciplinary sanctions from the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without

full and clear acknowledgment. The term “collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with any other person in preparing work offered for academic credit. Students are advised that faculty routinely use online software (e.g., Turnitin, SafeAssign) both to prevent plagiarism and to assist in verifying when/if it has occurred.

If I suspect that a student has committed plagiarism, even if it is his or her first time, the student will receive a zero on the assignment and an incident report will be filed with the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. For more information about plagiarism and prevention go to www.plagiarism.org. To view the Kennesaw State University Student Codes of Conduct visit <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>.

Technical Support: Students are encouraged to seek out resources available to them at Kennesaw State if they are experiencing any technical difficulties that the instructor is not able to solve. You can find this support at the following places:

- Student Technology Services
 - <http://its.kennesaw.edu/students/index.html>
 - Email: studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu
 - Call: 770-499-3555
 - Walk-in STS Helpdesk in Burruss 475
- Desire2Learn (D2L) Support
 - Training schedule, booklets, and videos available at <http://its.kennesaw.edu/techoutreach/d2l/students/index.html>

Desire2Learn Accessibility statement: <http://www.desire2learn.com/products/accessibility/>

Kennesaw State University Accessibility Statement: KSU provides program accessibility and reasonable accommodations for persons defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Disabled Student Support Services via Ms. Carol Pope, ADA Compliance Officer for Students, at 770-423-6443 (V) or 770-423-6480 (TDD). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Disabled Student Support Services. In addition, please notify me within the first week of class if there are any special accommodations that you might need in order to be successful in this course. **Course Accessibility Statement (ADA statement) found here:** http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/welcome.html

Academic Support Links: KSU offers many academic support resources including Academic Tutoring, Student Success Services, ESL Support, Writing Center, Math Lab, and Supplemental Instruction. Please look at the following link for more information on any of these resources: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/resourcelinks.shtml>

KSU also provides many computing resources for students including for more information go to: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/computing.shtml>

Student Support Services: KSU has many student support services geared particularly toward online students that can be found at: <http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/resources/index.php> . You

can also find more information on more general student support services for all students at:
<http://www.kennesaw.edu/students.shtml>

Privacy Policies of External Course Tools:

- <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-us/privacystatement>
- https://www.youtube.com/static?&template=privacy_guidelines
- <http://www.adobe.com/privacy/policy.html>

Miscellaneous University Policies

- [Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement](#)
- [Confidentiality and Privacy Statement \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Course Accessibility Statement \(ADA statement\)](#)
- [Ethics Statement](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Statement](#)
- [University – Student Rights Statement](#)

Enrollment Status Statement: Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to amend or correct this course syllabus as necessary.

Course Schedule

*These readings are posted in D2L (Required Readings tab)

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Week 1 May 30- June 3	Module 1: Democracy in Crisis Module 2: History and Functions	Bennett- Chapter 1 *McChesney and Nichols (2011)- The Death and Life of American Journalism Graber- Chapters 1 and 6
Module 1 Reaction Post due Sunday June 3 by 11:59pm Module 2 Reaction Post due Sunday June 3 by 11:59pm Quiz 1 due Sunday June 3 by 11:59pm		
Week 2 June 4- June 10	Module 3: Freedom and Control Module 4: Routines and Practices	Bennett- Chapter 7 Graber- Chapters 2 and 3 Bennett- Chapter 5 and pgs. 200-222 Graber- Chapter 4
Module 3 Reaction Post due Friday June 8 by 5:00pm Module 4 Reaction Post due Friday June 8 by 5:00pm Quiz 2 due Sunday June 10 by 11:59pm		

Week 3 June 11- June 17	Module 5: Partisanship and Bias	Bennett- Chapter 2 *Prior (2013)- Media and Political Polarization *Hallowell (2011)- Study: All Major News Outlets Have Left-Leaning Bias that ‘Distorts’ Minds
Module 5 Reaction Post due Friday June 15 by 5:00pm Quiz 3 due Sunday June 17 by 11:59pm		
Week 4 June 18- June 24	Module 6: Audience Effects: Media as Informer Module 7: Audience Effects: Media as Manipulator	Graber- Chapter 7 *Baum & Jamison (2011)- Soft News and the Four Oprah Effects *Zaller (1992)- The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion pgs. 40-51 Bennett- Chapter 3 *Besser- Nefarious Uses and Democratic Possibilities *Gilliam & Iyengar (2000)- Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public
Module 6 Reaction Post due Friday June 22 by 5:00pm Module 7 Reaction Post due Friday June 22 by 5:00pm Quiz 4 due Sunday June 24 by 11:59pm		
Week 5 June 25- July 1	Module 8: Media and Government Module 9: Campaign Coverage	Graber- Chapter 9 and pgs. 259-267 Bennett- Chapter 4 *Wolf (2013)- Power of the press: Can the media influence voting behavior of legislators? *Banducci and Hanretty (2014)- Comparative Determinants of Horse-Race Coverage *Hamby (2013)- Did Twitter Kill the Boys on the Bus? *Gilbert and Loveridge (2014)- What Should the Fox Say?
Module 8 Reaction Post due Friday June 29 by 5:00pm Module 9 Reaction Post due Friday June 29 by 5:00pm No Quiz due Sunday July 1		

