

American Political Journalism

University of Notre Dame Washington Program

Prof. Carlos Lozada

Monday 6:30-9 p.m.

1150 15th St. NW (5th floor conference room)

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202-334-6358

Readings and Viewings:

Weekly readings will be distributed by instructor at the end of the prior class, or sent via e-mail.

Daily readings: Students will be expected to read the Washington Post and New York Times, at a minimum, in print or online or both, on a daily basis. Any other news consumption (NPR, Politico, Wall Street Journal, news/analysis/opinion blogs, etc.) is encouraged.

Media criticism: Students should read Jack Shafer's columns in Slate, Howard Kurtz's columns in The Daily Beast, and The Kicker blog on cjr.org. Also, subscribe to Romenesko e-mail on Poynter.org.

Movies: At least two movies will be viewed during the semester, among All the President's Men, Shattered Glass, Good Night and Good Luck and The Insider.

Objectives:

This class will explore the relationships among politics, news media and government. It will do so by focusing on particular news events in which the role of the media became an integral part of the story. Some of the sessions below may change based on guest speakers' schedules; topics of discussion and readings may also change based on breaking news events. Class will include 1-2 sessions that meet at times other than regular class time; students will receive ample advance notice so they can adjust schedules accordingly.

Grade:

Students in this class will read, write and talk—a lot. Grades will be based on four essay assignments (40 percent); class participation (30 percent); and a final exam (30 percent). This is a seminar class—students are expected to participate actively and thoughtfully in the discussion. (You can't participate if you're not here: Attendance is expected and will be a factor in final grades and unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade.)

In class:

All cell phones, laptops, BlackBerrys, iPhones, etc. must be off. There will be a 10 minute bathroom break in the middle of class.

Office hours:

By appointment

CLASS SESSIONS

Jan. 24: What is news? Where do I get it? Why?

Introductions, orientation and discussion
Assignment: Essay #1 (State of the Union)

Jan. 31: The Downfall of General Stanley McChrystal

Essay #1 due at the beginning of class
Readings: "The Runaway General" by Michael Hastings (Rolling Stone, June 20, 2010); "How Obama took Command" (Politico, June 24, 2010); "McChrystal Allies Say Article Broke Ground Rules" (WP, June 26, 2010); "The 36 Hours that Shook Washington" (NYT, June 27, 2010)

Feb. 7: The Screaming Match

Readings: "One Angry Man" (New Yorker, June 23, 2008); "Glenn Beck has a Hitler fetish and a Woodrow Wilson Obsession. I'm just saying." (WP, Oct. 3, 2010); "Glenn Beck is in on the conspiracy" (USA Today, June 14, 2010); "Keith Olbermann, Bill O'Reilly and the death of real news" (WP, Nov. 14, 2010)

Viewings: Olbermann response to Koppel:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAK10qF_Jc

Plus: "The Glenn Beck" show and reruns of "Countdown" with Keith Olbermann

Feb. 14: Cheat Sheet Journalism

Readings: "The Man the White House Wakes Up To" (NYT Magazine, April 21); Politico Playbook; Chris Cillizza's The Fix (WP)

Assignment: Essay #2

February 21: No scheduled class – Newseum visit

Feb. 28: The Art of the Tick Tock

Essay #2 due at beginning of class

Readings: "How Obama came to plan for the surge in Afghanistan" (NYT, Dec. 6, 2009); "Obama pressed for faster surge" (WP, Dec. 6, 2009); "The art of the tick-tock" (Politico, Dec. 6, 2009)

Essay #3 assignment

March 7: The Case of Shirley Sherrod

Essay #3 due

Readings: Watch edited and unedited videos of Sherrod speech; "**Video Shows** USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give Full Force of Help to White Farmer" (Fox News, July 19, 2010); "With Apology Fired Official is Offered New Job" (NYT, July 21, 2010); Other Sherrod readings TBA

March 14: No class/spring break

March 21: Covering the White House

Guest speaker: Anne Kornblut, Washington Post White House correspondent
Readings: "Fortress Bush" (New Yorker, Jan. 2004); "Message Control" (Columbia Journalism Review, July/August 2010); "The Obama Narrative, Nonstop" (WP, June 20, 2010). Plus, articles by Anne Kornblut

March 28: The Journalism of Secrets

Guest Speaker TBA

Readings: WP's Top Secret America series, "A hidden world, growing beyond control" (WP, July 19, 2010); "National Security Inc. (WP, July 20, 2010); "The secrets next door" (July 21, 2010).

Viewings: PBS Frontline, "Top Secret America"

Essay #4 assignment

***April 4: Watergate, forty years later**

Essay #4 due

Guest Speaker TBA

Movie: "All the President's Men" (1976). Readings: "I'm the Guy They Called Deep Throat" (Vanity Fair, July 2005); "FBI's #2 was Deep Throat" (WP, June 1, 2005); "How Mark Felt Became Deep Throat (WP, June 2, 2005); "A 33-year old pledge was kept at a price" (WP, June 2, 2005)

April 11: No Monday class, field trip to CNN/NPR/Politico

April 18: Class subject TBA (either film or another issue that emerges in the course of the semester)

April 25: No class/Easter break

May 2: Final Exam (written, in class)