**SYLLABUS**

**The Impact of the Image:**

**How the Media Influences Washington Politics and Policy**

**UCDC Fall Quarter 2012**

**Thursdays 6:00-9:00 pm**

**Instructor: Lindsey Arent Schank**

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**Office Hours: by appointment Wednesdays**

**Course Overview**

In this seminar we will examine the impact of television, print and electronic media on Washington politics and policy, using the November 2012 elections as a backdrop. We will take a critical look at the power of the televised image, and how it has historically catapulted or crippled political candidates and their causes. We will study the effects of the 24-hour news cycle on Congressional lawmakers, and the way it has fundamentally changed modern lawmaking. And we will examine the current Presidential race with a critical eye, learning about what goes on inside in a newsroom from working producers and reporters. Through examples culled from broadcast television, film, and the Internet, we will watch 50 years of broadcast history, observing the evolution and impact of political ads, the crumbling of campaigns due to viral video, and the powerful role parody and satirical news programs have played in recent elections and key Congressional votes. Along the way we will watch and dissect pivotal media moments in recent political history, from the first televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in 1960, to the various gaffes and game-changers of the 2012 presidential race.

**Course Requirements**

Your grade will be based on:

* Class participation (30%)
* Media Critique (30%)
* Final Paper (40%)

**Class Participation:**

***Your participation in class is essential and you will be graded on it accordingly.*** This class will be a mix of lectures, lively debates and dissections of key moments in media. Your involvement in class is mandatory. You are expected to read all of the assigned materials prior to class, and come ready to discuss them. We will have many guest appearances by producers, reporters, and Congressional staffers. You are expected to come with good questions for our guests. **No use of cell phones or laptops in class.**

**Course Texts**

All of your reading assignments can be found in the course reader available for purchase at U.S. Printing and Copying, located at 1725 M St. NW (202) 785-9424. They are open Monday-Friday, 8:30am-6pm. **Please make sure to come to class having done the reading ahead of time.**

**Assignments**

**News Consumption:**

Since this is a course about politics and the news, you are expected to keep up with current events. You should scan at least one major online or print news source each day, such as the *Washington Post*, *Politico* or the *New York Times*, and/or watch a television news broadcast to keep up with major political stories.

**Option #1: 2012 Media Critique:** Students will write a 1,500-word critique of media coverage surrounding the 2012 elections, comparing the ways in which the candidates are using and/or losing the media battle. Using specific examples, please analyze the relationship between the campaigns and the media and the public.

**OR**

**Option #2: Media Strategy Memo**: Students will take on the role of chief communications advisor to a politician or candidate for office, outlining a 1,500-word media strategy for navigating hot-button political or policy issues of your choice. Please use specific examples of how you plan to make use of the relationship between campaigns, the media and the public.

**Final Paper:** Students will write a 2,500-word visual and social analysis of a key moment in media history, addressing questions of whether an effective media strategy was employed, what methods were used, how media coverage impacted the public’s perception of the event, and what worked, and what mistakes were made.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**September 20: Introduction**

-Course introduction, overview

-Discussion: Is the media trustworthy? Where does the news really come from?

-Selected video: Romney video gaffe, Seminal moments in media history

**September 27: Media’s Early Days /Television Comes of Age**

-Discussion: Muckrakers, Evolution of broadcast, how public opinion is swayed

-Video: Pivotal hearings, newscasts and broadcast events (1954-2012)

**Reading Due:**

*-The Rise and Fall of the Media Establishment,* Darrell M. West, (Ch. 3-4)

*-Mass Media and American Politics*, Doris Graber, (Ch. 6: p.129-138 and p. 50-154)

**-***The Jungle,*Upton Sinclair, (Ch. 14)

**\*\*\* WATCH THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE WEDS OCT. 3 @ 9:00PM. \*\*\***

**October 4: Debate Post-Mortem / Media and Politics: A Twisted Relationship**

-Discussion: Debate highs and lows, who won? How media and politics mix

-Guest Paul Lindsay, Nat’l Republican Congressional CommitteeComms Dir.

-Video: Top moments in debate history, Congressional elections

**Reading Due:**

-*-Politics on Demand,* Alison Dagnes (Intro: How the Media Are Failing the Gov’t)

*-Graber, Ch 9 (p. 245-255, “The Media and Congress”)*

*-Nitty-gritty knocked Va. abortion bill off the fast track,*Washington Post

*- Do Presidential Debates Really Matter?* By John Sides, Washington Monthly

**-** *Watch what GOP Candidates Don’t Say at Debate*, Los Angeles Times

**\*\*\* WATCH THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ON WEDS OCT. 3 @9PM \*\*\***

**October 11: The Business of News**

**-**Discussion: Who owns the news? How do media companies make money? Media bias

-Guest: Brian Weiss, Manager of New Ventures at The Washington Post Company

-Video: Best of profit-driven media

**Reading Due:**

- *How Roger Ailes Built the Fox News Fear Factory,* Rolling Stone

*- A Fox Chief at the Pinnacle of Media and Politics*, NYT

*-The Rise and Fall of the Media Establishment,* Darrell M. West, (Introduction, chs. 5-6)

**\*\* OCT. 16: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE - 9PM\*\***

**October 18: Inside the Media - The 24-Hour News Cycle, Social Media**

-Discussion: How new media and cable TV have changed everything about politics

-Guest: Sean Gibbons, Vice President of Communication, Third Way

Video: Best of overtly politicized news and interviews

**Reading Due:**

-*How Biased Are the Media, Really?* Washington Post

-*Game Change,* Heilmann, Halperin (p.42-82)

-*Behind TV Analysts, Pentagon’s Hidden Hand*, NYT

-*Graber,* Ch. 9 (p. 225-241)

**\*\* OCT. 22: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE - 9PM\*\***

**October 25: Inside the Media Part II- How the White House, Congress and Media Work Together (and against each other.)**

Discussion: How the media sways public perception about politicians and candidates, how lawmakers and politicians make use of each other.

Guest/Video: TBD

**Reading Due:**

*-Ted Koppel: Olbermann, O’Reilly and the Death of Real News,* Washington Post

-*One Man’s Military-Industrial-Media Complex*, NYT

-*Mass Media and American Politics*, Doris Graber (Ch. 8)

**\*\*FIRST PAPER DUE SUNDAY OCT. 28TH 11:59 PM\*\***

**November 1: Political Advertising**

-Discussion: Media strategy, SuperPACs, *Citizens United*, key campaigns

-Video: Most effective political ads of the past 50 years

**Reading Due:**

*-* *Citizens United: A Little History,* Fred Wertheimer, Huffington Post

-*Attack Dog,* Jane Mayer, The New Yorker

- *Politics on Demand,* Alison Dagnes (“The Internet: A Series of Tubes”)

**November 8: Election Post-Mortem (!!!) / Behind the Camera**

-Discussion: How does the news get made? Reported? Selected? How hellish is covering an election?

-Guest: Television Reporter and Producer

-Video top contentious reporter moments, “Broadcast News” clip

**Reading Due:**

-*Mass Media and American Politics*, Doris Graber (Ch. 5)

-*Obama is an Avid Reader and Critic of the News*, NYT

-*A Day in the Life of a Presidential Press Secretary*, Iyengar

-*Non-Stop News*, The New Yorker

-*Fortress Bush: How the WH Keeps the Press Under Control,*The New Yorker

**November 15: The Power of Political Satire**

-Discussion: The Daily Show effect, how satire impacts lawmaking

-Video: Various Stewart, SNL, Colbert clips

**Reading Due:**

-*In 2012 Comedy Cycle, Colbert is King*, Politico

***-****America is a Joke,* Jon Stewart Profile in New York Magazine

-*Is Jon Stewart the Most Trusted Man in America?* NYT Magazine

**NOVEMBER 22 – THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS**

**November 29: WHAT THE MEDIA MISSED / THE FUTRE OF JOURNALISM**

-Discussion: What happens when the media gets it wrong? Media’s future

-Video: 2000 Election, Powell addresses UN, Anthrax scare

-Video: Best and worst of the media

**Reading Due:**

-*Powell’s Case for the Iraq War Falls Apart 6 Months Later*, AP

-*The Times and Iraq*, NYT

*-Headlines and Exonerations,* NYT

-*Media’s Balancing Act*, NYT

*-Five Myths About the Future of Journalism* Washington Post

*-The Future of Journalism: Good for you, Scary for Us,* TIME

**\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE SUNDAY DECEMBER 2 AT 11:59PM\*\*\***