Course Number & Name: JRN 245 Politics and the Media

Credit Hours: 3.0  Contact Hours: 3.0  Lecture: 3.0  Lab: N/A  Other: N/A

Prerequisites: Grades of “C” or better in JRN 141, JRN 142, JRN 145 and JRN 243

Co-requisites: None  Concurrent Course: JRN 145

Course Outline Revision Date: Fall 2010

Course Description: This is a survey course that focuses on media coverage of politics, special interest groups and political parties. Topics include analysis of media influence on politicians and advocacy groups. These will include the use of advertising and how media messages impact voters as well as the effect political campaigns have on society and democracy. Emphasis will be placed upon polls, focus groups and various audiences.

Course Goals: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. demonstrate accurate, fair and factual oral and written communication skills in reporting, revising, covering and editing of relevant news stories acceptable by professional journalism standards;
2. conduct effective research, interviews and evaluation of news;
3. demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and theories in the presentation of news;
4. identify, access and apply appropriate technological and multi-media tools in writing and evaluating critical information and in layout and design of publishable news stories; and
5. explain the historical (professional, institutions), social (diversity, cultural), economic (businesses, advertisers) perspectives, and ethical guidelines and practices that govern the journalism profession, including the legal implications and constraints that inform the profession.

Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs): Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate accurate, fair and factual oral and written communication skills in reporting, revising, covering and editing of relevant news stories acceptable by professional journalism standards:
   1.1 explain how politics and the media are inter-related;
   1.2 apply analytical and critical skills to news; and
   1.3 describe how news is about American democracy
   1.4 describe the impact of mass media on all aspects of society
Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs) (continued):

2. Conduct effective research, interviews and evaluation of news:
   2.1 conduct effective research and gathering of news;
   2.2 verify news sources before publishing or broadcasting;
   2.3 describe major news elements in news (e.g., impact, proximity, engagement, etc.); and
   2.4 conduct news interviews relevant to writing and reporting of news stories

3. Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and theories in the presentation of news:
   3.1 write news leads based on the inverted pyramid (e.g., broad to narrow idea);
   3.2 explain the political process and parties;
   3.3 present information based on journalistic style and format; and
   3.4 describe politicians and polls

4. Identify, access and apply appropriate technological and multi-media tools in writing and evaluating critical information and in layout and design of publishable news stories:
   4.1 use computers to gather data and information necessary for news reporting and coverage;
   4.2 describe the impact of image in politics and presidential elections, presidency and the judiciary; and
   4.3 use the library, multi-media and others, including scholarly works from various locations, as information sources

5. Explain the historical (professional, institutions), social (diversity, cultural), economic (businesses, advertisers) perspectives, and ethical guidelines and practices that govern the journalism profession, including the legal implications and constraints that inform the profession:
   5.1 explain the historical and social implications of journalism in American society;
   5.2 describe the economic potential of advertising in mass media;
   5.3 articulate the ethical guidelines and practices that govern the journalism profession; and
   5.4 describe the legal implications and constraints that inform the profession

Methods of Instruction: Instruction will consist of lectures, discussions, written and oral presentation projects, editing, and critique of readings from textbooks, newspapers, and/or magazines (e.g., *Time*, *The Nation*, *Newsweek*, local, national and international newspapers, etc.).

Outcomes Assessment: Test and exam questions are blueprinted to student learning objectives. A checklist rubric is used to evaluate students’ presentations and critique of print, broadcast and online news for their awareness of current societal issues, for their use of research and critical and interpretive skills in the presentation of news, and for the presence of other course objectives.
**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Complete weekly readings, exercises, and discussions.
2. Critique and present print, broadcast and online information.
3. Complete writing and re-writing of news stories.
4. Complete all exams using the Associated Press style.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grading Components</th>
<th>% of final course grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Discussions and class participation</strong></td>
<td>10 – 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will analyze, critique, and give presentations on print, broadcast and online news. Students will use their research, critical and interpretive skills in the presentation of news.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Assigned readings and exercises</strong></td>
<td>10 – 25%</td>
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<td>A perusal of completed exercises based on assigned readings will determine the extent to which students master course objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Writing and re-writing of news stories</strong></td>
<td>10 – 25%</td>
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<td>Students conduct research and check grammar and sources to write news articles. The completed articles provide evidence of the achievement of course objectives.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Exams (using Associated Press-style)</strong></td>
<td>20 – 40%</td>
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<td>The exams show evidence of the extent to which students have understood and synthesized all course content and achieved all course objectives.</td>
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**NOTE:** The instructor will provide specific weights, which lie in the above-given ranges, for each of the grading components at the beginning of the semester. Students must score at least 80% for the overall grade to pass the course.
**Academic Integrity**: Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
- cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
- interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
- fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct**: All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and as considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time for all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, Lifeline, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.
**Course Content Outline:** The recommended texts and suggested newspapers and magazines for the class are as follows:


Hollihan, Thomas A. *Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age.* New York: Bedford/St Martins 2001. (recommended)


Read and critique columns and articles from various magazines such as *Time*, *The Nation*, *Newsweek*, *US World Report*, and *The Republic*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content/Topics/Readings from <em>Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2</td>
<td>Politics is communication&lt;br&gt;Politics and political power&lt;br&gt;The U.S. Presidency&lt;br&gt;Discussion of suggested readings and exercises</td>
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<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>The long campaign&lt;br&gt;The role of political parties&lt;br&gt;The role of special interest groups and lobbying groups</td>
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<td>5 – 6</td>
<td>Political socialization&lt;br&gt;The relationship of church and state&lt;br&gt;The role of family, schools and civic education</td>
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<td>7 – 8</td>
<td>Review and continue discussions&lt;br&gt;<strong>Exam #1</strong></td>
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<td>9 – 10</td>
<td>Nurturing political images&lt;br&gt;The power of public discourse</td>
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<td>11 – 12</td>
<td>How the news media shapes political campaigns&lt;br&gt;Political advertising&lt;br&gt;Mail surveys, polls</td>
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<td>13 – 16</td>
<td>Televised debates and effects on voting behavior&lt;br&gt;The politics of scandal and character&lt;br&gt;<strong>Exam #2</strong></td>
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