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Access Course Materials via SIU Online (a.k.a Desire2Learn)

Course Description

This course is a university-level introduction to the study of mass media and politics. The focus will be on U.S. news media and politics. It begins with a general and historical review of the relationship between the press and politics, including discussions of press freedom, ownership, and government regulation of the media. We will cover the news reporting business and how it intersects with politics, as well as media bias, the role of the media in election campaigns, their effects on civic learning and public opinion, and the relationship between the media and government officials.

How the Online Course Works

This online course is designed to follow closely the substance and format of our traditional in-class course on the same topic. It has the same requirements with one exception: Students submit their coursework and “attend” lectures online rather than in a lecture hall.

SIU Online (Desire2Learn or “D2L”)

Students access the lectures, Powerpoint slides associated with those lectures, and other course materials through SIU Online [https://online.siu.edu]. Students must be registered for the course to access course materials.
Modules

The course is divided into four modules. Each module covers about four weeks of material. You must finish one module before moving on to the next one. You can work at your own pace within each module but be aware that there are deadlines associated with each module. Please be aware of these deadlines and plan for them so that you will be able to complete all the work.

Lectures

Lectures associated with each course topic are posted online in two formats: Video with audio (.mp4) and audio only (.mp3). You must watch each video attentively, as you would if you were physically in the classroom. Take notes and study those notes carefully because the answers to most of the exam questions are covered in the lectures. While watching, pause the video frequently to write down information. I cannot emphasize this enough: If you want to succeed in this course, you must know the material covered in the lectures. You may benefit from watching (or listening to) videos twice, or even more often than that, as necessary, to learn the material and perform adequately on the exam.

Required Reading

The course requires three books and selected readings. The books can be purchased at online retailers such as Amazon.com. Other required readings are available either online through links on the syllabus (see below) or by way of SIU Online. The required books are as follows:


Student Learning and Assessment

Goals

1. Learn basic features of the role of news media in American politics.
2. Assess critically how news media influences, and is affected by, the public and politics.
3. Equip students to evaluate and use mass media as thoughtful participants in civil society.
Course Requirements and Grading

You will be graded on four exams and two writing assignments.

Four Exams. *Each exam is 15% of final grade*

At the end of each module you take a multiple-choice exam. The exam covers all the material from lectures and assigned reading for that module. Each module exam must be taken during a specific period of time. (Please see below for exam deadlines of each module) You can choose when to take the exam for that module, again before the deadline of that module. Each exam has 25 multiple choice questions. You have 30 minutes to complete each exam. Each exam covers material from that module only. There is no final exam in the course. The exams are used to evaluate Objectives 1 and 2.

First Writing Assignment. *20% of final grade*

The first writing assignment is due by the end of the first module, before you take the first exam. *The deadline is Friday, February 12.* You will learn what you need to know to complete the first writing assignment in the first module of lectures. Specific instructions on what to do for this assignment can be found on [SIU Online](#). (Please see below for the policy on late and missed assignments) The first writing assignment is used to evaluate Objectives 1, 2, and 3.

Second Writing Assignment. *20% of final grade*

The second writing assignment is due by the end of the fourth (final) module, before you take the fourth exam. *The deadline is Friday, May 6.* This assignment is a critical review of the assigned book by Lichter et al., *Politics Is a Joke!: How TV Comedians Are Remaking Political Life.* Specific instructions on what to do for this assignment can be found on [SIU Online](#). (Please see below for the policy on late and missed assignments) The second writing assignment is used to evaluate Objectives 1, 2, and 3.

Overview of Course Requirements

- Four Exams 15% of overall grade each (60% total)
- First Writing Assignment 20% of overall grade
- Second Writing Assignment 20% of overall grade
Grading

Your writing assignments, exams, and overall grade in the course will be calculated according to the following scales. The writing assignments will be awarded as the midpoint of the letter-grade range as indicated in the first column of the table below. Thus an “A” on the first writing assignment, worth 20 percent of the overall grade, would be awarded a numerical grade of “96.5,” an “A-“ would be scored as a “91.5,” etc. The exam grades, as well as the overall final grade, will be awarded according to the scale in the second column. Since SIU does not observe plusses or minuses, pluses and minuses are not possible in the submission of final course grades. If your final grade is an “A-“ you will receive an “A,” if your final grade is a “B+” or “B-“ you will receive a “B,” etc. Grades in this course are awarded based on merit, according to the requirements outlined above, in conjunction with the judgment of the instructor, and are not otherwise negotiable.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment, Research Requirement, &amp; Participation</th>
<th>Exam and Final Grade Ranges</th>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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Deadlines and Grace Periods

- You have a deadline to complete all tasks for a given module. The exams and writing assignments are due at 10 pm central time of the last day of the module (see below for specific deadlines of specific modules).

- If an emergency, technological issue, or other major life event arises before the deadline, your instructor will work with you to find an appropriate accommodation. In most cases, a little more time is all that is required.

- Because many delays are minor, all students are granted grace period. You do not need to ask for this. It is automatic. The grace period extends from the deadline until midnight CT Sunday night/Monday morning. Any tasks submitted during the grace period are not considered late. Use the grace period at your own risk, because all tasks submitted after the grace period will not be accepted for any reason.
• Again, because the grace period is after the deadline, all emergencies that occur during the grace period are not excused. Only emergencies brought to the attention of the instructor before the deadline will be considered. If you wait until after the deadline to complete your work, and an emergency occurs during the grace period that prevents you from submitting your work by the end of the grace period, then the consequence will be that your work, submitted late, will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., from an “A” to a “B”) for each day that they are late. This means that an “A” assignment turned in five days late automatically receives a failing grade. Because they come at the end of the semester, the second writing assignment and fourth exam cannot be accepted after the grace period ends. If you do not submit the fourth exam or second writing assignment before the end of the grace period, it will automatically receive a grade of zero.

General Policies

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any case of misconduct will result in a severe penalty, from zero credit for the assignment to failure for the course and a recommendation for university punishment. The instructor reserves the right to change the details of the class as necessary.

Policy on Academic Honesty

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own, done exclusively for this course. Instances of suspected cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s ideas or words without proper attribution) will be dealt with in accordance with the university’s policy on academic honesty. Please note that penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an excuse for cheating or plagiarism.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been documented by the SIU office of Disability Support Services will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information please visit the Disabilities Support Services website at http://disabilityservices.siu.edu or call the DSS office at (618) 453-5738. If you have a disability you must inform your instructor at the start of class so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Modules

Unless otherwise indicated on the course website, we will follow the order of the modules as listed in the schedule. Each numbered item has an online lecture associated with it. The course is sequential. This means that you have to finish the first module before proceeding to the second module; you have to finish the second module before going on to the third module; and then the fourth module. At the beginning of the course online lectures for later lectures and modules may not yet posted. They will be posted as the course proceeds, before that module begins.
Module 1: Tuesday, January 19 to Sunday, February 14

1. Introduction to the Course

2. Introduction to Media and Politics
   Reading: Graber & Dunaway ch. 1; Iyengar ch 1.

3. History of Mass Media and Politics
   Reading: Schudson and Tifft, “American Journalism in Historical Perspective” (D2L)

4. Freedom of the Press
   Reading: Graber & Dunaway ch. 3

5. Ownership of Mass Media
   Reading: Iyengar, ch. 2

6. Internet Neutrality
   Reading: What is Net Neutrality & What Does It Mean for Me?, USA Today, 2015

Writing Assignment 1

Exam 1

Exam 1 and writing assignment 1 must be submitted before Friday February 12 at 10:00 p.m. CT; Grace period until midnight CT Sunday night/Monday morning, February 14.
Module 2: From Monday, February 15, to Sunday, March 13

   *Reading:* Graber & Dunaway ch. 5 (first half)

8. The Media in Crises and Conflicts  
   *Reading:* Graber & Dunaway ch. 5 (second half), Iyengar ch. 4

9. News Reporting as Political Activism  
   *Reading:* Graber & Dunaway ch. 6

10. New Media  
    *Reading:* Iyengar ch. 5, Pew Research Center 2015, [Millennials & Political News](#)

11. Social Media and News Media  
    *Reading:* Graber & Dunaway ch. 4 (also p. 378-389)

12. Media Bias  
    *Reading:* Graber & Dunaway ch. 12

Exam 2

*Exam 2 must be submitted before Friday March 11 at 10:00 p.m. CT; Grace period until midnight CT Sunday night/Monday morning, March 13.*
Module 3: From Monday, March 14 to Sunday, April 10

13. How Well Does News Media Inform the Public?
   Reading: Pew Research Center, 2015, “What the Public Knows”

14. News Media Agenda Setting & Priming
   Reading: Graber & Dunaway ch. 10

15. News Media Framing
   Reading: Iyengar ch. 8

   Reading: Summary of Zaller’s Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion

17. Media and Political Campaigns
   Reading: Graber & Dunaway ch. 8, Iyengar ch. 11

18. Campaign Commercials, Cont.
   Reading: Iyengar ch. 9

Exam 3

Exam 3 must be submitted before Friday April 8 at 10:00 p.m. CT; Grace period until midnight CT Sunday night/Monday morning, April 10.
Module 4: From Monday, April 11 to Sunday, May 8

19. Governing Through the Media  
   Reading:   Graber & Dunaway ch. 7, Iyengar ch. 7 & 10

20. Mass Media, Crime, and Courts  
   Reading:   Graber & Dunaway ch. 8

21. Effects of Entertainment Media on Viewers  
   Reading:   Mulligan and Habel, “The Implications of Fictional Media for Political Beliefs.”

22. Effects of Entertainment Media on Society  


Exam 4

Exam 4 and writing assignment 2 must be submitted before Friday May 6 at 10:00 p.m. CT; Grace period until midnight CT Sunday night/Monday morning, May 8.
SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:  http://safe.siu.edu

SALUKI CARES

The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-5714, or siucares@siu.edu, http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. We ask that you become familiar with the SIU Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) programs. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Safety’s website at www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

SIU contains people from all walks of life, from many different cultures and sub-cultures, and representing all strata of society, nationalities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and affiliations. Learning from and working with people who differ is an important part of education as well an essential preparation for any career. For more information please visit:  http://www.inclusiveexcellence.siu.edu/

LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Help is within reach. Learning support services offers free tutoring on campus and math labs. To find more information please visit the Center for Learning and Support Services website:

Tutoring: http://tutoring.siu.edu/
Math Labs  http://math.siu.edu/courses/course-help.php

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center offers free tutoring services to all SIU students and faculty. To find a Center or Schedule an appointment please visit http://write.siu.edu/

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Our office's main focus is to ensure that the university complies with federal and state equity policies and handles reporting and investigating of discrimination cases. For more information visit: http://diversity.siu.edu/

Additional Resources Available:

SALUKINET: https://salukinet.siu.edu/cp/home/displaylogin

ADVICEMENT: http://advisement.siu.edu/

PROVOST & VICE CHANCELLOR: http://pvcaa.siu.edu/

SIU ONLINE: http://online.siu.edu/