

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Department of Political Science
Central European University
Fall 2016
2 credits, Master Level

Classes: TBA

Instructor: Oana Lup (vislup@ceu.edu)

Office hours: TBA

To sign up for consultations please use oanalup.youcanbook.me

Course objectives

This MA-level course provides an overview of the main topics, approaches, and methodologies in the study of political communication. It explores the range of actors involved in political communication and how the information flows between them matter for democratic politics.

We critically examine key concepts used in lay and academic discussions to identify problems, causes and consequences in the political communication domain such as democratic performance of the media, media vs. political logic, mediatization, public sphere, media system characteristics, pluralism, polarization, fragmentation, information quality, political bias, accuracy, media effects, agenda setting, priming, framing, gatekeeping.

Each week we shall disentangle the interactions between citizens, mass media, and political actors in the production, transmission, and reception of political messages with a different analytical focus, which is indicated in the topic description for the week. We look at how these interactions depend on the characteristics of each of the three, and on contextual, societal and political differences. We will reflect on how these issues travel to the new digital environment and how the changes brought by the internet link up to the fundamental questions about how citizens can make sense of politics and relate to democratic political processes.

The course provides students with a postgraduate-level understanding of:

- selected concepts and research methods in political communication, political marketing, and election campaign studies;
- current techniques used by political and social actors in traditional media as well as online political communication; and
- critical perspectives on and issues in political communication, political marketing, and election campaigns.

Learning outcomes

- Appropriate level understanding and critical review of the social science literature in the field of political communication.
- Conceptual frames and research skills for the analysis of political communication in contemporary political systems; ability to assess a range of theories and methods.
- Foundations to compare and contrast the role and impact of media and communication in politics and political processes in different settings

- Apply theories and methods to developments and issues not specifically covered by the course

Course format

The course will alternate short lectures, students' presentations, and applied exercises, and will link big theoretical and normative questions with real world examples. Class participation is essential as interactivity and learning from each other are at the core of what should be an enjoyable and not just useful experience. Active participation involves comments and questions based on the required literature, the lecture, and the presentations.

Course requirements and assessment

Attendance is mandatory for this course. If you are unable to attend a class, please inform the instructor *in advance* via email. More than two unexcused absences results in a reduction of the participation grade and more than three unexcused absences results in failure of the course.

25 % - Presentation

Students need to give a presentation based on the required readings presentation on a topic to be covered in class based on background / recommended readings, internet searches, and the required readings. Clear guidelines for preparing and delivering these presentations will be discussed in the first class of the course. Students need to prepare handouts for the presentations. Handouts will be graded: 1/3 of the grade for the handout and 2/3 for the presentation.

15 % - Class participation

Grading will take into consideration the active and meaningful participation of students in class discussions. It is essential that you make your contributions in a constructive way, based on a careful and critical reading of all required materials, and facilitating that everyone in class gets involved in a civil and focused discussion.

15 % - Exercises

Individual and group exercises will be assigned for some of the classes. The frequency and content of the exercises depends on the number of students registered. The aim of the exercises is to apply key concepts from readings and cases presented in class to similar examples and real-life problems that students should be able to critically analyze. Detailed instructions for exercises will be given prior to the tasks.

45% Final paper or closed-book final exam

Writing a final paper is particularly recommended for students whose thesis topic is closely connected to the material covered in this class.

An outline of the final paper should be submitted in week 6. The outline follows the structure of a research proposal, in that it should serve to:

- identify the context of the research problem

- present a preliminary account of the literature on the topic, including its gaps and limitations
- identify the research question(s)
- provide (preliminary) examples, cases, data for analysis
- show the intended contribution of the paper to the existing scholarship on the topic

Following consultation with the course instructor on the outline, students can decide whether to submit a final paper or to sit for a closed-book final exam, covering the entire course material.

Length of the paper: 2500 - 3000 words. The final paper is based on the submitted outline and on the feedback received on the outline. Further guidelines for the final paper will be provided in due time. The deadline for the final paper will be agreed upon in class.

Final exam, closed-book

The exam will include 1) questions that require very brief answers on definitions or basic concepts and 2) questions that refer to more than one concept. For the analytical questions the answers are supposed to be concise, well written essays (you can use examples in the essays that are not only based on the assigned readings). Your answers will have to incorporate a tight argument while evaluating different positions from the scholarly literature.

The exam is a closed book test. Course-related materials, reading notes and the like will not be admitted.

The final exam will take place in week 12.

Required preliminary readings

To ensure that we have a basic common ground in class, please make sure you understand well the topics and concepts in the following readings, which you can consult at your own pace:

- Sparks, Glenn G. 2016. *Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview* (5th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- McNair, Brian. 2017. *Introduction to Political Communication* (3rd edition). London: Routledge.
- Curran, James. ed. 2010. *Media and society* (5th edition). London: Bloomsbury.

Recommended readings

- Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, eds. 2011. *After Broadcast News - Media Regimes, Democracy and the New Information Environment*, Cambridge University Press.
- Esser, Frank and Barbara Pfetsch, eds. 2004. *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gunther, Richard, and Anthony Mughan, eds. 2000. *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnston, Richard, Michael G. Hagen, Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2004. *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallin, Daniel C. And Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallin, Daniel C. and Paolo Mancini, eds. 2011. *Comparing media systems beyond the western world*, Cambridge University Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Richard Reeves, eds. 1997. *Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters, and Reporters in America*. London: Sage.
- Jakubowicz, Karol and Miklós Sükösd, eds. 2008. *Finding the Right Place on the Map: Central and Eastern European Media Change in a Global Perspective*. Bristol, UK: Intellect Books; Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kaid, Lynda Lee, ed. 2004. *Handbook of Political Communication Research*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mazzoleni, Gianpietro Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield, eds. 2003. *The Media and Neopopulism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- McQuail, Denis, Doris A. Graber and Pippa Norris. 2007. *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Negrine, Ralph and James Stanyer, eds. 2007. *The Political Communication Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Norris, Pippa et al. 1999. *On Message: Communicating the Campaign*. London: Sage.
- Norris, Pippa. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Also <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Books/Virtuous%20Circle.htm>
- Norris, Pippa ed. 2009. *Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform*, World Bank. Available online <http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/9780821382004?mode=embed&layout=http://skin.issuu.com/v/light/layout.xml&showFlipBtn=true>

or

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Books/Public%20Sentinel.htm>

Voltmer, Katrin, ed. 2006. *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*. London: Routledge.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND MANDATORY READINGS

Note:

The mandatory readings may be changed as the course goes along depending on the kind of interests that exist among the students; the order of the topics might also be subject to variations. At all times, students will find the most up-to-date version of the syllabus on the e-learning site.

Recommended readings for specific topics will be provided during the term. They will include scholarly review pieces, classic and state-of-the art scholarly research, and theoretically or practically relevant non-academic research, opinion, and discussion pieces as fitting.

WEEK 1: Political Communication. Key issues in a fast changing world

Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, eds., 2011. *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy, Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-19

Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, eds. 2011. *After Broadcast News. Media Regimes, Democracy and the New Information Environment*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 51-103 (chapter 3)

WEEK 2: Media influence: Agenda setting

Shanto Iyengar, Mark D. Peters and Donald R. Kinder, 1982. 'Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-so-Minimal" Consequences of television News Programs' in *The American Political Science Review*, 76(4), pp. 848-858

Stefaan Walgrave, Stuart Soroka and Michiel Nuytermans, 2007. 'The Mass Media's Political Agenda-Setting Power. A Longitudinal Analysis of Media, Parliament, and Government in Belgium (1993 to 2000) in *Comparative Politics Studies*, 41(6), pp. 814-836

Exercise: What's in the news this week?

Make a list of the most important issues (up to 10) discussed in the mainstream and alternative media in the current week. Are there differences in the issues discussed in the mainstream and alternative media/newspapers and television/public and private channels/ left leaning and right leaning outlets? What might explain them? (A more detailed description of the exercise will be provided on the e-learning and discussed in the class).

WEEK 3: Media influence: Framing

Frank Baumgartner, Suzanna Linn, and Amber E. Boydston, 2010. 'The Decline of the Death Penalty: How Media Framing Changed Capital Punishment in America' in *Winning with Words: The Origins and Impact of Framing*, ed. by Brian F. Schaffner and Patrick J. Sellers. New York: Routledge, pp.159-184

Hänggli, R., & Kriesi, H. (2010). Political Framing Strategies and Their Impact on Media Framing in a Swiss Direct-Democratic Campaign. *Political Communication*, 27(2), 141–157. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903501484>

Additional reading

Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., & Iyengar, S. (2016). The End of Framing as we Know it ... and the Future of Media Effects. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(1), 7–23. <http://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2015.1068811>

Shehata, A., & Strömbäck, J. (2013). Not (Yet) a New Era of Minimal Effects A Study of Agenda Setting at the Aggregate and Individual Levels. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(2), 234-255.

EXERCISE – Identify frames

Prepare and bring to the class examples of competing/diverse frames that either media or political actors have used in publicly discussing a specific issue. The issue chosen is up to you! (You may consider comparing the frames employed for presenting a specific issue in various countries. This might be interesting for some issues, I guess).

If you take these examples from non-English sources, please translate them in a way that would preserve the key message. As possible sources of information you could use various media outlets and/or political actors' public speeches (campaign speeches or candidate debates might be a good source, for example). When presenting these competing frames in the class, please be prepared to give us a bit of background information, e.g. what is the partisan color of the media/political actor using a specific frame, why this issue was particularly relevant at the time of the elections etc.

You can work in pairs/groups no larger than 3 people.

Bonus points will be given for group work on identifying frames pertaining to the same issue/phenomenon across various countries.

WEEK 4: Message and Messenger: negative campaigns, information, mobilization

John Sides, Keena Lipsitz and Matthew Grossmann, 2010. 'Do Voters Perceive Negative Campaigns as Informative Campaigns?' in *American Politics Research*, 38(3), pp. 502-530

Richard Lau and Ivy Brown Rover, 'Negative Campaigning' in *The Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 12, 2009, pp. 285-306

EXERCISE – Debate: pros and cons of negative campaigns

Additional readings

Fridkin, K., Kenney, P. J., & Wintersieck, A. (2015). Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: How Fact-Checking Influences Citizens' Reactions to Negative Advertising. *Political Communication*, 32(1), 127-151.

Tworzecki, H., & Semetko, H. A. (2012). Media Use and Political Engagement in Three New Democracies: Malaise versus Mobilization in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 1940161212452450.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212452450>

<http://journalistsresource.org/studies/politics/ads-public-opinion/negative-political-ads-effects-voters-research-roundup>

WEEK 5 & 6: Media roles and structure. History and contemporary challenges

WEEK 5

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, 2003. *Comparing Media Systems, Three Models of Media and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 21-45, 66-86

James Curran, Shanto Iyengar, Anker Brink Lund, and Inka Salovaara-Moring, 2009. 'Media System, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study' in *European Journal of Communication*, 24(1), pp. 5-26.

or

Stuart Soroka et al., 2013. 'Auntie Knows Best? Public Broadcasters and Current Affairs Knowledge' in *The British Journal of Political Science*, pp. 1-35

EXERCISE: Present a map of the political information environment in your country – list the most popular media outlets, their news and political programs structure, audiences (if figures available), partisan leaning, ownership structure etc.

WEEK 6

Stetka, V. (2012). From Multinationals to Business Tycoons Media Ownership and Journalistic Autonomy in Central and Eastern Europe. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17(4), 433–456. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212452449>

Additional reading

Nielsen, R. K. (2013). The Absence of Structural Americanization Media System Developments in Six Affluent Democracies, 2000–2009. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(4), 392-412.

Marina Popescu with Bogdana Buzarnescu, Emese Czikora, Tania Gosselin, Adina Marincea, Jose Santana Pereira, and Gabor Toka. 2013. "European Media Systems Survey 2013." Data set. Bucharest: Median Research Centre. URL: www.mediasystemsineurope.org.

WEEK 7: The process of political news production: Journalistic practices, norms, and constraints

Helfer, L., & Aelst, P. V. (2016). What Makes Party Messages Fit for Reporting? An Experimental Study of Journalistic News Selection. *Political Communication*, 33(1), 59–77. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.969464>

Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., ... & Virginia Moreira, S. (2011). Mapping journalism cultures across nations: A comparative study of 18 countries. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273-293.

Additional reading

Stetka, V., & Örnebring, H. (2013). Investigative Journalism in Central and Eastern Europe: Autonomy, Business Models, and Democratic Roles. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(4), 413-435.

Chadwick, A., & Collister, S. (2014). Boundary-Drawing Power and the Renewal of Professional News Organizations: The Case of the Guardian and the Edward Snowden NSA Leak. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 22.

WEEK 8: Biases. Partisanship, Polarization, Misinformation

Jennifer Jerit and Jason Barabas. 2012. 'Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment' in *Journal of Politics*, 74, pp. 672-84

Stephan Lewandowsky et al. 2012. 'Misinformation and its Correction. Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing' in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(3), pp. 106-131

Additional reading

Markus Prior, 2013. 'Media and Political Polarization' in *The Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, pp. 101-127

EXERCISE – Design a campaign aimed at correcting misinformation presented in the media on an event/issue of your choice.

WEEK 9: Selective exposure & deliberation in everyday political talk. Political discussion and media as complementary sources of political influence

Jennifer Brundidge, 2010. Encountering 'difference' in the contemporary public sphere: the contribution of the Internet to the heterogeneity of political discussion networks, in *Journal of Communication* 60, pp. 680-700

Garrett, R. Kelly et al. 2013. 'A Turn Toward Avoidance? Selective Exposure to Online political information, 2004-2008' in *Political Behavior*, 35 (1), pp. 113-134

Additional readings

Hardy, Bruce W. and Dietram A. Scheufele. 2009. 'Presidential Campaign Dynamics and the Ebb and Flow of Talk as a Moderator: Media Exposure, Knowledge, and Political Discussion' in *Communication Theory*, 19, pp. 89-101

Barnidge, Matthew and Hernando Rojas. 2014. 'Hostile Media Perceptions, Presumed Media Influence, and Political Talk: Expanding the Corrective Action Hypothesis' in *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26 (2), pp. 135-156

Scheufele, Dietram A. 2002. 'Examining differential gains from mass media and their implications for participatory behavior' in *Communication Research*, 29, pp. 46-65

WEEK 10: Citizens, mass media and political actors in election campaigns.

Keena Lipsitz et al., 2005. 'What Voters Want from Political Campaign Communication' in *Political Communication*, 22(3), pp. 337-354

Schuck, A. R. T., Vliegthart, R., Boomgaarden, H. G., Elenbaas, M., Azrout, R., Spanje, J. van, & Vreese, C. H. de. (2013). Explaining Campaign News Coverage: How Medium, Time, and Context Explain Variation in the Media Framing of the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 12(1), 8–28.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2013.752192>

Exercise: Use the above texts and any other resources of your choice to analyze an election campaign

Additional readings

Randolph T. Stevenson and Lynn Vavreck, 2000. 'Does Campaign Length Matter? Testing for Cross-National Effects' in *The British Journal of Political Science*, 30, pp. 217-235

Baek, Mijeong 2009. 'A Comparative Analysis of Political Communication Systems and Voter Turnout' in *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), pp. 376-39

Dumitrescu, D. (2010). Know me, love me, fear me: The anatomy of candidate poster designs in the 2007 French legislative elections. *Political Communication*, 27(1), 20-43.

WEEK 11: "Here comes everybody"... or not. Citizens, mass media and political actors in the digital age

Rød, E. G., & Weidmann, N. B. (2015). Empowering activists or autocrats? The Internet in authoritarian regimes. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(3), 338–351.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314555782>

Casero-Ripollés, A., Feenstra, R. A., & Tormey, S. (2016). Old and New Media Logics in an Electoral Campaign The Case of Podemos and the Two-Way Street Mediatization of Politics.

The International Journal of Press/Politics, 1940161216645340.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216645340>

Additional readings

Archon Fung, Hollie Russon Gilman and Jennifer Shkabatur, 2013. 'Six Models of the Internet + Politics' in *International Studies Review*, 15, pp. 30-47

Theocharis, Y., Lowe, W., Deth, J. W. van, & García-Albacete, G. (2015). Using Twitter to mobilize protest action: online mobilization patterns and action repertoires in the Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, and Aganaktismenoi movements. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(2), 202–220. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.948035>

Lilleker, D. G., Tenscher, J., & Štětka, V. (2015). Towards hypermedia campaigning? Perceptions of new media's importance for campaigning by party strategists in comparative perspective. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(7), 747–765.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.993679>

Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, eds. 2011. *After Broadcast News - Media Regimes, Democracy and the New Information Environment*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 135-167 (chapter 5), 168-221 (chapter 6)

WEEK 12: FINAL EXAM