POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Department of Political Science
Central European University

MA Programme in Political Science (1- and 2-years)
Winter Term 2016/2017 (4 credits)

Instructor: José Pereira (jose.santana@eui.eu)
Class meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9.00-10.40
Office hours: Tuesdays 11.00-13.00 (schedule a meeting at least 48 hours in advance via e-mail)

Introduction

This course offers an overview of the main theories, concepts and empirical approaches to the subject of political communication in democratic nations. The course starts with a review of the main theoretical and empirical studies covering issues such as the modalities of political campaign and communication, the role of the media in these processes and campaign/media effects on public opinion. The key concepts to be explored and critically discussed are mediatization of politics, media systems, freedom and pluralism, journalist professionalization and information quality, campaign modernization, campaign professionalization, permanent campaigning, persuasion, conversion, mobilization, learning effects, agenda-setting, priming framing, and others. The course ends with a discussion of the main challenges to political communication in the 21st century.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to have:

- A thorough knowledge of the scientific literature on political communication.
- The ability to assess, balance and contrast the weaknesses and strengths of different positions in classic and contemporary debates in this field.
- An understanding of the research skills necessary to the analysis of the nature and effects of political communication in contemporary democracies.
Assessment and requirements

- **Participation** in discussions and exercises (10%).
- **Presentation** (20%). Students are required to present a research article in class (Weeks 9-11). The list of papers to be chosen for the presentations is presented in the syllabus. The presentation schedule will be set in Week 1, therefore students are expected to come to class with a list of two or three articles that they would like to present.
- **Mid-term written, closed-book, exam** (25%), covering the main theoretical frames and concepts as well as the research discussed in class, in Week 8.
- **A final 3000 words essay** (45%). The essay's topic needs to be approved by the instructor. Students are expected to submit the title, preliminary structure and bibliography (4-6 references) before Week 8. The deadline for submitting the essay (via e-mail) is March 31. Academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism) will be severely punished.

All students must read the mandatory articles/chapters before the class.
Attendance is mandatory. In order to get a grade, you need to attend at least 90% of the classes.

**Bibliography**


Course programme

Week 1 – Introduction to Political Communication: History, Theoretical Perspectives, New Developments (10 & 12 January)

Required reading:

Week 2 – Parties and Candidates: Political Campaigns and Mediatization of Politics (17 & 19 January)

Required reading:

Week 3 – The Media: Media Systems, Media Outlets and Politics (24 & 26 January)

Required reading:

Week 4 – Citizens: Selective Exposure, Media (dis)Trust, Interest in Politics (31 January & 2 February)

Required reading:


**Week 5 -- Effects: An Introduction (7 & 9 February)**

**Required reading:**


**Week 6 -- Effects: Agenda-setting, Priming, Framing (14 & 16 February)**

**Required reading:**


**Week 7 -- Effects: Learning (21 & 23 February)**

**Required reading:**


Week 8 – Midterm Exam and Discussion of Essay Projects (28 February and 2 March)

Written Exam (28 February)

Discussion of Essay Projects (2 March)

Week 9 – Research on Political Communication: Presentations and Discussions on Campaigns (7 & 9 March)

Articles for the presentations:


Week 10 – Research on Political Communication: Presentations and Discussions on Media (14 & 16 March)

Topic description

Articles for the presentations:


Week 11 – Research on Political Communication: Presentations and Discussions on Citizens/Audiences (21 & 23 March)

Articles for the presentations:


Week 12 – Challenges of Political Communication in the 21st Century (28 & 30 March)

Required reading:


