



*Political Science 367
Online Syllabus
Last updated July 3, 2021*

Important Note: Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements or through Stony Brook email.

Part 1: Course Information

Course title: Mass Media in American Politics

Course catalog # and section: POL 376

Credit hours: 3

Instructor name: Hillary Style

Instructor's Stony Brook email: Hillary.style@stonybrook.edu

Office hours: By Appointment on Zoom

Course Description: Competing theories of the power of the press are tested by examining the literature on mass media effects on what the public thinks and what the public thinks about. Various explanations of why news organizations behave as they do are also assessed. Conflicts between freedom of the press and such values as privacy, national security, and the right to fair trial are discussed. The relationships between freedom of the press and the public's right to know are also explored.

Required Course Textbook and Materials:

Mass Media and American Politics (9th Edition) by Doris A. Graber & Johanna L. Dunaway

ISBN-10: 1452287287

Additional readings and materials, including the most updated syllabus can be found on Blackboard

Recommended Readings/Bibliography:

There is an expectation you should be reading political news, particularly to assist in the various short paper assignments. The following are some recommendations for news sites that may be useful for these assignments.



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Note that the decision to include some sources is primarily for usefulness for assignments, not quality of the news. If you're interested in following these sites primarily for news, my recommendation is to make sure to visit a variety of them. This is particularly the case for following anything in the "Liberal" or "Conservative" Leaning columns.

Liberal Leaning	Conservative Leaning	Traditional News	Foreign News
MSNBC	Fox News	New York Times	BBC News
Vox	National Review	Washington Post	Der Spiegel
Democracy Now	Reason	Wall Street Journal	Japan Times
Daily Kos	The Daily Signal	PBS News Hour	AllAfrica
Huffington Post	Weekly Standard	CBS News	Al Jazeera
Think Progress	Drudge Report	ABC News	Russia Today
Daily Beast	Breitbart	NBC News	China Daily

Throughout the course, you will be expected to post and respond to your classmates about different news stories, which may come from a range of sources. Please be sure to review and follow the online etiquette in Part 5 of this syllabus.

Course Delivery Mode and Structure:

This is an *online course*, delivered in the Blackboard learning management system (LMS). Students must be mindful of all course expectations, deliverables and due dates. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies. See "Technical Requirements" section for more information. In Blackboard, you will access online lessons, course materials, and resources. **EACH WEEK HAS 1 LEARNING MODULE;** with deadlines on **Wednesday and Saturday at 11:59pm ET.** Video lectures will be about 10-15 minutes in length and slides will be provided. Some variations will occur.

How We Will Communicate:

The best way to contact me is to email me directly. If you use Blackboard's **email tool** from the course site, it will automatically include your full name, course name and section when you send me an email. **Please allow between 24-48 hours for an email reply.** Your Stony Brook University email must be used for all University-related communications. You must have an active Stony Brook University email account and access to the Internet. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your SBU email account. **Plan on checking your SBU email account regularly for course-related messages.** To log in to Stony Brook Google Mail, go to <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud> and sign in with your NetID and password.

Regular announcements will be sent from Blackboard. These will be posted in the course site and may or may not be sent by email.

Regular communication is essential in online classes. Logging in once a day, checking the discussion board and participating with your colleagues ensures that you are able to remain an active member of the class and earn full points for participation.

Technical Requirements:

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades and feedback. The Blackboard course site can be accessed at <https://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>

If you are unsure of your NetID, visit <https://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/finding-your-netid-and-password> for more information. You are responsible for having a reliable computer and Internet connection throughout the term. **Caution!** You will be at a disadvantage if you attempt to complete all coursework on a smart phone or tablet. It may not be possible to submit the files required for your homework assignments.

Students should be able to use email, a word processor, spreadsheet program, and presentation software to complete this course successfully.

The following list details a minimum recommended computer set-up and the software packages you will need to have access to, and be able to use:

- PC with Windows 10 or higher (we recommend a 3-year Warranty)
- Macintosh with OS 10.11 or higher (we recommend a 3-year Warranty)
- Intel Core i5 or higher
- 250 GB Hard Drive
- 8 GB RAM
- Latest version of Chrome or Firefox; Mac users may use Chrome or Firefox. (A complete list of supported browsers and operating systems can be found on the My Institution page when you log in to Blackboard.)
- High speed internet connection
- Word processing software (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)
- Headphones/earbuds and a microphone
- Webcam (recommended)
- Printer (optional)
- Ability to download and install free software applications and plug-ins (note: you must have administrator access to install applications and plug-ins).

Technical Assistance:

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

- Phone: 631-632-9800 (client support, Wi-Fi, software and hardware)
- Submit a help request ticket: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>
- If you are on campus, visit the Walk-Up Tech Support Station in the Educational Communications Center (ECC) building.

Part 2: Course Learning Objectives and Assessments

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- explain the dynamics of how news functions within the context of the American political environment and market systems.
- think critically about your political environment and analyze how you are shaped by the information you consume.
- start to read a broad range of scholarly research that helps you describe mass political behavior and its connections to our media environments.

How to Succeed in this Course:

- Complete all assigned readings in the course
- Engage and think critically in online discussion groups
- Follow the news. If this is new to you, pick one story you find interesting and see how it develops over the course of this class and how different sources report on it.
- Review course materials daily. Start by looking at the readings & watching the video lectures, then move on to the quiz, your journal post and the engage in discussions within your small group.
- How much time should students devote to an online course? Time on task information, see NY State Education Department: <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/distance-education-program-policies>

Part 3: Course Schedule

****subject to changes****

Week 1 (July 5 – July 11): Structure of the News

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes
 - a. Students will explain the history of the modern political media
 - b. Students will discuss the role of media in democracy
2. Readings
 - a. Role of Media in Democracy
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 1
 - ii. Ladd, Chapter 8
 - b. A Brief History of Modern Political Media
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 2-3
 - ii. Berry & Sobieraj, Chapter 3

3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. Intro to the course video
 - ii. Lecture 1: Role of Media in Democracy
 - iii. Lecture 2: A Brief History of Modern Political Media
4. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 1 Discussion Post (**Due July 7 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - i. Respond to the prompt about the role of media & share with your small group on Blackboard
 - b. Week 1 Quiz (**Due July 10 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - c. Peer review of someone else's post (**Due July 10 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

Week 2 (July 12-18): What Makes the News?

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes
 - a. Students will identify news reporting routines, the role of the media as policy makers, and bias in the media
2. Readings
 - a. News Making & News Reporting Routines
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 5
 - b. The Media as Policy Makers
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 6
 - c. Bias in the Media
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 12
 - ii. Bennet, Chapter 2
3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. 1: News Making & News Reporting Routines
 - ii. 2: The Media as Policy Makers
 - iii. 3: Bias in the Media
4. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 2 Discussion Post (**Due July 14 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - i. With your small group, share a news article and identify and discuss the bias of the article
 - b. Week 2 Quiz (**Due July 17 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - c. Peer review/response to someone else's post (**Due July 17 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

Week 3 (July 19-25): Media Effects on Behavior and Attitudes

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes
 - a. Students will discuss the range of ways that people process media information and how it effects behaviors and attitudes

2. Readings
 - a. Media Effects & Processing
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 10
 - ii. Iyengar, Chapter 8
 - iii. Bennet, Chapter 3
3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. 1: Media Effects & Processing
4. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 3 Discussion Post (**Due July 21 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - i. Journal about how your attitudes or behaviors have been affected by information in the media
 - b. Week 3 Quiz (**Due July 24 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - c. Peer review/response to someone else's post (**Due July 24 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

Week 4 (July 26 – August 1): The Changing Media Landscape

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes
 - a. Students will analyze the role of the internet and social media on the media landscape, including the role of humor in the news
2. Readings
 - a. The Changing Media Landscape
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 4
 - ii. Prior, Chapter 4
 - b. Political Humor & Entertainment
 - i. Young 2012
 - ii. Young 2013
3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. 1: The Changing Media Landscape
 - ii. 2: Political Humor & Entertainment
4. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 4 Discussion Post (**Due July 28 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - i. Post about how your attitudes or behaviors have been affected by information in the media
 - b. Week 4 Quiz (**Due July 31 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - c. Peer review/response to someone else's post (**Due July 31 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

Week 5 (August 2-8): News Media and Institutions

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes

- a. Students will discuss the role of the media in the Presidency, Congress, state & local politics, and foreign affairs
2. Readings
 - a. Media, The Presidency, and Congress
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 7
 - ii. Atkinson, Chapter 1
 - b. Media & State and Local Politics
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 8
 - c. Foreign Affairs Coverage
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 9
3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. 1: Media, The Presidency, and Congress
 - ii. 2: Media & State and Local Politics
 - iii. 3: Foreign Affairs Coverage
4. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 5 Discussion Post (**Due August 4 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - i. Respond to the prompt about one of the institutions discussed and provide an example of media coverage
 - b. Week 5 Quiz (**Due August 7 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
 - c. Peer review/response to someone else's post (**Due August 7 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

Week 6 (August 9-15): Media and Elections

1. Topics & Student Learning Outcomes
 - a. Students will analyze how the media covers campaigns and the role of campaign advertisements
2. Readings
 - a. Campaign Coverage
 - i. Graber & Dunaway, Chapter 11
 - ii. Iyengar, Chapter 6
 - b. Campaign Advertisements
 - i. Brader (2005)
3. Course materials
 - a. Video Lectures & Slides
 - i. 1: Campaign Coverage
 - ii. 2: Campaign Advertisements
2. Activities, assignments, assessments, etc. & Due Dates and Points
 - a. Week 6 Discussion Post (**Due August 11 11:59pm ET**) 5 points

- i. Complete a discussion post about a campaign advertisement & provide a link to the video. Share why it may or may not lead to a story in the media.
- b. Week 6 Quiz (**Due August 14 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
- c. Peer review/response to someone else's post (**Due August 14 11:59pm ET**) 5 points
- d. Full, completed journal (**Due August 15 11:59pm ET**) 10 points

Part 4: Grading, Attendance, and Late Work Policies

Assessment and Grading: Each week you will be expected to complete a quiz based on the readings and lecture for that week. Each quiz is worth 5 points for a total of 30% of your grade. Throughout the course, you will build a journal. Overall, the journal makes up 40% of your grade, with 5 points per week for submitting a weekly draft as your discussion post and then 10 points for the final submitted journal. You will also have the opportunity to give and receive reviews from your peers on drafts of your posts. The reviews that you complete are worth 30% of your grade. If you engage in further, civil discussions on your group members' posts, you will receive 1-point extra credit for that week.

Journal Assignment: Each week I will provide a prompt for your discussion posts. Some weeks will be more of a traditional journal format where you personally engage with the material and relate what we've learned to current media coverage, other weeks will be more of a discussion format and focus on sharing current media examples of elements discussed in the readings and lectures with your classmates. You will also need to review and engage with the discussion posts shared by your group members. I will leave it up to groups how they want to structure feedback to ensure everyone receives comments on each post. At the end of the course, use the comments to revise your journal entries and compile them into one final course journal to submit. Each journal entry should be about 300-500 words.

Viewing Grades on Blackboard: Points and feedback for graded activities will be posted to the My Grades tab in the Tools area of Blackboard. Quizzes, discussion boards, journals will be graded within 48 hours of closing each week. Submitted papers will be graded within 2 weeks of being submitted. You are responsible for checking your grades and keeping track of your progress throughout the course. If you are missing a grade for a completed assignment, you must bring it to my attention before the end of the course.

In this course, you will be assessed on the following:

Activity/Assignment	Points	Due Date
Quizzes	30 (5 points each, 6 quizzes total)	Weekly
Weekly Journal drafts	30 (5 points each, 6 entries total)	Weekly
Final Journal	10	End of Week 6
Journal Peer Review comments	30 (5 points each, 6 responses total)	Weekly
Total	100	

Minimum Grade Policy: If you complete and turn in an assignment before the deadline, the lowest possible grade you can receive is 50% of the possible points for the assignment.

Letter Grades:

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned:

- [Undergraduate Grading System](#)
- [Graduate Grading System](#)

Grade Scale:

A : 100-93 A-: 92-90 B+: 89-87 B: 86-83 B-: 82-80

C+: 79-77 C : 76-73 C-: 72-70 D+: 69-67 D : 66-60

F : <60

Attendance Policy: Because we are not meeting in person, there is no formal attendance policy, but it is your best interest, both for your grade and understanding of course material, to engage in the small group discussions and with the materials posted.

Late Work Policy: Please reach out to me if you anticipate being unable to meet a deadline. If you receive an extension before a due date, there is no penalty for late work. If you reach out after a deadline has passed, late work will be accepted at my discretion, with penalty (10% of the possible points deducted for each day the assignment is late). Please contact me before turning in work after the deadline has passed. If you are experiencing a serious or ongoing issue, please see Section 6 below for guidance on resources.

Weekly Journal Draft and Peer Review Grading Rubric

Interpretation Points	Quality of posts	Frequency	Mechanics
Exemplary 5, full points or higher	The post/comment is accurate, relevant, properly attributed and evidence-based as well as original and well written. Adds substantial learner presence to the course and stimulates additional thought about the issue under discussion. Comments have a collegial and friendly tone.	Participates and responds to instructor and/or peers on or before deadline.	Free of spelling and grammatical errors.
Accomplished 3 to 4	The post/comment lacks at least one of the above qualities, but is above average in quality. Makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed.		One or two minor errors.
Developing 2 to 3	The post/comment lacks two or three of the required qualities. Comments which are based solely upon personal opinion or personal experience often fall within this category.	Few posts. Deadlines are not met.	Multiple spelling and grammar errors or inappropriate.
Needs work 1 to 2	The post/comment presents little or no new information. However, may provide social presence and contribute to a collegial atmosphere.		

Course Journal Grading Rubric

Interpretation Points (x2 for assignment grade)	Content	Organization	Clarity	Mechanics	Effort
Exemplary 5, full points or higher	Fully engages with the topics and prompts. External content/examples included and referenced is interesting; the details focus on the most important information. Choices help the reader see things in a new way.	Journal entry is logical and effective.	Can understand all of what is being communicated.	Free of spelling and grammatical errors.	Exceeds the requirements of the assignment and have put care and effort into the process.
Accomplished 3 to 4	Engages with the topics and prompts. Selected examples that are important in discussing the activities for the week; the details help the reader see things	Journal entry is generally logical and effective with a few minor problems.	Can understand most of what is being communicated.	One or two minor errors.	Fulfills all of the requirements of the assignment.

	about the items in interesting ways.				
Developing 2 to 3	Somewhat engages with topics and prompts. External examples only loosely relates to the content of the week	Journal entry is somewhat illogical and confusing in places.	Can understand less than half of what is being communicated.		Fulfills some of the requirements of the assignment.
Needs work 1 to 2	Doesn't engage with topics and prompts. Examples from external sources are not included or not relevant.	Journal entry lacks logical order and organization.	Can understand little of what is being communicated.	Multiple spelling and grammar errors or inappropriate.	Fulfills few of the requirements of the assignment.

Part 5: University and Course Policies

University Policies:

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-people-physical-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.

Academic Integrity Statement:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Important Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will be reported to the Academic Judiciary.

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Course Policies:

- This is a 6-week online summer course. Because of the condensed time, the weekly reading and assignments are more intense compared to a week of a full semester course.
- The course schedule is a guideline of how I plan on the course proceeding. I reserve the right to change the material as the class proceeds if the need arises. You will be informed of these changes through e-mail and Blackboard.

Understand When You May Drop This Course:

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider withdrawing from a course. Refer to the Stony Brook Academic Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration: http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/academic_calendars.

- [Undergraduate Course Load and Course Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Graduate Course Changes Policy](#)

Incomplete Policy:

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. Circumstances must be documented and significant enough to merit an incomplete. If you need to request an incomplete for this course, contact me for approval as far in advance as possible.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement:

Course material accessed from Blackboard, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

Online Communication Guidelines and Learning Resources:

Maintain professional conduct both in the classroom and online. The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. I will make every effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students—both in

the face-to-face classroom and online communication. Students have the right and privilege to learn in the class, free from harassment and disruption. The course follows the standards set in the Student Code of Conduct, and students are subject to disciplinary action for violation of that code. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer. I reserve the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content.

Online Etiquette:

- Offensive language or rudeness will not be tolerated. Discuss ideas, not the person.
- Avoid cluttering your messages with excessive emphasis (stars, arrows, exclamations).
- If you are responding to a message, include the relevant part of the original message in your reply, or refer to the original post to avoid confusion.
- Be specific and clear, especially when asking questions.
- Use standard punctuation and capitalization. Using all UPPERCASE characters gives the appearance of shouting and makes the message less legible.
- Remember that not all readers have English as their native language, so make allowances for possible misunderstandings and unintended discourtesies.

Online Classes Require Better Communication:

It is important to remember that we will not have the non-verbal cues that occur in a face-to-face classroom. I cannot see the confused, frustrated, or unhappy expressions on your face if you encounter problems. You **MUST** communicate with me so that I can help. To make the experience go smoothly, remember that you're responsible for initiating more contact, and being direct, persistent, and vocal when you don't understand something.

My Role as the Instructor:

As the instructor, I will serve as a "guide" in our online classroom. While I will not respond to every post, I will read what is posted, and reply when necessary. Expect instructor posts in the following situations:

- To assist each of you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and textbook material.
- To fill in important things that may have been missed.
- To re-direct discussion when it gets "out of hand."
- To point out key points or to identify valuable posts.

Part 6: Student Resources

Academic and Major Advising (*undergraduate only*): Have questions about choosing the right course? Contact an advisor today. Phone and emails vary-please see website for additional contact information; website: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/for-students/academic-advising/>

Academic Success and Tutoring Center (*undergraduate only*):

<https://www.stonybrook.edu/tutoring/>

Amazon @ Stony Brook: Order your books before classes begin. Phone: 631-632-9828; email: Bookstore_Liaison@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bookstore/>

Bursar: For help with billing and payment. Phone: 631-632-9316; email: bursar@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bursar/>

Career Center: The Career Center's mission is to support the academic mission of Stony Brook University by educating students about the career decision-making process, helping them plan and attain their career goals, and assisting with their smooth transition to the workplace or further education. Phone: 631-632-6810; email: sbucareercenter@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/career-center/>

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS staff are available by phone, day or night. <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/caps/>

Ombuds Office: The Stony Brook University Ombuds Office provides an alternative channel for confidential, impartial, independent and informal dispute resolution services for the entire University community. We provide a safe place to voice your concerns and explore options for productive conflict management and resolution. The Ombuds Office is a source of confidential advice and information about University policies and procedures and helps individuals and groups address university-related conflicts and concerns. <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ombuds/>

Registrar: Having a registration issue? Let them know. Phone: 631-632-6175; email: registrar_office@stonybrook.edu; <http://www.stonybrook.edu/registrar/>

SBU Libraries: access to and help in using databases, ebooks, and other sources for your research.

- Research Guides and Tutorials: <http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/>
- Getting Help: <https://library.stonybrook.edu/research/ask-a-librarian/>

Student Accessibility Support Center: Students in need of special accommodations should contact SASC. Phone: 631-632-6748; email: sasc@stonybrook.edu; <https://www.stonybrook.edu/sasc/>

Support for Online Learning: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/online/>

Writing Center: Students are able to schedule face-to-face and online appointments. <https://www.stonybrook.edu/writingcenter/>