

University of Maryland, College Park
Department of Communication

COMM 738 - Seminar in Mediated Communication:

Political Media Effects

Spring 2004

Time: Tuesday 6:30-9:30

Place: SKN 2127

Dr. Michael F. Meffert

Office: Skinner 2118

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30, Thursday 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

Phone: 301-405-6533

Email: mmeffert@umd.edu

Course Description

The seminar provides an in-depth introduction to social scientific research on political media effects, drawn from a variety of disciplines. The course starts with an overview of classic mass communication theories and continues with modern media effects theories based on the cognitive information processing paradigm such as agenda-setting, priming, framing, and motivated information processing. Other topics include media effects in context and political campaigns, in particular negative advertising. After a short review of research on the effects of health communication, sex and violence, and ethnic images, the seminar concludes with a look at the impact of new media and technologies.

Readings

Required

- Bryant, Jennings, and Dolf Zillmann. 2002. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters. Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cappella, Joseph N., and Kathleen H. Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Course reader with additional articles and book chapters.

Optional Recommendation for the Quantitatively Inclined

- Gunter, Barrie. 2000. *Media Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Requirements/Assignments

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| • 3 x Reaction Paper | 15% (5% each) |
| • 2 x Discussion Leader | 40% (20% each) |
| • Research Paper | 30% |
| • Participation | 15% |

Reaction Papers: Students are expected to write 3 short reaction papers of approx. 3 pages during the semester, in weeks of their choice (except when discussion leader). The papers should offer a short, critical evaluation of (some of) the readings of a given week. They are due at noon each Tuesday (hardcopy or email).

Discussion Leader: Each student will choose two of the (sub-)topics on the course schedule and, in consultation with the instructor, present recent research and/or the current status of the theory to the class. A list of suggested topics can be found at the end of the syllabus. It is possible to suggest other topics related to the course content as well. The presentation should include a brief outline of the key findings, methods, implications, and limitations of the theory or research topic. The discussion leader is expected to make a presentation and lead the seminar discussion for one-third to one-half of a class period. Discussion leaders are expected to hand out an outline to the class detailing what they cover in their presentation as well as a brief annotated bibliography of the articles reviewed for presentation. Please note that the bibliography is to supplement the readings already on the syllabus for a particular topic. More specifically:

- The topics will be assigned on the first day of class.
- One week before the assigned discussion leadership, students must provide their classmates and the instructor with a copy of one article or study that they feel best demonstrates how the topic we are covering can be used to understand theories of media effects. Keep in mind that your discussion should relate the readings you found to the assigned readings for the week.
- One week before the assigned discussion leadership, students should provide the instructor with a *preliminary* copy of the outline of the presentation, discussion questions, and the annotated bibliography.
- On the day of your presentation, outline and annotated bibliography are distributed.

Research Paper: Each student is required to write a 20 to 30 page research paper related to the course material (and ideally the student's research interests). This will usually be a summary and critical review of a particular concept, theory, or hypothesis as well as the research or studies pertaining to it. It could also be a (proposal for a) research project testing media effects, or an empirical study such as the secondary analysis of existing data or a short experiment. The precise topic is to be determined between the student and the instructor as early as possible during the semester. The goal is to write a paper of high quality (substantively and formally) that might be submitted to a conference or even a journal. A short, written proposal is due – at the latest – April 6. The completed paper will be presented and submitted on May 11. Students are encouraged but not required to submit a final draft of their paper some time before May 11 for comments and suggestions.

Participation: The seminar requires active participation of the students in class discussions. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before each session.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Maryland is committed to making appropriate accommodations to individuals with disabilities that have been documented by the Disability Support Services (0126 Shoemaker Hall). If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class, please contact the instructor as soon as possible, and no later than the third week of class.

Course Schedule

Part I – Classic Theories & Methods

1/27 Introduction, History of Media Effects Research, & Mapping of the Territory

2/3 Research Methods & Cultivation Processes

Overview

- McLeod, Douglas M., Gerald M. Kosicki, and Jack M. McLeod. 2002. "Resurveying the Boundaries of Political Communications Effects." In *Media Effects* (pp. 215-267).

Research Methods

- Gunter, Barrie. 2000. "Overview of Media Research Methodologies: Audiences." (Chapter 2) In *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions, and Impact*. London: Sage (pp.22-54).

Cultivation

- Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, Nancy Signorielli, and James Shanahan. 2002. "Growing Up with Television: Cultivation Processes." In *Media Effects* (pp. 43-67).
- Shrum, L. J. 2002. "Media Consumption and Perceptions of Social Reality: Effects and Underlying Processes." In *Media Effects* (pp. 69-95)

2/10 Public Opinion & Classic Theories: Spiral of Silence & Uses-and-Gratifications

Public Opinion

- Entman, Robert M., and Susan Herbst. 2001. "Reframing Public Opinion as We Have Known It." In *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 203-225).

Spiral of Silence

- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1991. "The Theory of Public Opinion: The Concept of the Spiral of Silence." In *Communication Yearbook 14*, ed. James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage (pp. 256-287).
- Jeffres, Leo W., Kimberly A. Neuendorf, and David Atkin. 1999. "Spirals of Silence: Expressing Opinions When the Climate of Opinion Is Unambiguous." *Political Communication* 16:115-131.

Uses-and-Gratifications

- Rubin, Alan M. 2002. "The Uses-and-Gratifications Perspective of Media Effects." In *Media Effects* (pp. 525-548).

Part II – Modern Theories & Cognitive Information Processing

2/17 The Cognitive Information Processing Paradigm

Historical & Philosophical Background

- Beniger, James R., and Jodi A. Gusek. 1995. "The Cognitive Revolution in Public Opinion and Communication Research." In *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent*, ed. Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon. New York: Guilford Press (pp. 217-248).

"Mechanics" of Cognitive Processing

- Lang, Annie. 2000. "The Limited Capacity Model of Mediated Message Processing." *Journal of Communication* 50:46-70.
- Zillmann, Dolf. 2002. "Exemplification Theory of Media Influence." In *Media Effects* (pp.19-41).

Attitudes & Motivations

- Petty, Richard E., Joseph R. Priester, and Pablo Briñol. 2002. "Mass Media Attitude Change: Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In *Media Effects* (pp. 155-198).
- Bandura, Albert. 2002. "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication." In *Media Effects* (pp. 121-153).

2/24 Agenda-Setting & Priming

Agenda-Setting

- McCombs, Maxwell, and Amy Reynolds. 2002. "News Influence on Our Pictures of the World." In *Media Effects* (pp. 1-18)
- Neuman, W. Russell. 1990. "The Threshold of Public Attention." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54:159-176.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters. Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Priming

- Roskos-Ewoldsen, David R., Beverly Roskos-Ewoldsen, and Francesca R. Dillman Carpentier. 2002. "Media Priming: A Synthesis" In *Media Effects* (pp.97-120).
- Miller, Joanne M., and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:301-315.

3/2	Framing (I)
------------	--------------------

Definitions

- Entman, Robert M. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43:51-58.
- Reese, Stephen D. 2001. "Prologue—Framing Public Life: A Bridging Model for Media Research." In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, ed. Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy, and August E. Grant. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (pp.7-31).
- D'Angelo, Paul. 2002. "News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman." *Journal of Communication* 52:870-888.

Attributions of Responsibility

- Iyengar, Shanto. 1987. "Television News and Citizens' Explanations of National Affairs." *American Political Science Review* 81:815-831.
- Iyengar, Shanto. 1990. "Framing Responsibility for Political Issues: The Case of Poverty." *Political Behavior* 12:19-40.

Symbolic Politics

- Gamson, William A., and Andre Modigliani. 1987. "The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action." In *Research in Political Sociology, Vol. 3*, ed. Richard G. Braungart. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press (pp. 137-177).
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96:75-90.

3/9	Framing (II) & On-Line Model
------------	---

Strategic Coverage & Cynicism

- Cappella, Joseph N., and Kathleen H. Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*. New York: Oxford University Press

On-line Model

- Lavine, Howard. 2002. "On-Line Versus Memory-Based Process Models of Political Evaluation." In *Political Psychology*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (pp. 225-247).
- Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89:309-326.

3/16	Motivated Information Processing
-------------	---

Cognitive Dissonance

- Oliver, Mary Beth. 2002. "Individual Differences in Media Effects." In *Media Effects* (pp. 507-524).
- Donsbach, Wolfgang. 1991. "Exposure to Political Content in Newspapers: The Impact of Cognitive Dissonance on Readers' Selectivity." *European Journal of Communication* 6:155-186.

Perceptions of Media

- Vallone, Robert P., Lee Ross, and Mark R. Lepper. 1985. "The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49:577-585.

Perceptions of Public Opinion

- Perloff, Richard M. 2002. "The Third-Person Effect." In *Media Effects* (pp. 489-506).
- Gunther, Albert C., Cindy Christen, Janice L. Liebhart, and Stella C.-Y. Chia. 2001. "Congenial Publics, Contrary Press, and Biased Estimates of the Climate of Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65:295-320.

Information Search

- Huang, Li-Ning, and Vincent Price. 2001. "Motivations, Goals, Information Search, and Memory About Political Candidates." *Political Psychology* 22:665-692.
- Chaffee, Steven H., Melissa N. Saphir, Joseph Graf, Christian Sandvig, and Kyu S. Hahn. 2001. "Attention to Counter-Attitudinal Messages in a State Election Campaign." *Political Communication* 18:247-272.

3/30	Constructionist Perspective & Dynamics of Mass Opinion
-------------	---

Learning & Knowledge

- Price, Vincent, and John Zaller. 1993. "Who Gets the News? Alternative Measures of News Reception and their Implications for Research." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 57:133-164.
- **Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**
- Fisch, Shalom M. 2002. "Vast Wasteland of Vast Opportunity: Effects of Educational Television on Children's Academic Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes." In *Media Effects* (pp. 397-426).
- Tewksbury, David. 2003. "What Do Americans Really Want to Know? Tracking the Behavior of News Readers on the Internet." *Journal of Communication* 53:694-710.
- Norris, Pippa, and David Sanders. 2003. "Message or Medium? Campaign Learning During the 2001 British General Election." *Political Communication* 20:233-262.

Dynamics of Public Opinion

- Zaller, John. 1996. "The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited Idea." In *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, ed. Diana C. Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman, and Richard A. Brody. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (pp.17-78).
- Zaller, John. 2001. "Monika Lewinsky and the Mainsprings of American Politics." In *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, eds. W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 252-278).

4/6	Mass Media & Interpersonal Discussion (Context Effects)
-----	--

- **Proposal for Research Paper due.**

Theoretical & Methodological Issues

- Reardon, Kathleen K., and Everett M. Rogers. 1988. "Interpersonal Versus Mass Media Communication: A False Dichotomy." *Human Communication Research* 15:284-303.
- Chaffee, Steven H. 1982. "Mass Media and Interpersonal Channels: Competitive, Convergent, or Complementary?" In *Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World*, ed. Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart. New York: Oxford University Press (pp. 57-77).
- Chaffee, Steven H., and Diana C. Mutz. 1988. "Comparing Mediated and Interpersonal Communication Data." In *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, ed. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Suzanne Pingree. Newbury Park: Sage (pp. 19-43).
- Rogers, Everett M. 2002. "Intermedia Processes and Powerful Media Effects." In *Media Effects* (pp. 199-214).

Research Studies

- Kim, Joohan, Robert O. Wyatt, and Elihu Katz. 1999. "News, Talk, Opinion, Participation: The Part Played by Conversation in Deliberative Democracy." *Political Communication* 16:361-385.
- Beck, Paul A., Russell J. Dalton, Steven Greene, and Robert Huckfeldt. 2002. "The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Choices." *American Political Science Review* 96:57-73.
- Druckman, James N., and Kjersten R. Nelson. 2003. "Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 729-745.
- Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger. 2003. "Mass Communication, Personal Communication and Vote Choice: The Filter Hypothesis of Media Influence in Comparative Perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 33:233-259.
- Meffert, Michael F. 1999. "Citizens in Context: Persuasive Influences of Newspapers and Personal Networks on Candidate Evaluations." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, September 2 - 5, 1999.

Part IV – Campaigns

4/13 Public & Political Campaigns

Theoretical Issues

- McGuire, William J. 1989. "Theoretical Foundations of Campaigns." In *Public Communication Campaigns*, ed. Ronald E. Rice and Charles K. Atkin. Newbury Park: Sage (pp. 43-65).
- Rice, Ronald E., and Charles Atkin. 2002. "Communication Campaigns: Theory, Design, Implementation, and Evaluation." In *Media Effects* (pp. 427-451).
- Stewart, David W., Paulos Pavlow, and Scott Ward. 2002. "Media Influences on Marketing Communication." In *Media Effects* (pp. 353-396).

Research Studies

- Kahn, Kim F., and Patrick J. Kenney. 2002. "The Slant of the News: How Editorial Endorsements Influence Campaign Coverage and Citizens' Views of Candidates." *American Political Science Review* 96:381-394.
- Holbrook, Thomas M. 1999. "Political Learning from Presidential Debates." *Political Behavior* 21:67-89.
- Fan, David P., and Albert R. Tims. 1989. "The Impact of the News Media on Public Opinion: American Presidential Election 1987-1988." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 1:151-163.

4/20 Negative Campaigns

Field Studies & Surveys

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88:829-838.
- Finkel, Steven E., and John G. Geer. 1998. "A Spot Check: Casting Doubt on the Demobilizing Effect of Attack Advertisements." *American Journal of Political Science* 42:573-595.
- Freedman, Paul, and Ken Goldstein. 1999. "Measuring Media Exposure and the Effects of Negative Campaign Ads." *American Journal of Political Science* 43:1189-1208.

Laboratory Experiments

- Meffert, Michael F., Sungeun Chung, Amber Joiner, Jennifer Garst, and Leah Waks. 2004. Motivated Information Processing and Negative Campaigns: The Dynamic Formation of Candidate Evaluations. Manuscript.
- Chang, Chingching. 2001. "The Impacts of Emotion Elicited By Print Political Advertising on Candidate Evaluation." *Media Psychology* 3:91-118.

Meta-Analysis

- Lau, Richard R., Lee Sigelman, Caroline Heldman, and Paul Babbitt. 1999. "The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-Analytic Assessment." *American Political Science Review* 93:851-875.

Part V – Specific Topics

4/27	Health Communication, Sex & Violence, and Ethnic Images
-------------	--

Health

- Brown, Jane D., and Kim Walsh-Childers. 2002. "Effects of Media on Personal and Public Health." In *Media Effects* (pp. 453-488).
- Harris, Richard Jackson, and Christina L. Scott. 2002. "Effects of Sex in the Media." In *Media Effects* (pp. 307-331).

Violence & Fear

- Sparks, Glenn G., and Cheri W. Sparks. 2002. "Effects of Media Violence." In *Media Effects* (pp. 269-285).
- Cantor, Joanne. 2002. "Fright Reactions to Mass Media." In *Media Effects* (pp. 287-306).
- Berger, Charles R. 2000. "Quantitative Depictions of Threatening Phenomena in News Reports." *Human Communication Research* 26:27-52.

Ethnic Images

- Greenberg, Bradley S., Dana Mastro, and Jeffrey E. Brand. 2002. "Minorities and the Mass Media: Television Into the 21st Century." In *Media Effects* (pp. 333-351).
- Gilens, Martin. 1996. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60:515-541.

Entertainment

- Bryant, Jennings, and Dorina Miron. 2002. "Entertainment as Media Effect." In *Media Effects* (pp. 549-582).

5/4	New Media & Communication Technologies
------------	---

Social Change

- Van Dijk, Jan. 1999. "Introduction." and "Psychology." In *The Network Society: Social Aspects of New Media*. London: Sage (pp. 1-27, 189-219).
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28:664-683.

New Media

- Neuman, W. Russell. 2001. "The Impact of the New Media." In *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, eds. W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 299-320).
- Mundorf, Norbert, and Kenneth R. Laird. 2002. "Social and Psychological Effects of Information Technologies and Other Interactive Media." In *Media Effects* (pp. 583-602).
- Flanagan, Andrew J., and Miriam J. Metzger. 2001. "Internet Use in the Contemporary Media Environment." *Human Communication Research* 27:153-181.
- Weimann, Gabriel. 2000. "Communicating Unreality." In *Communicating Unreality: Modern Media and the Reconstruction of Reality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (pp.359-389).

Part VI – Presentations

5/11	Presentations
-------------	----------------------

- **Final Paper Due**

(Suggested) Discussion Leader Presentation Topics
--

Date	Topic	Name
2/3	Research Methods	
	Cultivation Theory	
2/10	Public Opinion	
	Spiral of Silence	
	Uses-and-Gratifications	
2/17	Cognitive Information Processing	
	Elaboration Likelihood Model	
2/24	Agenda-Setting	
	Priming	
3/2	Framing	
3/9	On-Line Model	
3/16	Motivated Information Processing	
	Cognitive Dissonance Theory	
	Hostile Media Phenomenon	
	Third-Person Effect	
3/30	Constructionist Perspective	
	The Converse/McGuire/Zaller Reception-Acceptance Model	
4/6	Mass Media & Interpersonal Communication	
	Diffusion of Innovations	
4/13	Public & Political Campaigns	
4/20	Negative Campaigns	
4/27	Health Communication	
	Sex & Violence	
	Ethnic Images	
	Entertainment	
5/4	New Media	
	Media Equation	