COMM 760 - Seminar on Political Communication - Fall 1999

Time: Th 7:00-10:00
Place: Skinner 2127

Dr. Michael F. Meffert
Office: Skinner 2118
Office Hours: Tu 2:00-3:30, Th 3:00-4:30, and by appointment
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Course Description

The seminar provides an in-depth introduction to research in the field of political communication, drawn from a wide variety of fields. The general conceptual framework follows constructionist approaches by focusing on how political messages are constructed and framed, by political elites and the media, and how they influence or are used by the public. A major portion of the seminar focuses on individual information processing and draws heavily on cognitive theories. Most of the studies covered follow a social scientific approach and are quantitative in nature.

Readings

Required
- Edelman, Murray. 1988. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Herbst, Susan. 1998. *Reading Public Opinion: How Political Actors View the Democratic Process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gamson, William. 1992. *Talking Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. 1992. *Dirty Politics: Deception, Distraction, and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Additional articles and chapters.

Recommended
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.

Requirements/Assignments

- 6 Reaction Papers   40% of grade
- 1 Research Paper   40% of grade
- Participation and Short Presentations   20% of grade

Reaction Papers
Students are expected to write 6 short reaction papers of approx. 3 pages during the semester, in weeks of their choice. The papers should offer a short, critical evaluation of (some of) the readings of a given week. They are due at noon each Thursday (that is, before the seminar) and can be submitted as hardcopy or by email. Optionally, one reaction paper might be substituted by a short book review of approx. 5 pages. The book has to be related to the course material (some suggestions are at the end of the syllabus) and must be cleared with the professor in advance.

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). The precise topic is to be determined between the student and the professor as early as possible during the semester. The goal is to write a paper of high quality (substantively and formally) that might be submitted for a convention or even a journal. A short, written proposal is due - at the latest - November 1. The completed paper will be presented and submitted on December 9. Students are encouraged but not required to submit a final draft of their paper some time before December 9 for comments and suggestions.

Participation/Short Presentations
The seminar requires an active participation of the students in class discussions as well as the occasional presentation/report of some of the assigned readings. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before each session.

Important Notice

The University of Maryland is committed to making reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities that have been documented by Disability Support Services (0126 Shoemaker Hall). If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class, please contact the instructor by September 14. Students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an exam or other assignment, to claim, at that time, a disability. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with disabilities to be treated fairly and appropriately.

Course Schedule

9/2   Introduction

9/9   Overview and Conceptual Framework (Constructionist Approaches)

- Graber, Doris. 1993. "Political Communication: Scope, Progress, Promise." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, ed. Ada W. Finifter. Washington: American Political Science Association (pp. 305-332).
- Nimmo, Dan, and David L. Swanson. 1990. "The Field of Political Communication: Beyond the Voter Persuasion Paradigm." In *New Directions in Political Communication: A Resource Book*, ed. David L. Swanson and Dan Nimmo. Newbury Park: Sage (pp. 7-45).
- Edelman, Murray. 1988. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gamson, William A., David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Theodore Sasson. 1992. "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 18:373-393.
- Altheide, David L., and Robert P. Snow. 1988. "Toward a Theory of Mediation." In *Communication Yearbook 11*, ed. James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage (pp. 194-223).

Optional
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Chapter 1 - "Introduction to Political Communication" (pp. 3-15).

9/16   Media - Journalists, Politicians, and the Public

- Cook, Timothy E. 1998. Chapter 5 - "The Political News Media." (pp. 85-115) and Chapter 6 - "The Uses of News: Theory and (Presidential) Practice." (pp. 120-140). In *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pfetsch, Barbara. 1998. "Government News Management." In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, ed. Doris Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pp. 70-93).
- Paletz, David L. 1998. "The Media and Public Policy." In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, ed. Doris Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pp. 218-237).
- Herbst, Susan. 1998. *Reading Public Opinion: How Political Actors View the Democratic Process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Larson, Stephanie G. 1999. "Public Opinion in Television Election News: Beyond Polls." *Political Communication* 16:133-145.

Optional
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Chapters 3-9 - "Mass Media and Government Institutions." (pp. 16-182).

9/23   Media - Political Coverage: Framing, Crises, and War

- 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).
- Gamson, William A., and Andre Modigliani. 1989. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 95:1-37.
- Gilens, Martin. 1996. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60:515-541.
- Entman, Robert M. 1991. "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents." *Journal of Communication* 41:6-27.
- Kaid, Lynda Lee, Roger Myrick, Cynthia Roper, Mark Hovind, and Nikos Trivoulidis. 1994. "CNN's Americanization of the Gulf War: An Analysis of Media, Technology, and Storytelling." In *The 1,000 Hour War: Communication in the Gulf*, ed. Thomas A. McCain and Leonard Shyles. Westport, CT: Greenwood (pp. 147-160).
- Shyles, Leonard, and Robert R. Fischbeck. 1994. "The Persian Gulf War Debate in the U.S. Congress on C-Span: An Analysis of Political Communication in a Global Setting." In *The 1,000 Hour War: Communication in the Gulf*, ed. T. A. McCain and Leonard Shyles. Westport, CT: Greenwood (pp. 161-187).

| 9/30 | **Public - Cognitive Information Processing: From McGuire to Cognitive Response Models** |

- 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).
- 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).
- Petty, Richard E., and Joseph R. Priester. 1994. "Mass Media Attitude Change: Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, ed. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. (pp. 91-122)
- Mondak, Jefferey J. 1993. "Source Cues and Policy Approval: The Cognitive Dynamics of Public Support for the Reagan Agenda." *American Journal of Political Science* 37:186-212.
- Zaller, John. 1993. "The Converse-McGuire Model of Attitude Change and the Gulf War Opinion Rally." *Political Communication* 10:369-388.
- Zaller, John. 1994. "Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion: New Evidence from the Gulf War." In *Taken By Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W. L. Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 186-209).

| 10/7 | **Public - Media Effects (I): Information Effects, Agenda-Setting, and Priming** |

- 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.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87:267-285.
- Klein, Darin W. 1998. "Processing Political Information: The Influence of Accurate Knowledge, Differentiation, Integration, and Attitude Upon Recall." *Communications* 23:27-41.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 76:848-858.
- Kosicki, Gerald M. 1993. "Problems and Opportunities in Agenda-Setting Research." *Journal of Communication* 43:100-127.
- Krosnick, Jon A., and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming." *American Political Science Review* 84:467-512.
- Krosnick, Jon A., and Laura A. Brannon. 1993. "The Impact of the Gulf War on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Multidimensional Effects of Political Involvement." *American Political Science Review* 87:963-975.

Optional
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Chapter 10 - "Political Communication Effects" (pp. 185-206).

10/14   Public - Media Effects (II): Framing, Biased Perceptions, and a Critical Review

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- 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.
- Park, Eunkyung, and Gerald M. Kosicki. 1995. "Presidential Support During the Iran-Contra Affair: People's Reasoning Process and Media Influence." *Communication Research* 22:207-236.
- Donsbach, Wolfgang. 1991. "Exposure to Political Content in Newspapers: The Impact of Cognitive Dissonance on Readers' Selectivity." *European Journal of Communication* 6:155-186.
- 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.
- 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.
- Sullivan, Denis G., and Roger D. Masters. 1988. "'Happy Warriors': Leaders' Facial Displays, Viewers' Emotions, and Political Support." *American Journal of Political Science* 32:345-368.
- Gitlin, Todd. 1978. "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm." *Theory and Society* 6:205-253.

Optional
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Chapters 11-14 - "Political Communication Theories and Effects." (pp. 207-260).

10/21   Public - Political Discussion

- Reardon. Kathleen K., and Everett M. Rogers. 1988. "Interpersonal Versus Mass Media Communication: A False Dichotomy." *Human Communication Research* 15:284-303.
- Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Bruce A. Williams. 1994. "Methods, Metaphors, and Media Research: The Uses of Television in Political Conversation." *Communication Research* 21:782-812.
- Mondak, Jeffery J. 1995. "Newspapers and Political Awareness." *American Journal of Political Science* 39:513-527.
- Gastil, John, and James P. Dillard. 1999. "Increasing Political Sophistication Through Public Deliberation." *Political Communication* 16:3-23.
- 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).

10/28	**Public - Media and Social Network Interactions**

- 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).
- Mondak, Jeffery J. 1995. "Media Exposure and Political Discussion in U.S. Elections." *Journal of Politics* 57:62-85.
- 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.
- Mutz, Diana C. 1992. "Mass Media and the Depoliticization of Personal Experience." *American Journal of Political Science* 36:483-508.
- Mutz, Diana C. 1994. "Contextualizing Personal Experience: The Role of Mass Media." *Journal of Politics* 56:689-714.
- Weaver, David H., Jian-Hua Zhu, and Lars Willnat. 1992. "The Bridging Function of Interpersonal Communication in Agenda-Setting." *Journalism Quarterly* 69:856-867.

11/4	**NCA convention (no class)**

11/11	**Political Campaigns (I) - Election Campaigns (Coverage, Advertising, and Debates)**

- Dalton, Russell J., Paul A. Beck, and Robert Huckfeldt. 1998. "Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election." *American Political Science Review* 92:111-126.
- Just, Marion, Ann Crigler, and Tami Buhr. 1999. "Voice, Substance, and Cynicism in Presidential Campaign Media." *Political Communication* 16:25-44.
- 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.
- Jamieson, Kathleen H. 1992. *Dirty Politics: Deception, Distraction, and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88:829-838.
- Sherr, Susan A. 1999. "Scenes from the Political Playground: An Analysis of the Symbolic Use of Children in Presidential Campaign Advertising." *Political Communication* 16:45-59.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shanto Iyengar. 1994. "Of Horseshoes and Horse Races: Experimental Studies of the Impact of Poll Results on Electoral Behavior." *Political Communication* 11:412-430.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shanto Iyengar. 1994. "Riding the Wave and Claiming Ownership Over Issues: The Joint Effects of Advertising and News Coverage in Campaigns." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58:335-357.

Optional
- Perloff, Richard M. 1998. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Chapters 15-22 - "Communication and the Presidential Election." (pp. 263-410).

| 11/18 | **Political Campaigns (II) - Election Campaigns (cont.) and Health Care Reform** |

- Holbrook, Thomas M. 1999. "Political Learning from Presidential Debates." *Political Behavior* 21:67-89.
- Zaller, John, and Mark Hunt. 1994. "The Rise and Fall of Candidate Perot: Unmediated Versus Mediated Politics - Part I." *Political Communication* 11:357-390.
- Zaller, John, and Mark Hunt. 1995. "The Rise and Fall of Candidate Perot: The Outsider Versus the Political System - Part II." *Political Communication* 12:97-123.
- Kaid, Lynda Lee, John C. Tedesco, and Julia A. Spiker. 1996. "Media Conflicts over Clinton Policies: Political Advertising and the Battle for Public Opinion." In *The Clinton Presidency: Images, Issues, and Communication Strategies*, ed. R. E. Denton and Rachel L. Holloway. Westport, CT: Praeger (pp. 103-121).
- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Joseph N. Cappella. 1998. "The Role of the Press in the Health Care Reform Debate of 1993-1994." In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, ed. Doris Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pp. 110-131).
- Holloway, Rachel L. 1996. "The Clintons and the Health Care Crisis: Opportunity Lost, Promise Unfulfilled." ." In *The Clinton Presidency: Images, Issues, and Communication Strategies*, ed. R. E. Denton and Rachel L. Holloway. Westport, CT: Praeger (pp. 159-187).
- West, Darrell M., Diane Heith and Chris Goodwin. 1996. "Harry and Louise Go to Washington: Political Advertising and Health Care Reform." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 21:35-68.

| 11/25 | **Thanksgiving (no class)** |

| 12/2 | **New Technologies/Future Developments** |

- Beniger, James R. 1987. "Personalisation of Mass Media and the Growth of Pseudo-Community." *Communication Research* 14:352-371.
- Friedland, Lewis A. 1996. "Electronic Democracy and the New Citizenship." *Media, Culture & Society* 18:185-212.
- Hacker, Kenneth L. 1996. "Missing Links in the Evolution of Electronic Democratization." *Media, Culture & Society* 18:213-232.
- Neuman, W. Russell. 1998. "The Global Impact of New Technologies." In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, ed. Doris Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pp. 238-250).
- Davis, Richard. 1999. "The Internet as Participatory Forum." In The Web of Politics: The Internet's Impact on the American Political System, Richard Davis. New York: Oxford University Press (pp. 168-186).
- Hill, Kevin A., and John E. Hughes. 1997. "Computer-Mediated Political Communication: The USENET and Political Communities." *Political Communication* 14:3-27.
- Kelley, Tina. 1999. "Candidate on the Stump Is Surely on the Web." *New York Times*, October 19, 1999.

| 12/9 | **Presentation of Papers** |

- **Final Papers due**

Suggestions for Book Reviews

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shanto Iyengar. 1995. *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*. New York: Free Press.
- Cappella, Joseph N., and Kathleen H. Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jamieson, Kathleen H. 1996. *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertisement.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Just, Marion R., Ann N. Crigler, Dean E. Alger, Timothy E. Cook, Montague Kern, and Darrell M. West. 1996. *Crosstalk: Citizens, Candidates, and the Media in a Presidential Campaign*. 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.
- Neuman, W. Russell. 1991. *The Future of the Mass Audience.* New York: Cambridge University Press.