PS 267: Political Communication
Fall 2012
Prof. Bruce Bimber
University of California, Santa Barbara
Wednesdays 1:00-3:50

Description
This seminar provides a graduate-level overview of research on political communication. It introduces students to a range of topics, from classic issues such as agenda-setting to current debates and emerging topics associated with digital media. The seminar is open to graduate students regardless of discipline or subfield, though the reading chiefly addresses political communication in the U.S.

Requirements
Use of the GauchoSpace course management system is required for this course. Students should be sure to log in before the start of class and familiarize themselves with the course.

1. Regular attendance and participation in discussion is required and contributes 30% of the grade. As part of participation, each student is expected once to provide the class with illustrations relevant to the weekly topic from the real world of political communication. This may involve identifying short video clips, or recommending films, web sites, or other political content of a non-scholarly origin that illuminates or bears in some way on the weekly topic.

2. A short analytic paper is due twice and contributes 20% of the course grade. Several discussion questions for each week’s reading will be available in advance. These questions will structure our weekly discussions and provide a focus writing the short analytic statement of about 500 words -- roughly one single-spaced page. These are due by 8pm on the evening before class (except the first week of class), via public post at GauchoSpace. They will be graded Not Pass, Pass, or Pass +. All students should read these posts before class. We will establish a schedule for these papers at the first meeting.

3. The final project is worth 50% of the seminar grade and is due Dec. 11. There are two options.

   Traditional Seminar Paper Option: Write a paper pursuing a topic or problem from the seminar in further depth, or developing one or more cross-cutting themes. The paper should advance an original theoretical claim.

   Research Preparation Option: Prepare a research design proposing a study in political communication. The design should state a well-formulated question, develop a theoretical position about the question along with testable hypotheses, describe a general methodological approach to obtaining evidence and testing hypotheses, and then discuss specific measures and statistical techniques that would be employed.

Required Book for Purchase

Reader
Required articles are available electronically on GauchoSpace. A printed version of the reader will be available from The Alternative in Isla Vista by special request to the instructor.

Articles and books labeled “Further Reading” are not required, but are intended as a guide for students interested in pursuing a topic in greater depth.
Oct. 3: Week 1 - Political Communication as a Field of Research


Oct. 10: Week 2 - Political Discussion and Deliberation


Further Reading


Oct. 17: Week 3 - Agenda-Setting, Hostile Media Effect, Third-Person Effect


Further Reading

Oct. 24: Week 4 - Framing, Media Effects of Time


**Further Reading**


**Oct. 31: Week 5 - Selective Exposure**


**Further Reading**


Nov. 7: Week 6 - The State of News & Political Commentary


Further Reading


**Nov. 14: Week 7 - Conceptualizing Digital Media in Public Life: Concepts**

Benkler, J. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Read just Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28) and then skim the rest of the book as you are interested; the pdf contains the whole volume.


**Further Reading:**


**Date tba: Week 8 - Digital Media and Choice**

Nov. 28: Week 9 - Political Communication, Activism, and Collective Action


Further Reading


Dec. 5: Week 10 - Digital Media and Authoritarian Regimes


Further Reading


