

## **PS 594PC: Political Communication**

Spring 2009  
Prof. Bruce Bimber  
UC Santa Barbara  
Wed. 1:00-3:50

### Description

This seminar provides a graduate-level overview of the study of 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 “new media.” The seminar is open to graduate students regardless of discipline or subfield, though the reading addresses political communication in the U.S.

### Requirements

1. Regular attendance and participation in discussion is required and contributes 20% of the grade. Each student will be “lead respondent” to the reading once during the quarter, a task that requires initiating the discussion.

2. Analytic responses to discussion questions for the reading are due each week and contribute 40% 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 for the short weekly writing assignments of approximately 500 words -- roughly one single-spaced page.

The weekly analyses are due by 8pm on the evening before class (except the first week of class), via posting at GauchoSpace. They will be graded Not Pass, Pass-, Pass, or Pass +.

3. The final project is worth 40% of the seminar grade and is due June 10. 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 Books for Purchase

Prior, Markus. (2007). *Post-Broadcast democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### Reader

Required articles are available electronically on the first day of class. A printed version of the reader is available from The Alternative in Isla Vista by request to the instructor. The first week’s reading will be distributed electronically before the start of class at GauchoSpace.

Articles and books labeled “Further Reading” are not required, but are intended as a guide for students interested in pursuing a topic beyond the scope of the weekly discussions.

## SCHEDULE OF READING

### **Week 1. Political Communication as a Field of Research**

Bennett, W. L., & Iyengar, S. (2008). A new era of minimal effects? The changing foundations of political communication. *Journal of Communication, 58*, 707-731.

Kinder, D. (2003). Communication and politics in the age of information. In D.O. Sears, L. Huddy, & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 357-393). New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Week 2. Political Discussion and Deliberation**

Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory, 16*, 411-426.

Delli Carpini, M. X., Cook, F. L., & Jacobs, L.R. (2004). Public deliberation, discursive participation, and citizen engagement: A review of the empirical literature. *Annual Review of Political Science, 7*, 315-44.

Gastil, J., Black, L.W., & Moscovitz, K. (2008). Ideology, attitude change, and deliberation in small face-to-face groups." *Political Communication, 25*, 23-46.

Capella, J., Price, V., & Nir, L. (2002). Argument repertoire as a reliable and valid measure of opinion quality: Electronic dialogue during campaign 2000. *Political Communication, 19*, 73-93.

Sanders, L.M. (1997). Against deliberation. *Political Theory, 25*, 347-76.

#### **Further Reading**

Habermas, J. (1962 [trans. 1989]). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: Polity.

Calhoun, C. (Ed.). (1992). *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Elster, J. (1998). *Deliberative democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Fishkin, J. (1991). *Democracy and deliberation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Price, V., Nir, L., & Cappella, J.N. (2006). Normative and informational influences in online political discussions. *Communication Theory, 16*, 47-74.

### **Week 3. Media and Public Opinion: Classic Effects**

McCombs, M., & Shaw, D.L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36*, 176-187.

Erbring, L., Goldenberg, E., & Miller, A.H. (1980). Front-page news and real-world cues: A new look at agenda-setting by the media. *American Journal of Political Science, 24*, 16-49.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*, 51-58.

Nelson, T.E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review*, 91, 567-583.

Iyengar, S., Peters, M.D., & Kinder, D.L. (1982). Experimental demonstrations of the 'not-so-minimal' consequences of television news programs. *American Political Science Review*, 76, 848-858.

Scheufele, D.A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda-setting, and priming: the evolution of three media-effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 9-20.

#### Further Reading

Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Entman, R. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Krosnick, Jon A., & Donald R. Kinder. (1990). "Altering the foundations of support for the president through priming." *American Political Science Review*, 84, 497-513.

Schaffner, Brian F. (2005). Priming gender: Campaigning on women's issues in U.S. Senate elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 803-817.

Huber, Gregory A., & John S. Lapinski. (2006). The 'race card' revisited: Assessing racial priming in policy contexts. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50, 421-440.

#### **Week 4. Current Research on Framing and its Limits**

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 99-118.

Druckman, J. N. (2004). Political preference formation: competition, deliberation, and the (ir)relevance of framing effects. *American Political Science Review*, 98, 671-686.

Slothuus, R. (2008). More than weighting cognitive importance: A dual-process model of issue framing effects. *Political Psychology*, 29, 1-28.

Lee, N-J. McLeod, D. M., & Shah, D. V. (2008). Framing policy debates: Issue dualism, journalistic frames, and opinions on controversial policy issues. *Communication Research*, 35, 695-718.

Druckman, J. N., & McDermott, R. (2008). Emotion and the framing of risky choice. *Political Behavior*, 30, 297-321.

#### Further Reading

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47, 263-291.

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 103-126.

Stanovich, K. E., & West, R. F. (2008). On the relative independence of thinking biases and cognitive ability. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 672-695.

Zhou, Y., & Moy, P. (2007). Parsing framing processes: The interplay between online public opinion and media coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 79-98.

## **Week 5. News**

Groeling, T., & Baum, M.A. (2008). Crossing the water's edge: Elite rhetoric, media coverage and the rally-around-the-flag phenomenon. *Journal of Politics*, 70, 1065-1085.

Bennett, W.L., Lawrence, R.G., & Livingston, S. (2006). None dare call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the Abu Graib scandal. *Journal of Communication*, 56, 467-485.

Althaus, S. (2003). When news norms collide, follow the lead: New evidence for press independence." *Political Communication* 20, 381-414.

Druckman, J. N., & Parkin, M (2005). The impact of media bias: How editorial slant affects voters. *Journal of Politics*, 67, 1030-1049.

Gilens, M., & Hertzman, C. (2000). "Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act." *Journal of Politics* 62, 369-386.

### **Further Reading**

Bennett, W. L. (2009). *News: The politics of illusion. 8th ed.* New York: Pearson Longman.

Martin, P.S. (2008). "The Mass Media as Sentinel: Why Bad News About Issues is Good News for Participation." *Political Communication*, 25, 180-193.

Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the U.S. *Journal of Communication*, 40: 103-125.

Patterson, T. (1993). *Out of order.* New York: Knopf.

Cook, T. (2005). *Governing with the news: The news media as a political institution, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Delli Carpini, M.X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

## **Week 6. Soft News and Infotainment**

Mutz, D. C., & Reeves, B. (2005). The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust." *American Political Science Review*, 99, 1-15.

Baum, M. (2002). Sex, lies, and war: How soft news brings foreign policy to the inattentive public. *American Political Science Review*, 96, 91-109.

Mutz, D.C. (2007). Effects of 'in-your-face' television discourse on perceptions of a legitimate opposition. *American Political Science Review*, 101, 621-635.

Baum, M. (2005). Talking the vote: Why presidential candidates hit the talk show circuit. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 213-234.

Baumgartner, J., & Morris, J. S. (2006). The Daily Show effect: Candidate evaluations, efficacy, and American youth. *American Politics Research*, 34, 341- 36.

### **Further Reading**

Jones, J. P. (2005). *Entertaining politics: new political television and culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

### **Week 7. Selective Exposure and Political Difference**

Iyengar, S., & Hahn K.S. (2009). Red media, blue media: Evidence of ideological selectivity in media use. *Journal of Communication*, 57,19-39.

Stroud, N.J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior*, 30, 341-366.

Garrett, R. Kelly. (2009). Echo chambers online?: Politically motivated reinforcement seeking. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14, 265-285.

Slater, M. (2007). Reinforcing spirals: The mutual influence of media selectivity and media effects and their impact on individual behavior and social identity. *Communication Theory*, 17, 281-303.

Mutz, D.C., & Martin, P.S. (2001). Facilitating communication across lines of political difference: The role of mass media. *American Political Science Review*, 95, 97-114.

#### **Further Reading**

Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50, 755-769.

Huckfeldt, R., Johnson, P.E., & Sprague, J. (2004). *Political disagreement: The survival of diverse opinions within communication networks*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stroud, N. J. (2007). Media effects, selective exposure, and Fahrenheit 9/11. *Political Communication*, 24, 415-432.

Sears, D. O., & Freedman, J. L. (1965). Selective exposure to information: A critical review. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31, 194-213.

Mutz D. C., & Mondak, J. J. (2006). The workplace as a context for cross-cutting political discourse. *Journal of Politics*, 68, 140-155.

Sunstein, C. 2001. *Republic.com*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### **Week 8. Media and the Structure of the Public Sphere**

Prior, M. (2007). *Post-Broadcast democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Further Reading**

Bimber, B. (2005). *Information and American democracy: technology in the evolution of political power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Westin, D. (2007). *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*. New York: Public Affairs.

## **Week 9. Overview of New Media**

Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks*. New Haven: Yale University Press. [Ch. 1: pp. 1-34.]

Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual sphere 2.0: The internet, the public sphere, and beyond. In A. Chadwick, & P. Howard (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics* (pp. 230-245). New York: Routledge.

Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & McNeal, R. S. (2008). *Digital citizenship: The Internet, society, and participation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [Ch. 1: pp. 1-19.]

Howard, P. (2006). *New media campaigns and the managed citizen*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Ch. 1, pp. 1-32.]

Drezner, D. W., & Farrell, H. (2008). The power and politics of blogs. *Public Choice*, 134, 15-30.

### **Further Reading**

Finish Benkler (2006) and Howard (2006); browse Chadwick & Howard (2009).

Surowiecki, J. (2004). *The wisdom of crowds*. New York: Anchor Books

Sunstein, C. (2006). *Infotopia*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Foot, K. A., & Schneider, S. M. (2006). *Web Campaigning*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## **Week 10. New Media and Civic Engagement**

Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & McNeal, R. S. (2008). *Digital citizenship: The Internet, society, and participation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [Ch. 3-4: pp. 47-93.]

Xenos, M., & Moy, P. (2007). Direct and differential effects of the Internet on political and civic engagement. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 704-718.

Bennett, W. L., Breunig, C., & Givens, T. (2008). Communication and political mobilization: Digital media and the organization of anti-Iraq war demonstrations in the U.S. *Political Communication*, 25, 269-289.

Bennett, W. L., & Toft, A. (2009). Identity, technology, and narratives. In A. Chadwick & P. Howard (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics* (pp. 246-260). New York: Routledge.

Bimber, B., Stohl, C., & Flanagin, A. (2009). Technological change and the shifting nature of political organization. In A. Chadwick & P. Howard (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics* (pp. 72-85). New York: Routledge.

### **Further Reading:**

Bennett, L. (2007). Changing citizenship in the digital age. In W. L. Bennett (Ed.), *Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hindman, M. (2008). *The myth of digital democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bimber, B. (2003). *Information and American democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York: Penguin.