



Department of Politics

Module Handbook

POL 2049/POC 2010

**Media, Public Opinion, and
Campaigns**

15 credits - 2009/10

Version of this handbook: January 19, 2010

Module Details:

Lecturer: Prof. Jeffrey Karp

Office Hours: Th. 10-12 and by appointment Amory 232A, ext. 3183.

Module Tutors: Georgios Xezonakis

Lectures: Tuesday, 11-12.

Tutorials: weekly from Week 3

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Module Description:

This module examines the interaction between media, public opinion, and campaigns. We will study such issues as how much the public appears to know about politics and the role the media plays in enhancing or diminishing levels of knowledge, how the media covers political campaigns and the effects this coverage has on the behaviour of office-seekers, and the implications of these interactions for democracy.

Learning Outcomes

Module-Specific Skills:

Knowledge of media, public opinion, and campaigns in the United States, Great Britain, and other advanced industrial democracies, including the structure of media and media ownership, how the media cover politics, and the influence of this coverage on the public, politicians, and political campaigns.

Discipline-Specific Skills:

Comprehension and the ability to use key concepts pertaining to the media, public opinion, and campaigns; the ability to synthesize and critique a variety of theories and arguments in the field; the ability to understand the implications of new evidence for a given theory; understanding of different methods of research in the field and their implications for findings.

Personal and Key Skills:

Independent and group work, including presentations for class discussion; spontaneous discussion and defense of arguments in class; oral and written analytical and organizational skills; writing an essay to a deadline.

Teaching Programme:

Learning and teaching methods

The module will be taught through 12 weekly lectures (starting week 1, January 19) in which we go over the topic and materials, and 7 linked tutorials involving group discussion. Tutorial questions and reading are based on lecture topics. All members of the class will be expected to contribute to discussion based on the week's reading.

Lectures: Will give students an overview of the main issues, but in order to gain a deeper understanding you should read around the lecture topics.

Seminars/Tutorials: Provide you with an opportunity to discuss a specific set of questions pertaining to the issues scheduled for discussion. All students will be expected to have prepared for the seminar/tutorial by covering some of the reading scheduled for each topic and every student should expect to contribute to the discussion. Tutorials will be run by tutors and the role of the tutor is to facilitate and guide discussion, not to provide you with all the answers.

Assessment:

ALL ASSESSED WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND MUST BE THERE BY 4.00 PM ON THE STATED DAY OR THE COMPUTER DOES NOT ACCEPT IT.

Assignments

1. 1 x 2000 word essay (40%), BART submission date, Thursday March 18, 2010. Details about the essay will be distributed in the second week.
2. Final exam – 1 hour (60%), Exams commence the week of May 10 and end June 11. You will be notified of the time and place of the final exam.

Essay Writing Guide: You can find lots of advice relating to essay writing at:

<http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/politics/undergrad/polEssayWriting.pdf>

<http://www.services.ex.ac.uk/cas/employability/askills/essay/index.htm>

You can also find other useful advice related to general study skills at:

<http://www.services.ex.ac.uk/edu/student-learning-skills/resources.shtml>

Overlap of assessed work

Students are reminded that they are not permitted to submit the same piece of work for assessment in two different modules, or substantially reproduce essay or exam answers within modules. Essays or dissertations which are found to duplicate entirely, or in part, the work which a student has already submitted for assessment will be subject to a penalty depending on an assessment of the severity of the case. In extreme cases a mark of 0 might be awarded. Students who are concerned about possible overlap in their assessed work should seek advice from their Module Leaders. Students who are resitting modules where they are required to re-submit coursework in all modules (other than the dissertation) must ensure that the coursework is new work and has not previously formed part of any assignment assessed by the Department.

Penalties for over length work

Different assessments have different word lengths specified for them; it is important that you keep to the word length specified for each assessment *at all times* on the following grounds:

- to encourage succinct and clear writing by students.
- to ensure equity between all the students doing that particular assessment.

If you are found to have exceeded the specified word limit for an assessment, you will be subject to the following penalties:

Up to 10% over length

No deduction off final mark

Between 10% and 20% over length

Deduction of 5 marks off final mark

20% or more over length

Maximum mark of 40%

Word counts

You are responsible for including an accurate word count on the cover sheet for each piece of work you submit; failure to be honest in this respect will itself be penalized under 1.1.d of the University's [cheating and plagiarism regulations](#).

The word count specified for undergraduate assessments usually excludes the footnotes and bibliography, except in those cases where departmental guidance or the module handbook makes clear that footnotes and bibliography are to be included in the word limit for that particular piece of work. Footnotes should always be used for references only;

those containing large amounts of texts will be treated as if they were part of the text. Appendices should be confined to diagrams, tables, maps, and visual images, unless departmental guidance or module handbooks explicitly allow otherwise.

Academic staff will check the declared word count on the cover sheet against the word limit specified for that assessment; where the word count exceeds the specified word limit, the appropriate penalty will be applied.

Where academic staff suspect that you have not declared the word count honestly, and that the piece of work is over the specified limit, staff will ask the School Office staff to check the word count in order to determine the appropriate penalty to be administered.

Essay marking

The following criteria will be used in assessing your essays:

1. Definition of the topic
 - Has the topic been clearly defined and directly addressed?
2. Structure of the essay
 - Does the introduction present a clear statement of the issues to be covered?
 - Does the essay have a clear structure or organisation in which a) the main points are developed logically; and b) the relevance of the material to the theme or argument is clear?
 - Is there an effective conclusion which draws together the main points?
3. Content
 - Is there evidence of adequate reading and research?
 - Has the question been answered?
 - Is the breadth of coverage adequate?
 - Are the issues and ideas analysed in sufficient depth?
 - Are arguments supported by evidence, examples, sources and quotations?
4. Analysis
 - Are the arguments logical and consistent?
 - Are opinions based on evidence and/or logic?
 - Does the essay show evidence of original or independent thought?
5. Presentation
 - Fluency and style of writing
 - Spelling, grammar, paragraphing
 - Presentation of data: effective use of figures and tables and correct use of units and quantities
 - Neatness and legibility
 - Sources: are sources acknowledged? Are references cited? Are references presented correctly?

Plagiarism

Cheating (plagiarism) is defined as any illegitimate behaviour designed to deceive those setting, administering and marking the assessment. Cheating may take various forms, including:

- 1.1 The use of unauthorized books, notes, electronic aids or other materials in an examination
- 1.2 Obtaining an examination paper ahead of its authorized release
- 1.3 Acting dishonestly in any way including the fabrication of data, whether before, during or after an examination or other assessment so as to either obtain or offer to others an unfair advantage in that examination or assessment;
- 1.4 Collusion i.e. the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing, where the owner of the work knows of the situation and both parties work towards the deceit of marker. (In plagiarism the author of the

work has not knowingly authorized the use of her or his work).

1.5 Plagiarism i.e. the act of representing another's work or idea as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing. There are three main types of plagiarism:

1.5.1 Direct copying from a book, article, fellow student's essay, student or lecturer's handout, thesis, web page or other source without proper acknowledgement.

1.5.2 Claiming individual ideas derived from a book, article, handout, thesis, web page or other source as one's own, and incorporating them into one's own work without acknowledging the source of these ideas.

1.5.3 Overly depending on the work of one or more works (as outlined in 1.5.1 above) without proper acknowledgement of the source. By, for example, constructing a piece of written work based on extracting large sections of text from another source and merely linking these together with a few of one's own sentences.

The university now provides a service, 'turnitin' that allows students to test their essays and module leaders to inspect them for evidence of plagiarism. This can be accessed through Web-CT (follow the link from the course website). Click on the folder and follow the instructions to upload your essay in Word into the system. You, and your module lecturer, will be able to view a report. The system matches the text of your essay against all the text in its databases. These are extensive although not exhaustive, but it is very likely, for example, that they contain more or less all text available on the internet on the topic in question.

All reports indicate a degree of matching of references and quotations, which is expected. However, higher levels of matching obviously indicate there is likely plagiarism. The text in question is highlighted and its source is indicated.

The system retains all text submitted to it. Submission of the same text in two different essays will therefore be detected if both are uploaded to turnitin.

How to avoid being accused of plagiarism:

In order to avoid being accused of the more inadvertent forms of plagiarism you need to ensure that you adopt the following aspects of good practice:

2.1. Adopt a good note-taking technique.

2.1.1 You need to make sure while you are reading and taking notes that you keep accurate records of the author, title, and publication details of source, including page numbers (if relevant).

2.1.2 You need to make clear in your own notes where you have copied a quote word for word from your source, so that when you come to write up your notes you know which parts are in your own words, and which are in the words of your source.

2.1.3 Similarly you need to make clear in your own notes where you have taken an idea from your source.

2.2 Accurate referencing

Make sure that you have referenced your work in accordance with the referencing guide set out in your departmental handbook; remember referencing conventions do vary between disciplines.

Plagiarism consists of any form of passing off, or attempting to pass off, the knowledge or work of others as one's own. It is a form of cheating. Examples of plagiarism include unattributed quotes from a book, magazine or article; copying from the notes or essays of others; the submission of work actually written or dictated by others; and unattributed use of other peoples' ideas. Remember, plagiarism includes information from books, newspapers, journals **and** the Internet. All work will be checked against specialist plagiarism software. You should be aware that University rules on plagiarism are strict and can result in failing the course and, at times, expulsion.

Readings

Van der Eijk, Cees and Mark N. Franklin. 2009. *Elections and Voters*. Palgrave. Available for purchase from Blackwells (Queens car park).

Other readings are listed below. Many of the journal articles and book chapters can be accessed electronically through the library website. Specific chapters from books and articles from journals to which the library does not have access are up on the course website (see above). Journals can be accessed and read online at: <http://lib.ex.ac.uk/search/s>

Some of the articles are quite technical; that is the nature of much work in this field. Do *not* ignore them on that basis. You should read them and try to understand what the authors are doing, why, and the conclusions that they draw. We will also go over how to interpret this kind of work in class.

Please keep in mind that module reading lists are only indicators of some relevant reading materials and you should browse the library shelves to find alternative sources that may give you a different perspective.

Some of the main journals relevant to this module are:

Political Communication

Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics

British Journal of Political Science

European Journal of Communication

A useful resource for conducting research is the Web of Science. This allows you to conduct searches of all the major academic journals. You can find details of the Web of Science at:

<http://www.library.ex.ac.uk/guides/essentials/wos.pdf>

If you have any further questions please consult the Library staff.

Lectures, tutorial topics, and reading list

Week 1: Introduction: Elections and the Democratic Process in Advanced Industrial Democracies (January 19)

Topics: Functions of elections, voter sophistication and ignorance, turnout paradox, meaning of elections.

Essential Reading:

Van der Eijk and Franklin. *Elections and Voters*. Chapter 1-2.

Week 2: Electoral Institutions and Electoral Outcomes (January 26)

Topics: Electoral rules, majoritarian and proportional visions, dispersed vs. concentrated power, party vs. candidate centered elections.

Essential Reading:

Van der Eijk and Franklin. *Elections and Voters*. Chapter 3, 5.

Gallagher, Michael and Paul Mitchell. "Introduction to Electoral Systems" *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. (Oxford Scholarship Online at <http://tinyurl.com/y9mfx2>).

Recommended Reading:

Webb, Paul. "Political Parties in Britain: Secular Decline or Adaptive Resilience?" in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. (Oxford Scholarship Online at <http://tinyurl.com/yevdg5u>).

Week 3: Voter Orientations (February 2)

Topics: Party identification, change and stability, accountability

Essential Reading:

Van der Eijk and Franklin. *Elections and Voters*. Chapter 4

Recommended Reading:

Abramson, Paul. 1976. "Generational Change and the Decline of Party Identification in America: 1952-1974" *American Political Science Review*. 70: 469-478.

Bartels, Larry M. 2000. Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996. *American Journal of Political Science* 44:35-50.

Tilley, James R. 2003. "Party Identification in Britain: Does Length of Time in the Electorate Affect Strength of Partisanship?" *British Journal of Political Science*, 33: 332-344.

Week 4: Media Coverage (February 9)

Topics: Objectivity and bias in the media; minimal effects, quality of media coverage of politics

Essential Reading:

Iyengar, Shanto, Helmut Norpht, and Kyu Hahn. 2004. "Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horserace Sells." *Journal of Politics* 66: 157-175.

Zaller, John. 2003. "A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen." *Political Communication* 20: 109-130.

Recommended Reading:

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Paul Waldman. 2003. *The Press Effect*, Chapter 1 (Oxford Scholarship Online at <http://tinyurl.com/yeyqz3f>)

Bennett, W. Lance. 2003. "The Burglar Alarm that Just Keeps Ringing: A Response to Zaller." *Political Communication* 20: 131-138.

Parkin, Michael. 2009. "Taking Late Night Comedy Seriously: How Candidate Appearances on Late Night Television Can Engage Viewers." *Political Research Quarterly*. <http://tinyurl.com/yavbsn6>

Week 5: The Media and Public Opinion (February 16)

Topics: Minimal effects, agenda setting, priming, and framing.

Essential Reading:

Van der Eijk and Franklin. *Elections and Voters*. Chapter 6-7.

Ansolabehere, Stephen. 2006. "The Paradox of Minimal Effects" in Brady and Johnston, *Capturing Campaign Effects*, 29-44.

Bartels, Larry. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3: 15-31.

Norris, Pippa. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies*. Ch. 1.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Paul Waldman. 2003. *The Press Effect*, Chapter 5 (Oxford Scholarship Online at <http://tinyurl.com/yeyqz3f>)

Recommended Reading:

- Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*.
- Rogers, Everett, and James Dearing. 2007. "Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has It Been, Where Is It Going?" In Doris Graber (ed.), *Media Power in Politics*.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*.
- Gavin, Neil, and David Sanders. 2003. "The Press and its Influence on British Political Attitudes under New Labour." *Political Studies* 51: 573-591.
- Druckman, James. 2003. "The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate Revisited." *Journal of Politics* 65: 559-571.

Week 6: Political Knowledge and Learning (February 23)

Topics: Political knowledge; whether and how individuals learn; individual and aggregate public opinion

Essential Reading:

- Gelman, Andrew and Gary King. 1993. "Why are American Presidential Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes are so Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23: 409-451.
- Eveland, William and D.A. Scheufle. 2000. "Connecting News Media Use with Gaps in Knowledge and Participation." *Political Communication* 17: 215-237.
- Holbrook, Thomas. 1999. "Political Learning from Presidential Debates" *Political Behavior*. 21: 67-89.

Recommended Reading:

- Converse, Phillip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter.
- Delli Carpini, Michael, and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*.
- Wlezien, Christopher, and Stuart Soroka. 2005. "Opinion-Policy Dynamics: Public Preferences and Public Expenditure in the UK." *British Journal of Political Science* 35: 665-689.
- Arceneaux, Kevin. 2006. "Do Campaigns Help Voters Learn? A Cross-National Analysis" *British Journal of Political Science*, 36: 159-173.
- Dunaway, Johanna. 2008 "Markets, Ownership, and the Quality of Campaign News Coverage." *Journal of Politics* 70: 1193-1202.

Week 7: Campaign Finance (March 2)

Topics: Regulating contributions and spending in campaigns, public vs. private sources, reform, free broadcasting.

Essential Reading:

- Jacobson, Gary C. 2006. "Measuring Campaign Spending Effects in U.S. House Elections" in Brady and Johnston, *Capturing Campaign Effects*. 199-220.
- Haynes et al. 1977. "The Role of Campaign Spending in Presidential Nomination Campaigns" *Journal of Politics* 59: 213-225.
- Colman, John J. 2001. "The Distribution of Campaign Spending Benefits Across Groups" *Journal of Politics*, 63:916-934.
- Wlezien, Christopher. 1995. "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 981-1000.

Recommended Reading:

- Farrell, David M. and Paul Webb. 2000. "Political Parties as Campaign Organizations" in *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. pp. 102-128.

Week 8: Advertising (March 9)

Topics: Trends in political advertising; differences between the US, the UK, and other countries; the controversy about negativity in advertising

Essential Reading:

- Zhao, Xinsuhu, and Steven Chaffee. 1995. "Campaign Advertisements versus Television News as Sources of Political Issue Information." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 59: 41-65.
- Hodess, Robin, John Tedesco, and Lynda Lee Kaid. 2000. "British Party Election Broadcasts: A Comparison of 1992 and 1997." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 5: 55-70.
- Johnston, Ron, and Charles Pattie. 2002. "Assessing the Television Campaign: The Impact of Party Election Broadcasting on Voters' Opinions in the 1997 British General Election." *Political Communication* 19: 333-358
- Sanders, David, and Pippa Norris. 2005. "The Impact of Political Advertising in the 2001 U.K. General Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 525-536.

Recommended Reading:

- Ansolabehere, Stephen and Shanto Iyengar. 1995. *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate.*
- Geer, John. 2006. *In Defense of Negativity.*
- Brader, Ted. 2006. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds.*
- Diamond, Edwin, and Stephen Bates. 1992. *The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television.*
- Haddock, Geoffrey, and Mark Zanna. 1997. "Impact of Negative Advertising on Evaluations of Political Candidates: The 1993 Canadian Federal Election." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 19: 205-223.
- Valentino, Nicholas, Vincent Hutchings, and Ismail White. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96: 75-90.

Week 9: Campaigns and Political Participation (March 16)

Topics: Trends in turnout; causes of turnout; media and campaign effects on turnout

Essential Reading:

- Stevens, Daniel, John Sullivan, Barbara Allen, and Dean Alger. 2008. "What's Good for the Goose is Bad for the Gander, Negative Political Advertising, Partisanship and Turnout." *Journal of Politics*. 70:527-541.
- Kim Fridkin Kahn and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. "Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship between Negativity and Participation" *The American Political Science Review*, 93: 877-889.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. and Craig Leonard Briens. 1999. Negative Campaign Advertising: Demobilizer or Mobilizer? *The American Political Science Review*, 93: 891-899.
- Blais, Andre. 2007. "Turnout in Elections." In Russell Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior.*

Recommended Reading:

- Sanders, David, Harold Clarke, Marianne Stewart, and Paul Whiteley. 2005. "The 2005 General Election in Britain." Report for the Electoral Commission (online at <http://www.essex.ac.uk/bes/Papers/ec%20report%20final.pdf>).
- Norris et al. 1999. *On Message*, Chapter 7.
- Banducci, Susan A. and Jeffrey A. Karp. 2003. "How Elections Change the Way Citizens View the Political System: Campaigns, Media Effects, and Electoral Outcomes in Comparative Perspective" *British Journal of Political Science*. Volume 33: 443-467.

Week 10: Issues, the Economy, and Character in Campaigns (March 23)

Topics: Forecasting elections, personality in politics; valence issues; the dynamics of campaigns; the media's role in bringing government performance, issues, character etc. to the fore

Essential Reading:

- Lewis-Beck, Michael and Charles Tien. 2008. "The Job of President and the Jobs Model Forecast: Obama for '08?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41: 687-690.
- Johnston, Richard, Michael Hagen, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2004. *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics*, Chapters 5, 6.
- Gilens, Martin, Lynn Vavreck, and Martin Cohen. 2007. "The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952-2000." *Journal of Politics* 69: 1160-1175.
- King, Anthony. 2002. "Do Leaders' Personalities Really Matter?" in *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections*. (Oxford Scholarship Online at <http://tinyurl.com/yevdg5u>).
- Norris, Pippa. 2006. "Did the Media Matter? Agenda-Setting, Persuasion, and Mobilization Effects in the British General Election Campaign." *British Politics* 1: 1-27.

Recommended Reading:

- Bishin, Benjamin, Daniel Stevens, and Christian Wilson. 2006. "Character Counts? Honesty and Fairness in Election 2000." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70: 235-248.
- Miller, Joanne, and Jon 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.
- Newton, Kenneth, and Malcolm Brynin. 2001. "The National Press and Party Voting in the UK." *Political Studies* 49: 265-284.
- Wilkin, Sam, Brandon Haller, and Helmut Norpoth. 1997. "From Argentina to Zambia: A World-Wide Test of Economic Voting." *Electoral Studies* 16: 301-316.

March 18: Essays due at 4pm.

Week 11: Summing Up: Assessing Electoral Democracy (March 30)

Topics: Representing citizen preferences, Do campaigns matter? Accountability.

Essential Reading:

Van der Eijk and Franklin. *Elections and Voters*. Chapter 8.

Recommended Reading:

- Brants, Kees. 1998. "Who's Afraid of Infotainment?" *European Journal of Communication* 13: 315-335.
- Brants, Kees. 1999. "A Rejoinder to Jay G. Blumler" *European Journal of Communication* 14: 411-415.
- Mazzoleni, Gianpietro, and Winfried Schulz. 1999. "'Mediatization' of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?" *Political Communication* 16: 247-261.