**MEJO 490**

**The Washington Experience**

Fall 2019

Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:15pm

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**Office Hours**: 8:00-9:00am Monday and Wednesday

The Washington Experience is an intensive, semester long course that will introduce students to political communication and D.C.-based organizations and individuals in the UNC School of Media and Journalism’s vast alumni and friend network. Political communication spans everything from political journalism and public relations to advertising and marketing. And, it takes place on social media and television, as well as the webpages of new journalism startups and print pages of newspapers. The hallmark of the class is a trip to Washington D.C. over fall break where students will visit various social media firms, journalism, party, and advocacy organizations, political consultancies, and legislative offices. At the end of the course, students will have a deep understanding of political communication across various fields and platforms, as well as a network of contacts who can help them launch their careers.

**Accreditation**

The School of Media and Journalism’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here:

http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps Students taking this course will be able to think critically, creatively, and independently, learn how to conduct research and evaluate information, write correctly and clearly, and critically evaluate their own work and that of others.

**Readings**

Readings for the class will be made available on Sakai. In addition, there is one required book for the class:

Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 presidential campaign and the battle for the meaning of America*. Princeton University Press, 2018.

Additional readings available on Sakai

**Grades**

Participation: 20%

Reading Comments: 20%

Final Class Presentations and Paper: 60%

You are assigned letter grades for participation, reading comments, and your class presentations and papers.

A 93-100%

A- 90-92%

B+ 87-89%

B 83-86%

B- 80-82%

C+ 77-79%

C 73-76%

C- 70-72%

D+ 67-69%

D 64-66%

F Below 64%

**Course Requirements**

*Participation*

This course is premised on active discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss them. There is a substantial reading load in the course, but it comes in lieu of other assignments. In addition, you are expected to be following the daily political media of whatever stripe. This course is also premised on a Fall Break trip marked by numerous site visits. You are required to participate in all of these, and be attentive, respectful, and engaged in all class activities.

*Each week*, you are responsible for posting *one* response to the readings on the Sakai forum. This should be in the range of about 500 words – so a substantial comment. These comments are due by 10pm the night before class.

*Final Group Presentations and Papers*

Career, Industry, or Organizational Analysis

For your final class project, you will work in groups or solo to do background research on a career, industry, or even an organization in Washington D.C.. This will be an *exhaustive* background look at how this career, industry, or organization has developed over time, a comprehensive overview of the services and products they provide in the political space, the career trajectories of its practitioners gleaned through publicly available sources such as *LinkedIn*, the competitors in this space and their market shares, and their projected future growth.

This is the perfect opportunity to pick a career that, as a group or on your own, you would like to pursue – such as communications directors, political journalists, social media directors, or campaign managers. Or, to choose an industry that you might want to work in, such as publishing, political consulting, think tanks, or advocacy organizations. Or, to provide an in-depth profile of an organization you might want to work for one day, such as the Republican National Committee, digital consulting firms such as Blue State Digital, or advocacy organizations such as the National Rifle Association or Planned Parenthood.

The analysis should be comprehensive. There are a number of academic, market research, and journalistic resources that will help you provide a detailed history and overview of the career, industry, or organization of your choosing. The best projects will be comprehensive and detailed, and provide histories and overview descriptive statics on various aspects of the field, in addition to rich description about the type of work that this career, industry, or organization is involved in and its role in Washington D.C. and democracy more broadly. Additional research, such as interviews with practitioners, is welcome but not required. It might be a great way to make contacts for your future job search.

On Monday, November 18th, you will present your in-progress ideas to the class. During our scheduled final exam time you will present your final project to the class and hand in your final paper.

**Resources**

Most of the readings for the class are on Sakai. As students, you have access to all of these resources. In addition, students should pay particular attention to sites that bridge social science and journalism. Here are a few of my favorites:

538: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/>

The Washington Post’s *The Monkey Cage:* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/>

Vox’s The Mischiefs of Faction: <http://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction>

Axios: <https://www.axios.com/>

In addition, there are all sorts of amazing podcasts right now that bring social science perspectives to analysis of electoral politics, or that offer insider perspectives on the political process. If you have a favorite, share it!

**Special Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at https://accessibility.unc.edu/

**Honor Code:**

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (http://honor.unc.edu). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Seeking Help:**

If you need individual assistance, it’s your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

**Diversity**:

The University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Laptops**

It pains me to do this, perhaps because I believe we have agency over our psychological desires, but the persistent distraction of social media is just too much to bear. People’s heads buried in their laptops simply diminishes classroom discussion, and is particularly rude during class presentations and guest speakers. Because of this, we all have to digital detox a bit, so no laptops or mobile phones in class. Don’t worry, we will consume plenty of media in class.

**Course Schedule**

**Part One: Democracy, Communication, and Social Identity**

*Wednesday, August 21st*

Introduction to the course

*Monday, August 26th*

Smith, Rogers M. 1993. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America." American Political Science Review 87 (September): 549-66

*Wednesday, August 28th*

No class

*Monday, September 2nd*

Labor Day Holiday

*Wednesday, September 4th*

Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

*Monday, September 9th*

Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 6 and 7

*Wednesday, September 11th*

Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 8 and 9

**Part Two: The Legacy Press and the Networked Public Sphere**

*Monday, September 16th*

Jonathan Ladd, *Why Americans Hate the News Media,* Chapters 1 and 3 (Available on Sakai)

*Wednesday, September 18th*

Jonathan Ladd, *Why Americans Hate the News Media*, Chapters 4 and 5

*Monday, September 23rd*

Skim the Reuters 2019 Institute Digital News Report: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>

*Wednesday, September 25th*

Freelon, Deen, et al. "How Black Twitter and other social media communities interact with mainstream news." (2018).

*Monday, September 30th*

Benkler, Yochai, Robert Faris, Hal Roberts, and Ethan Zuckerman. "Study: Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda." *Columbia Journalism Review* 1, no. 4.1 (2017): 7.

*Wednesday, October 2nd*

Marwick, Alice, and Rebecca Lewis. "Media manipulation and disinformation online." *Data & Society Research Institute* (2017).

**Part Three: Contemporary Campaigns**

*Monday, October 7th*

Kreiss, Daniel. *Prototype Politics*, Chapter 1 (available on Sakai)

*Wednesday, October 9th*

Kreiss, Daniel, Regina G. Lawrence, and Shannon C. McGregor. "In their own words: Political practitioner accounts of candidates, audiences, affordances, genres, and timing in strategic social media use." *Political communication* 35.1 (2018): 8-31.

*Monday, October 14th-Friday, October 18th*

*Fall Break in DC*

*Monday, October 21st*

Kreiss, Daniel, and Kirsten Adams. "Navigating the brogrammers and the boys’ club: Women’s representation and experiences in political technology." *New Media & Society* (2019): 1461444819835573.

*Wednesday, October 23rd*

Kreiss, D., & McGregor, S. C. (2018). Technology firms shape political communication: The work of Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, and Google with campaigns during the 2016 US presidential cycle. *Political Communication*, *35*(2), 155-177.

*Monday, October 28th*

Baldwin-Philippi, Jessica. "The myths of data-driven campaigning." *Political Communication* 34.4 (2017): 627-633.

*Wednesday, October30th*

Kim, Young Mie, et al. "The stealth media? Groups and targets behind divisive issue campaigns on Facebook." *Political Communication* 35.4 (2018): 515-541.

*Monday, November4th*

Fowler, Erika Franklin, Travis N. Ridout, and Michael M. Franz. "Political advertising in 2016: The presidential election as outlier?." *The Forum*. Vol. 14. No. 4. De Gruyter, 2016.

*Monday, November 11th*

Howard, P. N., Woolley, S., & Calo, R. (2018). Algorithms, bots, and political communication in the US 2016 election: The challenge of automated political communication for election law and administration. *Journal of information technology & politics*, *15*(2), 81-93.

*Wednesday, November 6th*

Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2018). The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, *112*(1), 148-166.

**Part Four: Movements, Civil Society, and Citizens**

*Wednesday, November 13th*

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic.* Available online at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

*Monday, November 18th*

Gest, Justin. "The white working-class minority: a counter-narrative." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4, no. 1 (2016): 126-143.

Final Paper In-progress Presentations

*Wednesday, November20th*

Prasad, Monica, Andrew J. Perrin, Kieran Bezila, Steve G. Hoffman, Kate Kindleberger, Kim Manturuk, Ashleigh Smith Powers, and Andrew R. Payton. "The undeserving rich: “moral values” and the white working class." In *Sociological Forum*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 225-253. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.

*Monday, November 25th*

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. "Putting inequality in its place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 3 (2012): 517-532.

*Monday, December 2nd*

Hart, Roderick P. "The People’s Voice During the 2016 Presidential Campaign." *American Behavioral Scientist* (2017): 0002764217707622.

*Wednesday, December 4th*

Wells, Chris, Katherine J. Cramer, Michael W. Wagner, German Alvarez, Lewis A. Friedland, Dhavan V. Shah, Leticia Bode, Stephanie Edgerly, Itay Gabay, and Charles Franklin. "When We Stop Talking Politics: The Maintenance and Closing of Conversation in Contentious Times." *Journal of Communication* 67, no. 1 (2017): 131-157.

*Friday, December 6th, 4pm*

Final presentations and papers due