

A History of the Study of Political Communication

JOMC 890

Tuesday, 9:00-11:45am, Carroll 338

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Hours: 12pm-1pm, Tuesday
and by appointment

Overview

This course will engage students in an interdisciplinary and mixed methods set of readings that can broadly be considered to comprise the history of political communication research. The goal of this course is to move beyond the current theoretical and methodological paradigms of the field, and consider historically how scholars have studied the organization, production, and effects of political communication and their democratic consequences. In addition, we will explore new frontiers of research that expand our conception and understanding of political communication from scholars of many other disciplines.

This course is designed to make an argument about what the study of political communication was, how it has changed, and what it could be. As such, it is not a formal intellectual history, although we will encounter readings that do just that. The readings in this course are by no means comprehensive of political communication research and its many subfields. Even more, many scholars we will read may not recognize themselves as 'political communication' researchers, even though that describes their objects of analyses. For the purposes of this course, the borders around 'political communication' are deliberately ill-defined - at its broadest, it is the study of the institutional (campaigns, legislative bodies, the presidency, the press, civil society organizations) and extra-institutional (movements) actors, events, processes, and technologies that constitute democratic life.

In the end, the readings for this course are meant to be thought provoking and push the boundaries of what we consider to be 'political communication.' Even more, these works represent various strands of empirical research and social thought over the last century, showing how much of communication and media research across an interdisciplinary set of fields was always oriented towards normative questions of democracy.

Readings

There are nine required books for this class, in addition to book and journal readings that will be available on Sakai.

Calhoun, Craig J., ed. *Habermas and the public sphere*. MIT press, 1992.

Chadwick, Andrew. *The hybrid media system*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Eliasoph, Nina. *Avoiding politics: How Americans produce apathy in everyday life*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Entman, Robert M. *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Herbst, Susan. *Reading public opinion: How political actors view the democratic process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Peters, John Durham, and Peter Simonson, eds. *Mass communication and American social thought: Key texts, 1919-1968*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.

Prior, Markus. *Post-broadcast democracy: How media choice increases inequality in political involvement and polarizes elections*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Schudson, Michael. *The good citizen*. Basic Books, 1998.

Turner, Fred. *The democratic surround: Multi media and American liberalism from World War II to the psychedelic 60s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Grades

Graduate grades are H, P, L, F. I determine your grade by active participation in class, the quality of your assignments, and your work in relation to others.

The following is a general description of graduate grades:

- H means a truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments.
- P is a solid performance overall in the class and on assignments.
- L is a performance in the class and on assignments that is below the acceptable level for graduate students. It means the student does not understand the course material very well, does not have a grasp of what is required in this area at the graduate level, is not participating in the class, is not handing in assignments on time, or is not participating in research basics or in-class exercises.
- F is failing.

Grading Percentages

Participation: 20%

Assignments: 30%

Final Paper: 50%

Course Requirements

Participation

This course is a seminar, and as such it is premised on active discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss them. Critical interpretations of the literature encountered in the course are particularly valued.

Sakai Discussion

You are responsible for posting a long-form discussion comment (about 500 words) each week about the readings on the course Sakai forum. These comments should be reasoned and developed starting points for group discussion, and they should end with the posing of at least one question that we will take up in class. You are responsible for reading the comments of your peers in advance of class.

Assignments

“Opening” a Text for Class Discussion: Due Date TBA

At some point in the course you will “open” a text for class discussion. This entails a formal presentation that 1) summarizes the key arguments of the text, 2) details the location of the work in terms of the field of communication and related disciplines, 3) presents and assesses the theoretical and methodological approach(es) of the author(s), 4) and commences class discussion. Your presentation should focus on the relationship between theory, method, and evidence. You are also responsible for facilitating the discussion of the text.

Term Paper

In the hope that this class will further your research, you can pursue one of two options for your class paper.

Option 1: Research Project

Students pursuing this option will conduct original political communication research during the course of the semester and write a paper based on it. The goal is that this could potentially become a journal article or even a chapter of a thesis or dissertation. You may choose any methodological approach. Students pursuing this option must also complete the Collaborative IRB Certification training online (if you have not already) at: <https://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/researchers/training/index.htm>. If you planning on carrying this work outside of class, you should also complete an IRB proposal (I am happy to guide you in this).

Option 2: Your Choice

I am open to other approaches to the final paper given the diversity of student interest in the class. If you want to pursue a different project, submit your plan in writing.

For both options, you will present your preliminary work midway through the semester and deliver a 15 minute presentation of your final paper to the class during the scheduled final exam period.

The Honor Code

The Honor Code is in effect at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. If you have questions about the Honor Code, please see me or read more at <http://honor.unc.edu>

Course Schedule

January 14th

Course Overview

These readings will be discussed in class and must be read in advance

W. Lance Bennett and Shanto Iyengar. 2008. "A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication." *Journal of Communication* 58 (4): 707–731.

David Karpf, Daniel Kreiss, and Rasmus Nielsen. 2013. "A New Era of Field Research in Political Communication?" Paper presented at the 2013 International Communication Association Annual Conference and forthcoming; ICA 2013 Theme Book (in press). Available online at: http://qualpolicomm.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/karpfkreissnielsen_newerapolicomm.pdf

Recommended:

Holbert, R. L, K. Garrett, & L. S. Gleason. (2010). "A New Era of Minimal Effects? A Response to Bennett and Iyengar." *Journal of Communication* 60 (2010) 15–34.

Neuman, W. Russell, and Lauren Guggenheim. "The Evolution of Media Effects Theory: A Six-Stage Model of Cumulative Research." *Communication Theory* 21, no. 2 (2011): 169-196.

January 21st

The Foundational Debate

Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*

Available at: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER2/Lippman/cover.html>

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*

Available at: <http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780271058320>

January 28th

The Field Before it Was a Field

Peters and Simonson, *Introduction and Part One*

Recommended:

Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee. 1954. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lazarsfeld, Paul and Morris Rosenberg (eds.). (1955). *The Language of Social Research*. The Free Press: New York.

February 4th

The Field Before it Was a Field

Peters and Simonson, *Part Two*

Recommended:

Lang, Kurt and Gladys Engel Lang. *Television and Politics*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. (1968 [1944]). *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in an Election Campaign*. (3rd Edition). New York: Columbia University Press.

February 11th

The Field Before it was a Field

Peters and Simonson, *Part Three*

Recommended:

Lang, Gladys Engel and Kurt Lang. (1983). *The Battle for Public Opinion: The President, the Press, and the Polls During Watergate*. New York: Columbia University Press.

February 18th

The Founding and Foundations of the Current Field

Bennett, W. Lance, and Murray Edelman. "Toward a new political narrative." *Journal of communication* 35, no. 4 (1985): 156-171.

Iyengar, S. M.D. Peters, and D.R. Kinder. (1982). "Experimental Demonstrations of the

of the “Not-So-Minimal” Consequences of Television News Programs.” *The American Political Science Review*. 74(4): 848-858.

Iyengar, S., Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., & Krosnick, J. A. (1984). “The evening news and presidential evaluations.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 778-787.

Iyengar, S., & Behr, R. "Television news, real-world cues, and changes in the public agenda", *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 49, 1985, 38-57.

Kaid, Lynda Lee, and Keith R. Sanders. "Political Television Commercials An Experimental Study of Type and Length." *Communication Research* 5, no. 1 (1978): 57-70.

Nimmo, Dan. "Political image makers and the mass media." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 427, no. 1 (1976): 33-44.

Nimmo, Dan. "Mass communication and politics." In *The Handbook of political behavior*, pp. 241-288. Springer US, 1981.

Tversky, Amos, D. Kahneman, and Rational Choice. "The framing of decisions." *Science* 211 (1981): 453-458.

Recommended

Iyengar, Shanto, and Adam F. Simon. "New perspectives and evidence on political communication and campaign effects." *Annual review of psychology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 149-169.

Patterson, Thomas E. *Out of order*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

Zaller, John, ed. *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge university press, 1992.

February 25th

Contemporary Perspectives on Media Choice

Prior, Post-Broadcast Democracy

Recommended:

Huckfeldt, Robert, Paul E. Johnson, and John Sprague. *Political disagreement: The survival of diverse opinions within communication networks*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald Kinder. (2010, [1987]). *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Norris, Pippa. *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies*. Cambridge, 2000.

Stroud, Natalie Jomini. *Niche news: The politics of news choice*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

March 4th

Contemporary Perspectives on Framing and Priming

Entman, *Projections of Power*

Recommended:

Althaus, Scott L. and Young Mie Kim. 2006. "Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments: Reassessing the Impact of News Discourse on Presidential Approval." *Journal of Politics* 68 (4): 960-976.

Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *The American Political Science Review* (87) 2: 267-285.

Bennett, W. Lance, and Robert M. Entman, eds. *Mediated politics: Communication in the future of democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Bucy, E. Page, and R. Lance Holbert, eds. (2011). *Sourcebook for Political Communication Research: Methods, Measures, and Analytical Techniques*. New York: Routledge.

Erbring, Lutz, Edie N. Goldenberg, and Arthur H. Miller. 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, Robert M. "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51-58.

Gamson, William A., David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Theodore Sasson. "Media images and the social construction of reality." *Annual review of sociology* (1992): 373-393.

Gamson, William A., and Gadi Wolfsfeld. "Movements and media as interacting systems." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1993): 114-125.

Graber, Doris A. 1988. *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide* 2nd ed. New York: Longman.

Mendelberg, Tali. *The race card: Campaign strategy, implicit messages and the norm of equality*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Scheufele, Dietram A. "Framing as a theory of media effects." *Journal of communication* 49, no. 1 (1999): 103-122.

March 11th

The Public Sphere

Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*

Skim: Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
Available at: http://pages.uoregon.edu/koopman/courses_readings/phil123-net/publicness/habermas_structural_trans_pub_sphere.pdf

Recommended:

Bohman, James. *Public deliberation: pluralism, complexity and democracy*. The MIT press, 2000.

Chouliaraki, Lilie, and Norman Fairclough. *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Dahlgren, Peter. *Television and the public sphere: Citizenship, democracy and the media*. Vol. 10. Sage, 1995.

Delli Carpini, Michael X., Fay Lomax Cook, and Lawrence R. Jacobs. "Public Deliberation, Discursive Participation, and Citizen Engagement: A Review of the Empirical Literature." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 315-44.

Gastil, John, Laura W. Black, and Kara Moscovitz. 2008. "Ideology, Attitude Change, and Deliberation in Small Face-to-Face Groups." *Political Communication* 25 (1): 23-46.

Huckfeldt, Robert. 2007. "Unanimity, Discord and the Communication of Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (4): 978-995

Melucci, Alberto. *Challenging codes: Collective action in the information age*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Mutz, Diana C., and Paul S. Martin. 2001. "Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of Mass Media." *American Political Science Review* 95 (1) 97-114.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. *The rational public: Fifty years of trends in Americans' policy preferences*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Sanders, Lynn M. "Against deliberation." *Political theory* 25, no. 3 (1997): 347-376.

Schudson, Michael. 1997. "Why Conversation is Not the Soul of Democracy." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. 14: 297-309

Taylor, Charles. *Modern social imaginaries*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press, 1995.

Warner, Michael. "Publics and counterpublics." *Public culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49-90.

Wessler, Hartmut. 2008. "Investigating Deliberativeness Comparatively." *Political Communication* 25 (1): 1-22.

March 25th

Cultural Approaches to Political Communication

Schudson, *The Good Citizen*

Recommended:

Fenno, Richard F. *Home style: House members in their districts*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978.

Hart, Roderick P. *Campaign talk: Why elections are good for us*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

March 27th

Fred Turner will be visiting UNC to discuss his new book

Turner, *The Democratic Surround*

April 1st

The Qualitative Sociological Tradition of Research on Civil Society and Movements

Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics*

Recommended:

Alexander, Jeffrey C. *The civil sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Cultural pragmatics: Social performance between ritual and strategy." *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (2004): 527-573.

Benson, Rodney. "Bringing the sociology of media back in." *Political Communication*, 21, no. 3 (2004): 275-292.

Berry, Jeffrey M., and Sarah Sobieraj. *The Outrage Industry: Political Opinion Media and the New Incivility*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Gamson, William A. *Talking politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Gitlin, Todd. (1978). "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm." *Theory and Society* 6(2): 205-253.

Katz, Elihu. "Why sociology abandoned communication." *The American Sociologist* 40, no. 3 (2009): 167-174.

Lee, Taeku. 2002. *Mobilizing Public Opinion: Black Insurgency and Racial Attitudes in the Civil Rights Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Polletta, Francesca. *Freedom is an endless meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Pooley, Jefferson, and Elihu Katz. "Further Notes on Why American Sociology Abandoned Mass Communication Research." *Journal of Communication* 58, no. 4 (2008): 767-786.

Sobieraj, Sarah. *Soundbitten: The perils of media-centered political activism*. NYU Press, 2011.

April 8th

The Qualitative Political Science Tradition Of Research on Public Opinion

Herbst, *Reading Public Opinion*

Recommended:

Edelman, Murray Jacob. *The symbolic uses of politics*. University of Illinois Press, 1985.

Edelman, Murray. *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Farr, James, John S. Dryzek, and Stephen T. Leonard, eds. (1995). *Political Science in History: Research Programs and Political Traditions*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gaventa, John. *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*. University of Illinois Press, 1982.

Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, and Daron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment" *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 135-150

Gershon, Sarah Allen. (2012). "Press Secretaries, Journalists, and Editors: Shaping Local Congressional News Coverage." *Political Communication* 29, no. 2 (2012): 160- 183.

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.

Mutz, Diana. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. (2004) *Talking About Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

April 15th

Science and Technology Studies and Political Communication

Marres, *Material Participation*

Recommended

Anderson, C. W., and Daniel Kreiss. "Black Boxes as Capacities for and Constraints on Action: Electoral Politics, Journalism, and Devices of Representation." *Qualitative Sociology* 36, no. 4 (2013): 365-382.

Barry, Andrew. *Political machines: Governing a technological society*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001.

Bowker, Geoffrey C., and Susan Leigh Star. *Sorting things out: Classification and its consequences*. The MIT Press, 2000.

Callon, Michel. *Acting in an uncertain world*. MIT Press, 2009.

Carroll, Patrick. *Science, culture, and modern state formation*. Univ of California Press, 2006.

Latour, Bruno, and Peter Weibel. "Making things public: atmospheres of democracy." (2005).

April 22nd

Technological Change, Media Practice, and Political Communication

Chadwick, *The Hybrid Media System*

Recommended

Howard, P. N. (2006). *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Karpf, David. *The MoveOn effect: The unexpected transformation of American political advocacy*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kreiss, Daniel. *Taking our country back: The crafting of networked politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis. *Ground wars: Personalized communication in political campaigns*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Vaccari, Cristian. *Digital politics in Western democracies: a comparative study*. JHU Press, 2013.

Week of April 27th

Final Paper Presentations