

**Media And Politics  
Spring, 2006**

**Instructor:** Geoff Peterson  
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**Texts:**

-West, Air Wars, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
-Graber, Mass Media & American Politics. (rent)

**Course Objectives:** The objective of this course is to take an in-depth look at the relationship between the media, the political system, and the public at large. We will look at how the news media covers politics, the symbiotic relationship between the press and politicians, and political advertising. This course is designed to be an upper-level course—students are expected to do the reading and come to class ready to discuss the readings.

**Grading:** Grading will be based on the following:

In-Class Quizzes	15%
In-Class Discussion	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Major Research Paper	30%

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will be given on the assigned readings throughout the semester. All quizzes will be unannounced and cannot be made up unless you have a university-excused absence. In the event of an excused absence, a make-up quiz covering alternate material will be provided.

**Midterm and Final Examinations:** The exams will be in-class essay examinations. The midterm will cover all of the material in the class through the first midterm, and the final will cover the material from the midterm through the end of the semester. The tentative examination dates are:

**Midterm: March 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Final Exam: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM**

**Major Research Paper:** Each student will write a research paper by the end of the semester. The paper should be *at least* 15 pages long, and include a full bibliography. You are expected to use a minimum of ten outside sources, including books, journal articles, and other materials. Although the topic is open, you will need to settle on a topic by February 10<sup>th</sup>. You have the option of submitting a rough draft for feedback. The rough draft is due **NO LATER** than April 12<sup>th</sup>, and the final paper is due on May 12<sup>th</sup>. We will discuss possible paper topics in class.

**Students With Disabilities:** Any student who has a disability that will in any way impede his or her completion of the course needs to speak to me as soon as possible about alternative arrangements. All possible arrangements will be made to accommodate students in need of assistance.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** Do it and you run the risk of failing. This should seem obvious, but it must be made clear--if you are caught cheating, every remedy made available to the instructors on this campus will be pursued. Cheating is defined as attempting to improve your grade through any method considered unethical by the university, including copying another student's test, bringing crib sheets for exams, writing notes on your hands or on the brim of your baseball cap, etc.

Plagiarism is defined as claiming any other author's intellectual work as your own. This can include copying parts of another written work and not giving the original author credit for it; using summaries of work written by others and claiming it as your own, etc. Plagiarism is NOT limited to copying another author's work word-for-word. If you use the author's IDEAS without giving the author credit for them, you are just as guilty as if you had Xeroxed the statements and put yourself down as author.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class, but attendance will not be taken on a regular basis.. Be warned, however, that failure to attend will result in missed quizzes and in-class assignments. In addition, a substantial portion of the exams will be based on material covered ONLY in lecture. Consistent failure to attend will lower your grade dramatically. You are responsible for ALL information covered in lecture, including changes in the reading assignments, changes in test dates, and in-class homework assignments. I will not make my lecture notes available on-line nor will I e-mail them to students.

### ***Grade Distribution***

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	92.0%-100.0%%	C-	70.0%-71.9%
A-	90.0%-91.9%	D+	68.0%-69.9%
B+	88.0%-89.9%	D	62.0%-67.9%
B	82.0%-87.9%	D-	60.0%-61.9%
B-	80.0%-81.9%	F	0.0%-59.9%
C+	78.0%-79.9%		
C	72.0%-77.9%		

The instructor reserves the right to alter the grade distribution as needed. Such adjustments will only be made to the benefit of the students. These percentages are provided to you so that you may generate an accurate assessment of your progress in the course. These percentages are not negotiable and will never be altered for the benefit of a single student. Any and all changes to the grade distribution will be applied to everyone in the course.

## Reading Schedule

**Please Note: You are expected to have the materials finished by the date listed.**

**All readings are listed by chapter number unless otherwise indicated. Additional readings are on reserve at the library and will be announced in class.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1/23	Introductions	Graber 1
1/25-2/1	Framing and Priming Theories	Reserve: Iyengar, Capella & Jamieson, Iyengar & Simon, West 7
2/3-2/10	Agenda-Setting Theory	Reserve: Jamieson & Waldman, West 6
2/13-2/17	Issues Of Ownership	Graber 2-3
2/20-2/24	Roles of Reporters & Press	Graber 4
2/27-3/3	How Reporters Report	Graber 5
3/6-3/10	Media and Cynicism	Graber 7
3/13-3/15	Media as Policymakers	Graber 6
<b>3/17</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	
3/27-3/29	Intro to Political Advertising	West 1
3/31	Using Advertising	West 2, 4
4/32-4/12	Analysis of Political Advertising	West 3,5
4/19-4/24	Fact or Fiction?	West 8
4/26-5/1	The Sound Bite	TBA
5/3-5/8	Who Is Using Whom?	Reserve: Graber, McQuail & Norris, Edwards & Wood
5/10-5/12	New Media and Conclusions	

## STANDARDS FOR GRADING

### Geoff Peterson

**A:** designates work of extra-ordinarily high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas.

**B:** designates work of high quality; reflects a clearly organized but less than comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents organized arguments that are supported by ideas.

**C:** Designates work which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment; written work reflects adequate organization and development of ideas, but arguments are communicated in a superficial or simplistic manner.

**D:** Designates work of poor quality which meets the minimum requirements of the assignment, but demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that the student has not read assignments thoroughly.

**F:** Designates work of poor quality that does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or task; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments or fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time.