H-J1335 Intro to Broadcasting: Media and the Presidential Election 2012

Instructor: Noah Lord Nelson
Class Location: 10:00-10:50 am, Henderson J-323 M-W / Social Science 312- Friday
Office Location: Journalism 213
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Course Information

Course Description

This course will examine the impact of television, radio, print and the internet on the outcome of the 2012 Presidential Election. We will take a particular look at the historical role that television has played in shaping the images of candidates and their campaign messages. We will study the 24 hour news cycle and how it has fundamentally changed the speed of political analysis and reactions of campaigns to events. Because of money, polls and pundits, the modern presidential campaign literally never sleeps.

We will look at the impact of media partisanship, from Fox News to MSNBC, from Rush Limbaugh to Bill Maher. We will explore the differences between alternative news sources and the mainstream media.

Using video examples from broadcast television, film and the internet, the course will look at the evolution of campaign advertising over the last half century: from Kennedy and Nixon to Obama and Romney. We will analyze important game changing moments in recent political history. The course will also look at campaign financing, court decisions and racial politics and the roles they play in determining who will become the next U.S. president.

Materials:


2. Required Viewing: Network news programs and political commentary shows

3. Required Reading: The Dallas Morning News and political content from other national newspapers and magazines. A list of political news web sites will be distributed.
Instructional Methods/Activities/ Assessment:

Class participation is essential and you will be graded accordingly. Most classes will begin with an analysis of the political news events dominating the current 24-hour news cycle. Students are expected to watch, read and analyze the assigned material and be prepared to discuss the information. There will be video examples of the topics we discuss.

Because this course will follow political events as they occur, additional readings will be handed out in class. We will have guest appearance by political news reporters, Democratic and Republican party spokespersons and political pollsters. You are expected to come prepared to ask good questions of the guests.

General Course Outline and Direction:

The course will cover the following discussion topics through the November election and its result:

- The Republican National Convention
- The Democratic National Convention
- The historical impact of television on the selection of presidential candidates
- Fact checking and the 24-hour news cycle
- Media partisanship
- Political advertising and the rising costs of campaigns
- Higher court decisions and voting rights
- Race and demographics of the electorate
- Election Result analysis
- What the election means for the direction of the nation
**Learning Outcomes:**

After completing this course, a student should be able to:

- Understand what role the media play in shaping the process surrounding the selection of the President
- Understand the synergy between the media and the presidential campaigns
- Know the historical role television has played in creating political imagery
- Recognize the impact that money, polls and the 24 hour news cycle have on the speed and accuracy of political reporting
- Listen critically to presidential candidates and understand more clearly what they are really saying
- Assess the credibility and veracity of stories reported in both the traditional, alternative and social media

**Grading:**

Class Participation: (10 pts)
4 in-Class Media Critiques (5 pts. each = 20 pts.)
Mid Term Paper (20 pts.)
Election Outcome Analysis (20 pts)
Final Paper (30 pts)

**Point Breakdown:**

A......90-100 pts.
B......80-89  pts.
C......70-79  pts.
D......60-69  pts.
COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Attendance:
Students are required to attend all class meetings. Requests for absences will be considered only for actual emergencies.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Students must document the sources of the material used in written assignments.

Class Etiquette:
Students will not text, make or receive phone calls in class.

Tardiness Policy:
A pattern of being late to class will have an impact on a student’s final grade

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
HYPERLINK "mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu"StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
HYPERLINK "http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/studentLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/"Student Disability Resources & Services

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).