

PS 4355 – 001

AMERICAN POLITICS IN MASS MEDIA

Spring 2020

1/13 – 5/2

Tuesdays and Thursdays - 2PM-3:20PM

BEP Bldg Room 00213

Dr. Kenneth Bryant Jr.

CAS 125

kbryant@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: T TR 12PM-1:55PM

Note - This syllabus is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class.

Introduction

This course examines the American politics at the mass media level, with an emphasis on communication, opinion, behavior, and culture. Topics include mass media in political campaigns, the influence of popular culture on public opinion and political behavior, as well as the electoral and governing strategies of political communication.

Course Objectives

1. Develop a critical understanding of the role of mass media in American political discourse.
2. Examine how political actors use media to influence the public.

Grade

Class Participation – 10%

Polling Participation – 20%

Midterm Exam – 30%

Final Exam – 40%

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance. You will receive an attendance score. It is not my favorite thing in the world to do, but it keeps you accountable. If you will be (or were) absent for any legitimate reason, please contact me in a timely fashion (which means don't wait until the end of the semester). I'm fairly lenient when you keep me informed.

Repeated tardiness is unacceptable. Repeated tardiness will result in a lessened attendance score.

Polling Participation Assignment

This assignment reflects a service learning activity to create real-world experience in the application of social science research and the skills you will be able to provide upon graduation. As part of this class you will be trained to conduct telephone surveys by entering detailed information from each respondent into Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) software. You will be trained on how to conduct surveys in-person in the Polling Lab and be led by survey professionals and faculty.

My goal will be to teach you the nuts and bolts of conducting a statewide survey and what to be mindful of as you ask questions to a respondent. You will see how details are collected and then compiled into a larger

database to include the research of you and your peers.

The training will be complete upon passage of a Canvas-based proficiency quiz. Note: points will be deducted for each round that it takes to achieve mastery of each task.

The poll you will assist in conducting will be in the field for two weeks, with the Polling Lab open for operation in the evenings between 5pm and 8:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as a block of time from 1pm to 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays. You will be able to select shifts to work at one of the 20 stations during that time.

The following are key to your participation grade:

- The University of Texas at Tyler, requires certified researches to complete 9 units of research and ethics training. The certification is given by the Institutional Review Board. The professional training is provided by CITI.

To access the training: <http://www.uttyler.edu/research/compliance/irb/training/index.php>

Assignment:

1. Visit the link to the CITI Training and register an account using your @patriots.uttyler.edu email address.
 - You will select your organization affiliation by typing --> University of Texas at Tyler.
 - You can make your own username and password.
 2. Complete the 9 units, they will require passing a quiz at each step.
 3. Upload your completion record to Canvas by entering the url for your record.
 - I was able to do this by clicking the "View-Print-Share" link on my account's page. I then scrolled to the bottom and selected the last link (found after "To Share the Completion Certificate...").
- Your participation will be assessed based on the hours you work (**minimum 8 hours**). The quality of your participation will reflect a ratio of the quality of your participation that reflects the number of calls made and the number of calls successfully completed. You will also be evaluated through observation of how clearly you communicate with respondents and complete the assigned tasks.
 - You will also be asked to journal (**minimum of 3 pages**) your experiences, offering a daily reflection on the similarities and differences of respondent attitudes recorded during the surveys you completed. What combinations of views were unexpected? What is your assessment of the political knowledge of respondents you spoke with? What messages from the media or campaigns are being reflected back in the answers of the individuals you spoke with?

Upon submission of this daily journal of your polling experience add an introduction of the main themes you recognized and a conclusion about the value of these reflections as evidence of the larger themes you recognized. In your conclusion, you may also want to add reflections about topics respondents wanted to talk about beyond the survey and offer advice on how the next survey could address those concerns.

Midterm Exam

This exam will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Final Exam

This exam will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2020.

Note - If you miss an exam, you *must* have one of the following: A) a note from a doctor proving you were too ill on the day of the exam to take it. Be aware that receipts from the Student Health Center are not sufficient documentation of a serious illness; or B) a copy of an obituary, in the unfortunate case you have to attend a funeral; C) proof of extremely prohibitive circumstances (such as being in an auto accident on the way to campus or a family emergency). The make-up exam you take will be different from the exam taken by the rest of the class and may include essay questions. No other excuses will be accepted for a missed exam. If an exam is missed, the student will receive a grade of *zero*, and (unlike a summer in Texas) that ain't going to be too hot.

Note – I will *not* be offering “extra credit” opportunities.

Grade Assignment

Below 60 = F
60 and less than 70 = D
70 and less than 80 = C
80 and less than 90 = B
90 and less than 100 = A

Class Disruptions

Repeated talking, texting, or surfing the web on laptops is not acceptable in this class. These actions are distracting. Such disruptions harm the learning environment. Incidents of texting, talking, or surfing the web in class will result in a discussion between the instructor and the student(s) involved. Believe you me, it just ain't worth the hassle, you can Instagram after class.

Required Readings

Iyengar, Shanto. 2016. Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide. Third Edition. W.W. Norton & Company. **ISBN: 9780393937794**

Don't get too excited. This isn't it for readings. I will periodically upload additional readings on Canvas throughout the semester. Don't worry. I'll let you know when I do so.

Schedule

| Date | Subject(s) | Readings |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| January 14 | Introductions | |
| January 16 & 21 | The Evolution of the News | Iyengar – Chapter 3 |
| January 23 & 28 | Public Opinion | Iyengar – Chapter 8 |
| January 30 & February 4 | The American Press | Iyengar – Chapter 2 |
| February 6 | No Class | |
| February 11 & 13 | Reporters, Sources, & Professional Journalism | Iyengar – Chapter 4 |
| February 18, 20, 25 & 27 | <i>Call Center Shifts</i> | Minimum 8 Hours Required |
| March 3 | Midterm Review | |
| March 5 | Midterm Exam | |
| March 10 & 12 | Spring Break | |
| March 17 | Image & The Media | Iyengar – Chapter 1 |
| March 19 & 24 | Campaigning & The Media | Iyengar – Chapter 6 & 9 |
| March 26 & 31 | Campaigning & New Media | Iyengar – Chapter 5 |
| April 2 & 7 | Governing & The Media | Iyengar – Chapter 7 and 10 |
| April 9 | No Class | |
| April 14 & 16 | Evaluating Media Politics | Iyengar – Chapter 11 |
| April 21 | Final Review | |
| April 23 | Final Exam | |

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date (Sept. 12th) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid State-Mandated Course

Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the

specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester. (Revised 05/17)

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student’s test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

“Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)