Course Description

The mass media, including the Internet, play a critical role of shaping public opinion and voting behavior. This course is designed to introduce political communication–a newly emerging subfield in the discipline. In this course, students are guided to learn, as well as expected to become familiar with critical theories in this field, such as the spiral of silence, agenda-setting, framing effects, third-person effects, etc. The focus of discussion in this semester, in particular, are selective procedures and how such theories shed light on our understanding of partisan voters and non-partisan voters.

** Note: Due to my frequent international travel this semester, I plan to hold some sessions online if it is necessary. So, students are required to get familiar with the virtual class system (and later the video conference system) provided by the university.

Course Texts and Readings

The course requires active participation in reading and discussing assigned papers. Most articles are available on university’s electronic journal archives. A copy of required book chapters and some journal articles that are not available in the library or databases (marked with ** in the end of the entry) will be available by request. You can also make a good use of university’s interlibrary loan system.

Grading Policy

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (online and off line)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three reaction papers</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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- **Class participation** (20%): Involvement in class discussion include your attendance, questions provided for discussion, and responses to questions. You are asked to read through the given materials and bring thoughts to the class.
- **Reaction papers** (30%): You are free to pick up three topics to write reaction papers in the beginning of the semester and write papers that each has at least five pages, doubled spaced (no less than four and
not longer than six pages). Reaction papers should demonstrate your (re)organization of the assigned readings and your thoughts (evaluation or critiques) about the papers. **Papers that simply summarize the assigned readings will be returned for rewriting**. Bonus points will be given to papers with extended (self-selected) readings that help develop arguments or clarify points.

- **Research paper (50%)**: Research paper, due on June 16 (5pm), is your “free-style” research work. Ideally, it is a part of your dissertation, research proposal, or research of your interest. It should be a semester-long project and shows how your thoughts or ideas learned in this class are integrated into your ongoing project. You need to consult me first if you want to write something beyond the scope of this class. You can extend your reaction papers into a term paper, but there is no need to do so. Your research paper should be at least fifteen-page long (double-spaced) in English, or twenty-five-page long in Chinese. Papers are graded based on the importance and originality of the topic, the choice and organization of literature (there should be at least ten journal articles or book or book chapters), your methodology, the presentation of your findings, the interpretation of your results, and overall format (use APA style). A research paper that is qualified for a conference presentation will get 85; 95 for submitting to a journal.

- All papers are due in class. The term paper is due in the beginning of the last class. Note that I do not give “I” for incomplete works. Make sure you manage your time well and turn in the hot copies of the papers before the deadlines. The cover page of papers should include the following information: class name, author’s full name and student id, paper type (mid-term paper or final term paper), turn-in date, and contact information.

**Weekly Schedule**

[**Feb. 24**] Class will formally start on March 3.

[**March 3**] Introduction

[**March 5 & 10**] Field Overview

- **Required**:

- **Supplemental**:

[**March 17**] Partisanship and Belief Systems

- **Required**:

- **Supplemental**

[March 24] Selective Processes and the Mind

- Required:

[March 31 & April 7] Political Discussion Networks, Opinion Expression, and Political Orientation

- Note: The class of March 31 is a make-up class for April 28 when I will be travelling.

- Required:

- Supplemental:

[April 14 & May 5] Media Effects Reconsidered

• No class on April 21 (the mid-term exam week) and April 28. Work on your research paper and discuss online.
• Research topics may be assigned on April 14. Students are expected to orally present and defend their choices of research topics on May 5. Discussion about this assignment in the virtual classroom during these two weeks are welcomed.
• Required:
• Supplemental:

[May 12, 19 & May 26] ICT Effects Reconsidered

• Required:


- Supplemented:

[May 28 & June 9] Student Chosen Readings

- The course of June 2 is rescheduled to May 28.
- There is no course on June 16; research paper due on June 17 5pm.
- Required:

[June 23] Online Discussion and Presentation of Student Research