Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: POSC 330

Course Title: Media and Politics

Number of: Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: The course will examine the impact of the media on political discourse and public opinion in America, as well as examine the ways in which the media is shaped and affected by political forces. Prerequisite: POSC 111.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): POSC 111.

Text(s): Most current editions of the following:

- West, Darrell. *Air Wars*. Congressional Quarterly.

Course Objectives:

- To examine the impact of the media on political discourse and public opinion in America.
- To explore the ways in which the media is shaped and affected by political forces.
- To enable students to be critical consumers of news and information provided by the media.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

- Explain changes in media forms over the last 250 years and the impact those changes have had on producers of media, politicians, and consumers.
- Describe and explain the process of consolidation of media ownership.
- Explain the role and significance of the Federal Communications Commission in regulating the media.
• Explain significant regulations and policies relating to the media, including the fairness doctrine, the equal time provision, the Freedom of Information Act and the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
• Explain the first amendment protection of freedom of the press and its limitations.
• Explain how journalists’ personality, organizational constraints and professional norms effect how news stories are chosen and how they are reported.
• Describe and assess criticisms of news coverage.
• Explain and assess the ways in which the media can influence public policy.
• Describe the communication strategies that politicians, including the President, use to manage their media coverage.
• Explain the role of the media in political campaigns.
• Describe techniques and evaluate effects of campaign advertising.
• Compare and contrast theories of media effects, such as views that propose strong, weak or contingent effects.
• Analyze claims of bias in the media.
• Explain and assess the process and content of foreign affairs and way coverage by the news media.
• Describe and assess recommendations for improving the quality of journalism.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

- Role of Media in Modern Democracies
- Theories of Press, Politics and Society
- Patterns of Media Ownership
- Regulating the Media
- Traditional Media (newspapers, radio, network television)
- News Media (cable TV, internet)
- News Media
- Impact of the Media on Public
- Political Campaigns and the Media
- Political Advertising
- Bias in the Media
- Spring: How Politicians try to use the Media
- Media Coverage of Foreign Affairs
- Media Reform

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 20

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.
NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

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