Graduate Seminar in Media and Politics
Prof. David Greenberg
Fall 2012

Class Time: Monday
Email: davidgr[at]rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Mon. 6.00-8.30
Course No.: 16:194:665:01

Room: Huntington House, 184 College Ave.
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Syllabus

Description. The course examines relationship between the news media and presidential politics. This year, because of the presidential campaign, we will focus in particular on media and the election. We’ll follow the ups and downs and twists and turns of the election season. But we’ll also try to understand how campaigns have come to take the form that they do by looking at these issues historically. Topics include the rise of mass-media politics; presidential debates; TV advertising; journalistic objectivity; and the role of the internet in today’s campaigns.

Course Requirements.

- **Short Paper. Due September 24.** There will be an initial 15-page essay, designed to evaluate facility with the readings, ability to frame an argument, and writing skill.

- **Term Paper. Due December 12.** The final piece of writing for the course is a 25-page paper that explores some aspect of presidential elections in depth. Topics will be given out in class.

- **Readings.** Each week there will be assigned readings on the given topic. Usually it will consist of a single book, but some weeks it will be a collection of articles.

- **Watching campaign events.** Students are expected to watch the conventions, debates and other major political events of the campaign season. They are also expected to read the New York Times and other political publications to stay abreast of campaign news and developments.

Reading List.

Weekly Assignments.

- Book available at Rutgers University Bookstore or in Alexander library reserves.
- Article available on the class website at the Sakai site.
Syllabus, p. 2

Sep. 10

Introduction

Alexis de Tocqueville, “Election of the President” and “Re-Election of the President,” in Democracy in America.

James Bryce, “The President” and “Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President” in The American Commonwealth.


Sep. 17

The Old System

Michael McGerr, The Decline of Popular Politics.

Sep. 24

Media and the Transformation of Presidential Politics

Stephen Ponder, Origins of the Media Presidency.


First Paper Due

Oct. 1

Presidential Spin, Then and Now


Oct. 3

WATCH: 1ST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Oct. 8

The Debates, Then and Now

Harold Holzer, ed. The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete, Unexpurgated Text.


excerpts from Daniel Boorstin, The Image, pp. 36-44; Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death, 44-50.

Oct. 11

WATCH: VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Oct. 16

WATCH: 2ND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Oct. 15

Television I: The Rise of the Image


**Television II: Advertising**

**Oct. 22**

**WATCH: 3RD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

**Oct. 29**

**Advertising, For and Against**
- Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar, *Going Negative*.

**Nov. 5**

**Polling**

**Nov. 6**

**WATCH: ELECTION DAY RETURNS**

**Nov. 12**

**Objectivity and Its Discontents**
- Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, Chs. 4 & 5, pp. 121-194 [74]

**Nov. 19**

**How Reporters Cover the Campaign**
- Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*

**Nov. 26**

**The Internet and Presidential Politics**
- Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Performance of Politics*

**Dec. 3**

**Does the System Work?—Part I**
- Thomas Patterson, *Out of Order*
Dec. 10  Does the System Work? — Part II
- Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*
- Second Paper Due