A History of the Study of Political Communication
JOMC 890
Tuesday, 9:00-11:45am, Carroll 338

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Hours: 12pm-1pm, Tuesday and by appointment

Overview
This course will engage students in an interdisciplinary and mixed methods set of readings that can broadly be considered to comprise the history of political communication research. The goal of this course is to move beyond the current theoretical and methodological paradigms of the field, and consider historically how scholars have studied the organization, production, and effects of political communication and their democratic consequences. In addition, we will explore new frontiers of research that expand our conception and understanding of political communication from scholars of many other disciplines.

This course is designed to make an argument about what the study of political communication was, how it has changed, and what it could be. As such, it is not a formal intellectual history, although we will encounter readings that do just that. The readings in this course are by no means comprehensive of political communication research and its many subfields. Even more, many scholars we will read may not recognize themselves as ‘political communication’ researchers, even though that describes their objects of analyses. For the purposes of this course, the borders around ‘political communication’ are deliberately ill-defined - at its broadest, it is the study of the institutional (campaigns, legislative bodies, the presidency, the press, civil society organizations) and extra-institutional (movements) actors, events, processes, and technologies that constitute democratic life.

In the end, the readings for this course are meant to be thought provoking and push the boundaries of what we consider to be ‘political communication.’ Even more, these works represent various strands of empirical research and social thought over the last century, showing how much of communication and media research across an interdisciplinary set of fields was always oriented towards normative questions of democracy.

Readings
There are nine required books for this class, in addition to book and journal readings that will be available on Sakai.


**Grades**

Graduate grades are H, P, L, F. I determine your grade by active participation in class, the quality of your assignments, and your work in relation to others.

The following is a general description of graduate grades:

- **H** means a truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments.
- **P** is a solid performance overall in the class and on assignments.
- **L** is a performance in the class and on assignments that is below the acceptable level for graduate students. It means the student does not understand the course material very well, does not have a grasp of what is required in this area at the graduate level, is not participating in the class, is not handing in assignments on time, or is not participating in research basics or in-class exercises.
- **F** is failing.

**Grading Percentages**

Participation: 20%

Assignments: 30%

Final Paper: 50%
Course Requirements

Participation
This course is a seminar, and as such it is premised on active discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss them. Critical interpretations of the literature encountered in the course are particularly valued.

Sakai Discussion
You are responsible for posting a long-form discussion comment (about 500 words) each week about the readings on the course Sakai forum. These comments should be reasoned and developed starting points for group discussion, and they should end with the posing of at least one question that we will take up in class. You are responsible for reading the comments of your peers in advance of class.

Assignments
“Opening” a Text for Class Discussion: Due Date TBA
At some point in the course you will “open” a text for class discussion. This entails a formal presentation that 1) summarizes the key arguments of the text, 2) details the location of the work in terms of the field of communication and related disciplines, 3) presents and assesses the theoretical and methodological approach(es) of the author(s), 4) and commences class discussion. Your presentation should focus on the relationship between theory, method, and evidence. You are also responsible for facilitating the discussion of the text.

Term Paper
In the hope that this class will further your research, you can pursue one of two options for your class paper.

Option 1: Research Project
Students pursuing this option will conduct original political communication research during the course of the semester and write a paper based on it. The goal is that this could potentially become a journal article or even a chapter of a thesis or dissertation. You may choose any methodological approach. Students pursuing this option must also complete the Collaborative IRB Certification training online (if you have not already) at: https://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/researchers/training/index.htm. If you planning on carrying this work outside of class, you should also complete an IRB proposal (I am happy to guide you in this).

Option 2: Your Choice
I am open to other approaches to the final paper given the diversity of student interest in the class. If you want to pursue a different project, submit your plan in writing.

For both options, you will present your preliminary work midway through the semester and deliver a 15 minute presentation of your final paper to the class during the scheduled final exam period.
The Honor Code
The Honor Code is in effect at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. If you have questions about the Honor Code, please see me or read more at http://honor.unc.edu

Course Schedule

January 14th
Course Overview

These readings will be discussed in class and must be read in advance


Recommended:


January 21st
The Foundational Debate

Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* 
Available at: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER2/Lippman/cover.html

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* 
Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780271058320
January 28th
*The Field Before it Was a Field*

Peters and Simonson, *Introduction and Part One*

Recommended:


February 4th
*The Field Before it Was a Field*

Peters and Simonson, *Part Two*

Recommended:


February 11th
*The Field Before it was a Field*

Peters and Simonson, *Part Three*

Recommended:


February 18th
*The Founding and Foundations of the Current Field*


Recommended


**February 25th**
*Contemporary Perspectives on Media Choice*

Prior, *Post-Broadcast Democracy*

Recommended:


**March 4th**

*Contemporary Perspectives on Framing and Priming*

Entman, *Projections of Power*

**Recommended:**


**March 11th**

*The Public Sphere*

Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*

Skim: Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* Available at: [http://pages.uoregon.edu/koopman/courses_readings/phil123-net/publicness/habermas_structural_trans_pub_sphere.pdf](http://pages.uoregon.edu/koopman/courses_readings/phil123-net/publicness/habermas_structural_trans_pub_sphere.pdf)

Recommended:


**March 25th**

*Cultural Approaches to Political Communication*

Schudson, *The Good Citizen*

Recommended:


**March 27th**
Fred Turner will be visiting UNC to discuss his new book

Turner, The Democratic Surround

April 1st
The Qualitative Sociological Tradition of Research on Civil Society and Movements

Eliasoph, Avoiding Politics

Recommended:


April 8th

*The Qualitative Political Science Tradition Of Research on Public Opinion*

Herbst, *Reading Public Opinion*

Recommended:


April 15th

*Science and Technology Studies and Political Communication*

Marres, *Material Participation*
Recommended


**April 22nd**

*Technological Change, Media Practice, and Political Communication*

Chadwick, *The Hybrid Media System*

Recommended


Week of April 27th

Final Paper Presentations