

**MEJO 490**  
**The Washington Experience**  
Fall 2017  
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-10:15am

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The Washington Experience is an intensive, semester long course that will introduce students to political communication and D.C.-based organizations and individuals in the UNC School of Media and Journalism's vast alumni and friend network. Political communication spans everything from political journalism and public relations to advertising and marketing. And, it takes place on social media and television, as well as the webpages of new journalism startups and print pages of newspapers. The hallmark of the class is a trip to Washington D.C. over fall break where students will visit various social media firms, journalism, party, and advocacy organizations, political consultancies, and legislative offices. The class will also feature a high-profile panel in Chapel Hill in November. At the end of the course, students will have a deep understanding of political communication across various fields and platforms, as well as a network of contacts who can help them launch their careers.

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps> Students taking this course will be able to think critically, creatively, and independently, learn how to conduct research and evaluate information, write correctly and clearly, and critically evaluate their own work and that of others.

### **Readings**

Readings for the class will be made available on Sakai. In addition, there are four required books for the class:

Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. *Democracy for realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government*. Princeton University Press, 2016.

Greenberg, David. *Republic of spin: An inside history of the American presidency*. WW Norton & Company, 2016.

Harris-Perry, Melissa V. *Sister citizen: Shame, stereotypes, and Black women in America*. Yale University Press, 2011. (Full text available online through UNC libraries)

Ladd, Jonathan M. *Why Americans hate the media and how it matters*. Princeton University Press, 2011. (Full text available on Sakai)

## **Grades**

Participation: 20%

Reading Comments: 20%

Final Class Presentations and Paper: 60%

You are assigned letter grades for participation, reading comments, and your class presentations and papers.

A	4
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2
C-	1.7
D	1

3.833-4	A
3.832-3.500	A-
3.499-3.167	B+
3.166-2.834	B
2.833-2.501	B-
2.5-2.167	C+
2.166-1.834	C
1.833-1.500	C-
1.499-1.166	D+
1.165-0.832	D
0.831-0.498	D-

## **Course Requirements**

### *Participation*

This course is premised on active discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss them. There is a substantial reading load in the course, but it comes in lieu of other assignments. In addition, you are expected to be following the daily political media of whatever stripe. This course is also premised on a

number of trips and site visits. You are required to participate in all of these, and be attentive, respectful, and engaged in all class activities.

*Each week*, you are responsible for posting *one* response to the readings on the Sakai forum. This should be in the range of about 500 words – so a substantial comment. These comments are due by 10pm the night before class.

### *Final Group Presentations and Papers*

#### Career, Industry, or Organizational Analysis

For your final class project, you will work in groups to do background research on a career, industry, or even an organization in Washington D.C.. This will be an *exhaustive* background look at how this career, industry, or organization has developed over time, a comprehensive overview of the services and products they provide in the political space, the career trajectories of its practitioners gleaned through publicly available sources such as *LinkedIn*, the competitors in this space and their market shares, and their projected future growth.

This is the perfect opportunity to pick a career that, as a group, you would like to pursue – such as communications directors, political journalists, social media directors, or campaign managers. Or, to choose an industry that you might want to work in, such as publishing, political consulting, think tanks, or advocacy organizations. Or, to provide an in-depth profile of an organization you might want to work for one day, such as the Republican National Committee, digital consulting firms such as Blue State Digital, or advocacy organizations such as the National Rifle Association or Planned Parenthood.

The analysis should be comprehensive. There are a number of academic, market research, and journalistic resources that will help you provide a detailed history and overview of the career, industry, or organization of your choosing. The best projects will be comprehensive and detailed, and provide histories and overview descriptive statistics on various aspects of the field, in addition to rich description about the type of work that this career, industry, or organization is involved in and its role in Washington D.C. and democracy more broadly. Additional research, such as interviews with practitioners, is welcome but not required. It might be a great way to make contacts for your future job search.

On Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, you will present your in-progress ideas to the class. On Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> you will present your final project to the class and hand in your final paper. It's an early morning final, so I will bring bagels and coffee.

#### **Resources**

Most of the readings for the class are on Sakai. As students, you have access to all of these resources. In addition, students should pay particular attention to sites that bridge social science and journalism. Here are a few of my favorites:

538: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/>

The Washington Post's *The Monkey Cage*:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/>

Vox's The Mischiefs of Faction: <http://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction>

Axios: <https://www.axios.com/>

In addition, there are all sorts of amazing podcasts right now that bring social science perspectives to analysis of electoral politics, or that offer insider perspectives on the political process. If you have a favorite, share it!

### **Special Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

### **Honor Code:**

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

### **Seeking Help:**

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

### **Diversity:**

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

### **Laptops**

It pains me to do this, perhaps because I believe we have agency over our psychological desires, but the persistent distraction of social media is just too much to bear. People's

heads buried in their laptops simply diminishes classroom discussion, and is particularly rude during class presentations and guest speakers. Because of this, we all have to digital detox a bit, so no laptops or mobile phones in class. Don't worry, we will consume plenty of media in class.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Part One: Democracy and Social Identity**

*Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>*

Introduction to the course

*Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>*

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 1 and 2

*Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>*

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 3 and 8

*Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup>*

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 9 and 10

*Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>*

Achen and Bartels, Chapter 11

*Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>*

Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics*

Available online at: <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~zhajnal/resources/white-backlash-manuscript.pdf>

### **Part Two: The Legacy Press and the Networked Public Sphere**

*Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>*

Jonathan Ladd, Chapters 1 and 3

*Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>*

Jonathan Ladd, Chapters 4 and 5

*Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>*

*Trip to Fox News and Facebook.* For the trip, read:  
Kreiss, D. and S. McGregor. "From Distribution Channels to Active Intermediaries: How Technology Firms Shape Political Communication." Presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference, May, 2017.

*Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>*

Jonathan Ladd, Chapters 6 and 7

*Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>*

Jonathan Ladd, Chapter 8

Skim the Reuters Institute Digital News Report:  
[https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web\\_0.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf)

*Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>*

Wells, Chris, Dhavan V. Shah, Jon C. Pevehouse, JungHwan Yang, Ayellet Pelled, Frederick Boehm, Josephine Lukito, Shreenita Ghosh, and Jessica L. Schmidt. "How Trump drove coverage to the nomination: Hybrid media campaigning." *Political Communication* 33, no. 4 (2016): 669-676.

Benkler, Yochai, Robert Faris, Hal Roberts, and Ethan Zuckerman. "Study: Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda." *Columbia Journalism Review* 1, no. 4.1 (2017): 7.

*Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>*

Marwick, Alice, and Rebecca Lewis. "Media manipulation and disinformation online." *Data & Society Research Institute* (2017).

Phillips, Whitney. "The house that Fox built: Anonymous, spectacle, and cycles of amplification." *Television & New Media* 14, no. 6 (2013): 494-509.

*Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>*

Read Chapters 9, 11, 12, 58, 60, and 65, in *US Election Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign*. Available online at: <http://www.electionanalysis2016.us/>

### **Part Three: Strategic Communication**

*Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>*

Greenberg, Introduction, Part 1, and Chapters 1, 3, and 7

*Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>*

Greenberg, Part II and Chapters 13, 14, 18; Part III and Chapters 20, 21, 22 and 27

*Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup>*

No Class, University Day

*Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup> through Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>*

*Fall Break Trip to Washington D.C.*

For the Fall Break Trip, read Greenberg, Chapters 29, 33, 38, 44, and Part IV (395-448)

## **Part Four: The Citizen**

*Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>*

Kreiss, Daniel, Regina Lawrence, and Shannon McGregor, "In Their Own Words: Audiences, Affordances, Genres, and Timing in Strategic Social Media Use." *Political Communication*, forthcoming.

*Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>*

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. "Putting inequality in its place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 3 (2012): 517-532.

*Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>*

Gest, Justin. "The white working-class minority: a counter-narrative." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4, no. 1 (2016): 126-143.

Prasad, Monica, Andrew J. Perrin, Kieran Bezila, Steve G. Hoffman, Kate Kindleberger, Kim Manturuk, Ashleigh Smith Powers, and Andrew R. Payton. "The undeserving rich: "moral values" and the white working class." In *Sociological Forum*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 225-253. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.

*Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>*

Harris-Perry, Introduction and Chapter 1

*Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>*

Harris-Perry, Chapters 2 and 3

*Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>*

Harris-Perry, Chapters 4 and 5

*Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>*

Hart, Roderick P. "The People's Voice During the 2016 Presidential Campaign." *American Behavioral Scientist* (2017): 0002764217707622.

*Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>*

Final Paper In-progress Presentations

*Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>*

Eliasoph, Nina. "'Close to home': the work of avoiding politics." *Theory and Society* 26, no. 5 (1997): 605-647.

Wells, Chris, Katherine J. Cramer, Michael W. Wagner, German Alvarez, Lewis A. Friedland, Dhavan V. Shah, Leticia Bode, Stephanie Edgerly, Itay Gabay, and Charles Franklin. "When We Stop Talking Politics: The Maintenance and Closing of Conversation in Contentious Times." *Journal of Communication* 67, no. 1 (2017): 131-157.

*Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>*

No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

*Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>*

Because of the extensive number of trips for this class requiring a considerable time commitment, we will not hold class these three days. Use these periods as opportunities to work on your final papers.

*Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 8am*

Final presentations and papers due