

Wright State University

Instructor: Lee Hannah**Location:** 399 Millett Hall**Office:** 317 Millett Hall**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10:00-12:00**Dates:****Time:** TR 11:00AM-12:20PM**Email:** lee.hannah@wright.edu**Twitter:** @LeeHannahWSU #PLS4300**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course investigates the interaction among the media, politicians, and citizens. The political media have been heavily scrutinized by both sides of the political aisle. While we will certainly engage with and entertain some of these ideas and critiques, it is important to remember that this is an academic course, not a venue for personal soapboxes, punditry, or partisan debates. The main questions that we will address include:

- 1) What is the media's place in American politics?
- 2) How are the media organized, and what rules and norms govern its coverage of politics?
- 3) Who and what makes the news?
- 4) How do elected leaders and candidates try to use the media to achieve their goals?
- 5) How do citizens respond to the media's coverage of politics and politicians' use of media?
- 6) What does the future hold for the media in a changing information landscape?

READING MATERIALS (Required):

- Iyengar, Shanto. 2016. *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: W.M. Norton and Company ISBN:978-0-393-93779-4.

Additional readings will be available online, posted on Pilot, or available through the Wright State University library.

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This class will include a mix of lecture, discussion, and group activities. Your attendance is critical for succeeding in this class.

Integrated Writing Course: PLS 4300 is designated an "Integrated Writing" (IW) course, designed to meet WSU guidelines for developing effective writing skills. Students will be expected to produce writing that:

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and

- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

Effective writing counts toward the final course grade. Students will meet IW requirements in a number of ways. These include reading question exercises, evaluating the news media assignment, and a final exam with short answer and essay components.

Make-Up Grades: These absences may include missing class for a University-sanctioned activity (with proper documentation), illness, religious observance, or family emergency. In case of an emergency, please contact me and we can work together on keeping you on track in the class.

Late Work Policy: Assignments turned in late will be penalized 5% per day.

EXPECTATIONS:

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for academic integrity.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you of any changes made throughout the course.

DISABILITY:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. It is your responsibility to notify me during the first week of the semester if such accommodations are needed. If you have questions about this, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at 937-775-5680 or disability_services@wright.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading Questions (35% of final grade) We will be reading several peer-review articles during the term. Since many of these are complex, I have included reading questions to direct you to the sections of the article that are most important for comprehension. These are to be completed and submitted on Dropbox prior to the start of the class of the assigned reading.

Reporter Questions (5% of final grade) We will have three journalists visiting our classes to share about their experience and answer questions. As a way to direct the conversation, you will submit 5 questions for the reporter to Dropbox.

In class activities (10% of final grade) Two assignments will be given during classes on September 7 and November 30.¹

¹Only those with excused absences will be able to make up the work.

Evaluating the News Media Assignment (20% of final grade) The first unit examines the behavior and performance of the press. You will be asked to critique several news sources using course concepts. Details for the assignment will be posted on Pilot.

Final Exam (20% of final grade) The final exam will be given during exam week and will cover the final unit of course material.

Participation and Attendance (10% of final grade) You are expected to come to class and to actively participate in class discussion and activities. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note taking. Students will be asked to put away technology if they are distracted by the technology.

COURSE SCHEDULE:²

Unit I: Behavior and Performance of the Press

Week 1

August 29 (T): Course Introduction

August 31 (Th): Image is Everything

Readings: Text Ch. 1³

Burns, Eric. 2006. "Introduction: Inappropriate Behavior." in *Infamous Scribblers: The Founding Fathers and the Rowdy Beginnings of American Journalism*, New York: Public Affairs.

Week 2

September 5 (T): The Press and the Democratic Process

Readings: Text Ch. 2

Patterson, Thomas E. 1997. "The News Media: An Effective Political Actor?" *Political Communication*, 14(4): 445-455.

Suggested Reading: Birkland, Thomas and Sarah Waterman. 2008. "Is Federalism the Reason for Policy Failure in Hurricane Katrina?" *Publius*, 38(4): 692-714.

September 7 (Th): Documentary - *PAGE ONE: Inside the New York Times*

Assignment: Documentary Questions

Week 3

September 12 (T): The Media Marketplace: Organizational Processes and Routines

Reading: Text Ch. 3

²Students are responsible for knowing both university and course schedules.

The academic calendar is available at: <https://www.wright.edu/registrar/academic-calendar>.

³Readings are to be completed before the corresponding class.

September 14 (Th): The Media Marketplace: Audiences and Market Pressures

Readings: Gentzkow, Matthew and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2010. "What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from U.S. Daily Newspapers." *Econometrica*, 78(1): 35-71.

Hemmer, Nicole. (2014 January 17). "The Conservative War on Liberal Media Bias Has a Long History." *The Atlantic*.

Suggested Reading: Pan, Po-Lin, Juan Meng, and Shuhua Zhou. 2010. "Morality or Equality? Ideological Framing in News Coverage of Gay Marriage Legitimization." *The Social Science Journal*, 47(3): 630-645.

Assignment: Reading Questions #1

Assignment: Questions for Erik Elken⁴

Week 4

September 19 (T): Local television reporting with guest Erik Elken - Anchor and reporter at WGRT Fox 45/ABC 22.

September 21 (Th): Local Media and Representation

Reading: Dixon, Travis L. 2017. "Good Guys Are Still Always in White? Positive Change and Continued Misrepresentation of Race and Crime on Local Television News." *Communication Research*, 44(6): 775-792.

Suggested Reading: Yanich, Danilo. 2012. "Local TV News, Content, and the Bottom Line." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 35(3): 327-342

Assignment: Reading Questions # 2

Week 5

September 26 (T): Reporters, Official Sources, Adversarial Journalism

Reading: Text Ch. 4

September 28 (Th): Indexing the News

Reading: From the editors. (2004, May 26). "The Times and Iraq." *The New York Times*, p. A10.

Assignment: Questions for Anthony Shoemaker⁵

Week 6

October 3 (T): The Press and National Security

Readings: Adams, Russell and Jessica E. Vascellaro. (2010 November 29). "To Publish Leaks or Not to Publish?" *Wall Street Journal*.⁶

Ellison, Sarah. (2011 February). "The Man Who Spilled the Secrets." *Vanity Fair*.

⁴Submit 5 questions for the journalist to Dropbox before class. [Author Profile](#)

⁵Submit 5 questions for the journalist to Dropbox before class. [Author Profile](#)

⁶PDF of this article is posted on Pilot.

Frum, David. (2017 August 3). "[Why Leaking Transcripts of Trump's Calls is So Dangerous.](#)" *The Atlantic*.

October 5 (Th): Local newspaper reporting with guest Anthony Shoemaker - *Dayton Daily News* public affairs editor.

Unit II: Shaping the News: Candidates, Advocacy Groups, and Elected Officials

Week 7

October 10 (T): New Media and Campaigns

Reading: Text Ch. 5

Evaluating the News Assignment due.⁷

October 12 (Th): Challenges of New Media: Authoritative Sources and Fake News

Reading: Allcott, Hunt and Matthew Gentzkow. 2017. "[Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election.](#)" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2): 211-236.

Suggested Reading: Lawrence, Regina C. and Amber E. Boydstun. 2017. "[Celebrities as Actors and Entertainment as Political Media.](#)" In P. Van Aelst and S. Walgrave (Eds.), *How Political Actors Use the Media* (Chapter 3). New York: Palgrave.

Assignment: Reading Questions #3

Week 8

October 17 (T): Campaigning Through the Media

Reading: Text Ch. 6

Draper, Robert. (2016 September 29). "[How Donald Trump Set Off a Civil War Within the Right-Wing Media.](#)" *New York Times Magazine*.

October 19 (Th): Media Strategies in Presidential Campaigns

Reading: Shaw, Daron. 2006. "The Truth About Electoral College Strategies." Ch. 3 in *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004* (pp. 41-60). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Suggested Reading: Herrnson, Paul S., J. Celeste Lay, and Atiya Kai Stokes. 2003. "[Women Running as Women: Candidate Gender, Campaign Issues, and Voter-Targeting Strategies.](#)" *The Journal of Politics* 65(1): 244-255.

Assignment: Reading Questions #4

Week 9

October 24 (T): Governing through the Media

Reading: Text Ch. 7

⁷Submit to dropbox before class.

October 26 (Th): Government by Publicity

Reading: Cook, Timothy E. 2005. "The Uses of News: Theory and (Presidential) Practice." Ch. 6 in *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution, 2nd Edition* (pp. 117-140). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Suggested Reading: Andrews, Kenneth T. and Neal Caren. 2010. "Making the News: Movement Organizations, Media Attention, and the Public Agenda." *American Sociological Review*, 75(6): 841-866

Assignment: Reading Questions #5

Assignment: Questions for Jim Hannah⁸

Week 10

October 31 (T): The national and international news beat with Jim Hannah, Assistant Director of Public Relations, Communications, and Marketing for Wright State University and former reporter for the *Rome American Daily*, *Indianapolis Star*, and Associated Press.

Unit III: Media Effects

November 2 (Th): News and Public Opinion

Reading: Text Ch. 8

Week 11

November 7 (T): Partisan Media and Polarization

Readings: Bakshy, Eytan, Solomon Messing and Lada A. Adamic. 2015. "Exposure to Ideologically Diverse News and Opinion on Facebook." *Science*, 248(6239), 1130-1132.

Levendusky, Matthew. 2017. "Partisan Media and Polarization: Challenges for Future Work." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Assignment: Reading Questions #6

November 9 (Th): **No class.**

Week 12

November 14 (T): Partisan Media

Readings: Draper, Robert. (2016 September 29). "How Donald Trump Set Off a Civil War Within the Right-Wing Media." *The New York Times Magazine*.

Weaver, David A. and Joshua M. Scacco. 2013. "Revisiting the Protest Paradigm: The Tea Party as Filtered Through Prime-Time Cable News." *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(1): 61-84

⁸Submit 5 questions for the journalist to Dropbox before class. [Author profile](#)

Suggested Reading: DellaVigna, Stefano and Ethan Kaplan. 2007. "[The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting.](#)" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3): 1187-1234.

November 16 (Th): Online Political Deliberation

Reading: Barberá, Pablo, John T. Jost, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A. Tucker, and Richard Bonneau. 2015. "[Tweeting from Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than An Echo Chamber?](#)" *Psychological Science*, 26(10): 1531-1542.

Assignment: Reading Questions #7

Week 13

November 21 (T): Politics and Entertainment Media

Readings: Pautz, Michelle C. 2015. "[Argo and Zero Dark Thirty: Film, Government, and Audiences.](#)" *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 48(1): 120-128.

Morrison, Oliver. "[Waiting for the Conservative Jon Stewart.](#)" (2015 February 14), *The Atlantic*.

November 23 (Th): **Thanksgiving**

Week 14

November 28 (T): Infotainment

Readings: Flanagan, Caitlin. "[How Late-Night Comedy Fueled the Rise of Trump.](#)" (2017 May), *The Atlantic*.

Goldstein, Aaron. "[Johnny Carson - The King of Late Night, and of Good Manners.](#)" (2017 May 22), *National Review*.

Curtis, Bryan. "[Sportswriting Has Become a Liberal Profession - Here's How It Happened.](#)" (2017 February 16). *The Ringer*.

November 30 (Th): Presidential Popularity: Evaluating President Trump

Reading: Text Ch. 10

Assignment: President Trump's Ratings Activity

[Gallup Approval](#)

[FiveThirtyEight Ratings](#)

Week 15

December 5 (T): Evaluating Media Politics

Reading: Text Ch. 11

December 7 (Th): Course Wrap-Up

December 14 (Th): Final Exam 10:15-12:15 PM⁹

⁹Final Exam will only cover Unit III.