



**POLS 419
Political Communication
Winter 2014**

**Tuesday 11:30-2:30 PM
Ellis 319**

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OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 11 AM-noon; Thursday, 10:30-noon; Friday 10-11 AM
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Academic Integrity : Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (as articulated by the Centre for Academic Integrity, Duke University; see www.academicintegrity.org) all of which are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University. (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/2011-2012-calendar/academic-regulations/regulation-1>), on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

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GRADING SCHEME:

All components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale:

Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme

Assignment mark	Numerical value for calculation of final mark
A+	93
A	87
A-	82
B+	78
B	75
B-	72
C+	68
C	65
C-	62
D+	58
D	55
D-	52
F48 (F+)	48
F24 (F)	24
F0 (0)	0

Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the DSO website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/>

Political communication may be defined in a number of ways. Denton and Woodward describe it in as "public discussion about the allocation of public resources (money), official authority (who decides), and official sanctions (what is to be rewarded)". Murray Edelman sees political communication as a spectacle; the conscious or subconscious creation of images, problems and antagonisms. A Marxist approach might be to see political communication as part of the ongoing and pervasive set of communication practices which transcends classes. All definitions, to some extent, explain how the state, explicitly or otherwise, uses communication apparatuses to ensure consent and legitimacy.

Thus, political communication can take many forms, from the overt such as political advertising and propaganda to the subtle such as the creation and propagation of myths and symbols of the state. They can be embedded in the entertainment of popular culture or take the guise of 'information' found in news.

Course objectives:

1. knowledge objectives:

Students will be introduced to the variety of contexts in which political communication takes place (such as mass media, advertising, political campaigns and architecture); learn the fundamentals of rhetoric, be introduced to semiotics and understand how political communication affects our political institutions and democratic practices.

2. skills objectives:

Students will have the opportunity to develop oral presentation skills through class discussion of reading summaries and class presentations. Learning to critically analyze readings and a variety of academic approaches in class discussion will be an important component of each class. Active learning where students take ownership of their progress through the material will be central to this course.

Format:

It is *essential* that students come to class having completed the readings and be ready to discuss them in class. The format of each class will be in-depth discussion of readings.

Evaluation will be based on some combination of the following to be determined by the class:

1. Participating in class discussion
2. Leading discussion on a seminar topic
3. Completing a 20 page research essay
4. Writing a 5-7 page book review.
5. Writing a rhetorical analysis of any two political speeches
6. Writing an Exam
7. Working in teams of two or three preparing and responding to a political crisis
8. Working in teams of two preparing political or public interest ad campaign

In lieu of an essay, students will also have the opportunity to create a "flight" of advertisements on behalf of a political party or public interest group. This will be done in teams of two.

The precise breakdown of each of these exercises will be decided by the class in the first week.

Required Book:

Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Recommended Books:

We will draw on readings from a number of sources. Limited quantities of the following book has been ordered as recommended texts only.

Aeron Davis, *Political Communication and Social Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010)

There are a number of other sources which may be useful for your research in this course. Some of the important journals you should examine are:

Canadian Journal of Communications
Critical Studies in Mass Communication
Media, Culture and Society
Public Opinion Quarterly

Communications
Journal of Communication
Political Communication
Rhetoric and Public Affairs

We will use Moodle for some readings and video links for this course.
Please see that you are enrolled in the POLS 419 Moodle course.

January 7

Introductions, goals of the course, evaluation. Students will begin an online discussion about what they expect from the course using the Moodle forum.

January 14

Warm-up:

Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication*, London: Routledge, 2014 [5th ed]. Part 1, Chapter 1, pp 3-15. (Hereafter this book will be referred to as McNair)

The Realm of Political Communications: What Constitutes Political Communication & What is its relevance to the Creation of Community?

Robert Denton and Gary Woodward, *Political Communication in America*, New York: Praeger, 1985. See Chapter 2, "Politics, Communication and Society"

Robert Babe, *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, introduction.

Marc Raboy and Peter Bruck (eds.), *Communication For and Against Democracy*, Montréal: Black Rose, 1989. "The Challenge of Democratic Communication", pp. 3-19.

Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone", *Journal of Democracy*. See:
http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/journal_of_democracy/v006/putnam.html

Framing: How meaning is shaped by language

George Lakoff, *Don't think of an Elephant: Know your Values and Frame the Debate* (New York: Chelsea Green). Available from instructor

Ira Basen, “A Schlemiel is the Elephant in the Room: The Framing of Stéphane Dion”, *Canadian Journal of Communication* 34 (2009)

Robert Entman, “Framing: Toward clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”, *Journal of Communication* 43:(4) (Fall 1993)

Dennis Chong and James Druckman, “Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies” *American Political Science Review*, 101:4 (Nov 2007)

Kenneth Dodge, “Framing Public Policy and Prevention of Chronic Violence in American Youths” *American Psychologist* 63:7 (Oct 2008)

January 21

Warm-up:

McNair Chapter 2

Communications and Government

Kristen Kozolanka, 2006. The Sponsorship Scandal as Communication: The Rise of Politicized and Strategic Communications in the Federal Government. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 31(2), pp 343-366.

Sally Young, *Government Communication in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Introduction.

Satire as Political Communication

Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal. Many on-line versions of this exist.

One is here: <http://art-bin.com/art/omodest.html>

Geoffrey Baym, “Representation & the Politics of Play: Stephen Colbert’s *Better Know A District* in *Political Communication* 24:4 (2007)

Lauren Feldman, “The News about Comedy: Young Audiences, The Daily Show and Evolving Notions of Journalism”, *Journalism* 8:4 (2007)

Heather LaMarre, Kristen Landreville and Michael Beam, “The Irony of Satire” in *International Journal of Press/Politics* 14:2 (April 2009)

Ian Reilly, “Amusing Ourselves to Death?” Social Media, Political Satire, and the 2011 Election” in *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2011), 503-11.

J.S. Meisel, “Humour and Insult in the House of Commons: the Case of Palmerston and Disraeli” *Parliamentary History*, vol. 28, iss. 2, June 2009, p. 229. (pp. 228-245).

Jon Stewart on Crossfire
video accessible on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFQFB5YpDZE>

Propaganda or Persuasion?

Randal Marlin, *Propaganda & the Ethics of Persuasion* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2003) chapters 4 “Ethics and Propaganda”, ch. 6 “Freedom of Expression: Some Classical Arguments” and ch. 7 “The Question of Controls”

Peter Van Ham, “Wars Lies and Videotape: Public Diplomacy and the USAs War on Terrorism” in *Security Dialogue* 34 (Dec. 2003)

Brandon Rottinghaus, ‘Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of ‘Crafted Talk’’, *Political Communication* 25:2 (2008) 138-57

January 28

Warm-up:

McNair, Chapter 3.

The Nature of Communication Theory: --The Process vs. Semiotics Schools

John Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies*, London: Methuen, 1982. Chapters 3 and 6.

Michael Gurevitch et.al., (eds.) *Culture, Society and the Media*, London: Methuen, 1982. Chapter 1.

Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, New York: Oxford, 1983. Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

Communication and the Canadian Legacy, McLuhan, Innis and Smythe

Robert Babe, *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, chs, 3, 5, 11 (pp. 50-89, 112-140, 266-306)

*Richard Collins, "The Metaphor of 'Dependency' and Canadian Communications: The Legacy of Harold Innis" in *Canadian Journal of Communications* 12:1 (Winter 1986) pp. 1-19.

*Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis, McLuhan, Grant*, Montréal: New World Perspectives, 1984. Note the chapters by Innis and McLuhan.

*Dallas Smythe, *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness and Canada*, Norwood: Ablex, 1981

* recommended reading but might be useful for term papers.

February 4

Warm-up:

McNair, chapter 4.

Rhetoric and Politics: From Ancient Greece to Teleprompters

Bruce Gronbeck, "Rhetoric and Politics" in Lynda Lee Kaid, *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004

Andrew O'Hehir, "God's Demagogue" in *Salon magazine* (Salon.com), March 1, 2006. Available on-line.

Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, Ch. 9, Rhetoric and Poetics pp. 259-273.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Chapter 2 (Nature of Rhetoric), Chapter 3 (Three Kinds of Rhetoric), Chapter 4 (The Subjects of Political Oratory), New York: Modern Library, 1954.

*Rita Kirk Whillock, "The Subversion of Argument: Lessons from the Demagogic Rhetoric of David Duke" in *Political Communication* 11:3 (Fall 1994) pp. 217-33.

*Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation" and Richard Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation" in John Louis Lucaites et. al. *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, New York: Guildford, 1999, pp. 217-31.

The Application of Rhetoric to Politics: Martin Luther King and Barack Obama

Jill Lepore, "The Speech: Have Inaugural Addresses been getting worse?" *New Yorker*, January 12, 2009

John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit, "Introduction", *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory A Reader*, New York, Guildford Press, 1999, pp. 1-19.

Ann Gordon & Jerry Miller, "Values and Persuasion During the First Bush-Gore Presidential Debate" in *Political Communication* 21:1 (Jan. 2004)

David Frank, "The Prophetic Voice and the Face of the Other in Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union' Address" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, (12:2) Summer 2009

*Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

*Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in An Electronic Age*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

February 11

Warm-up:

McNair, chapter 5.

Mass Media and Democratic Obligations: the case of the “War on Terrorism”

Peter Maass, “The Toppling: How the Media inflated a Minor Moment in a Long War”, *New Yorker*, January 10, 2011

John Hutcheson et. al., “US National Identity, Political Elites, and A Patriotic Press Following September 11” *Political Communication* 21 (2004)

Timothy M Jones & Penelope Sheets, “Torture in the Eye of the Beholder: Social Identity, News Coverage, and Abu Ghraib” *Political Communication* 26:3 (July 2009), pp. 278-95.

John Hutcheson, David Domke et. al. “US National Identity, Political Elites, and a Patriotic Press Following September 11” *Political Communication* 21, pp. 27-50, (2004).

Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Use of Propaganda in Bush’s War in Iraq*, New York: Penguin, 2003, chapters 1 and 2.

Paul Rutherford, *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Marketing the War Against Iraq*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. ch. 2, “War Debate”.
<http://leadingtowar.com/intro.php>

The balance of the course will be spent with student presentations and discussion. The format of these classes will take the form of a 20 minute student presentation, followed by class discussion. There will be three student presentations per week.

The readings accompanying the seminar topics are merely guidelines to steer the class for the assigned topic. The assumption is that the presenter will have read more. Students should consult with me early on for additional readings.

In the past student presentations have been on topics as diverse as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- The Codes of Television and the Creation of Myths -- TV News and the Inability to Inform -- Negative Advertising -- Political Socialization & Political Communication --Role of Social Media in Politics: Is there a place for Twitter and Facebook? --YouTube as a vehicle for democratization (case study of the Arab Spring) -- Television Debates and the Fulfillment of Democratic Norms -- Political Advertising -- Government Advertising -- The Impact of Public Relations and Political Consultants on Public Discourse --Editorial Cartoons as vehicles of political persuasion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Civic Journalism -- Media Ownership and the Coverage of Political Issues --The impact of new media on creating democratic practices --Feminism & Communication Studies -- State Branding: How governments market themselves -- How are gay/lesbian/bi/transgendered issues portrayed in the media? --Political Rhetoric: How has it evolved? -- Political Symbolism and the Construction of Myths --Hate Propaganda: The Limits of Free Speech --The uses and abuses of public opinion polling --9/11 and the creation of dominant news frames
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