

Political Communication

Communication 4013/6013
Monday/Tuesday 2:20pm –
3:45pm

Office Hours:by appt

Course Description

Citizens lament the drama, division, and distortion that have marked the 2020 presidential campaign thus far.

This course turns that lament on its head by teaching you to work with – rather than against – such qualities in the interest of greater civic discernment.

Drawing from classical, modern, and postmodern theories of political rhetoric and close study of the major presidential candidates, the course explores how power circulates and becomes manifest in the conflicting words and images we use to make sense of public life – and to elect the President of the United States.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular institutional disciplinary procedures. (<https://www.memphis.edu/osa/students/academic-misconduct.php>)

Expectations

I expect you to treat each other and me with respect. We will discuss these expectations further as the class progresses.

Deadlines

Each assignment has a deadline. You get a zero – that is, no points at all – if a deadline passes, and you have not completed the assignment. You do, however, have one (1) chance for a 24-hour extension, but only after email consultation with the instructor before the due date.

Attendance and Breaks

This course will meet remotely for the entire term. We will not have any “in-person” sessions. Class starts at 2:20pm on ZOOM. Follow instructions provided via email and on eCourseware.

Course Content

All course readings marked with an (ec) are available for download via eCourseware.

Otherwise, you need only purchase one book: *Winning Arguments* by Stanley Fish. Make sure you have this book by 9/2.

Assignments and Grading

You start with zero (0) points. Throughout the term, you accumulate points toward your final grade. Each assignment has a maximum number of total points. Quizzes (which can earn you from 10pts to 15pts, and which you will take on eCourseware) assess you via a range of tools, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and essay questions. The other assignments each have different point totals.

Here's how that breaks down overall and totals 100pts:

- Quiz 1 10pts
- Quiz 2 15pts
- Issue Controversy Proposal 15pts
- Workshop Response 05pts
- Debate Analysis 10pts
- Issue Controversy Presentation 20pts
- Final Paper 25pts

I detail the criteria for each assignment in the “POLCOMM-2020 Assignments Handout” posted to eCourseware. Students enrolled in the 6013 section of the course will have additional assignments emailed to them by the first day of class.

Course Schedule for Political Communication

Campaign 2020

The Problem of Political Rhetoric

M	8/17	Introductions: Why are we doing this? And who are “we” anyway?
W	8/19	Syllabus review; Political Rhetoric; Q&A on the national and local elections
M	8/24	Kendi’s “The Other Swing Voter” (ec); Woodard “Half of Americans Don’t Vote. What Are They Thinking?” (ec)
W	8/26	Controversy and the Problem of Political Rhetoric; Discuss Issue Controversy assignments
M	8/31	Drama, Division, Distortion: The Case of Ayanna Pressley vs. Betsy DeVos
W	9/2	Connolly’s <i>Terms of Political Discourse</i> (Introduction and Preface) (ec): The Case of “Freedom” and COVID-19

F 9/4 Quiz 1 due @5pm on eCourseware

No Way Out

Living in a Rhetorical World

M	9/7	Labor Day
W	9/9	Fish, “Introduction” and “Living in a World of Argument”
M	9/14	Fish, “Political Arguments” <u>Deadline to schedule your One-On-One workshop meeting</u>
W	9/16	Fish, “Academic Arguments” and “Why We Can’t Get Along”
M	9/21	Hershey’s “Constructed Explanations” (ec)
W	9/23	Constructed Explanations: The Case of the 2019 Memphis Mayor’s Race

F 9/25 Quiz 2 due @5pm on eCourseware

M	9/28	Arthur Miller’s “On Politics and the Art of Acting”
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T	9/29	Presidential Debate #1-Indiana
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W	9/30	Discuss debate
F	10/2	Issue Controversy Proposals due @5pm on eCourseware

PAUSE

Prepping for your Final Projects

M	10/5	One-on-One workshops
T	10/6	One-on-One workshops
W	10/7	One-on-One workshops

W	10/7	Vice Presidential Debate- Utah
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F	10/9	Workshop Response due @5pm on eCourseware
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M	10/12	In-class discussion of proposals
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W	10/14	Discuss 11/8/16 documentary
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Th	10/15	Presidential Debate #2-Florida
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Getting Down to Cases

Leaders, Problems, and Ideologies

M	10/19	Fannie Lou Hamer and LBJ-1964
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W	10/21	FLH-LBJ-1964 (cont’d)
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Th	10/22	Presidential Debate #3-Tennessee
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F	10/23	Debate Analysis due @5pm on eCourseware
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M	10/26	Elizabeth Warren & Mike Bloomberg-2020
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W	10/28	EW-MB-2020 (cont’d)
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M	11/2	TBD
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Tuesday, November 3 – ELECTION DAY!

W	11/4	What Just Happened? Recap
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Issue Controversy Presentations

M	11/9	Issue Controversy Presentations (A)
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W	11/11	Issue Controversy Presentations (B)
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M	11/16	Issue Controversy Presentations (C)
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W	11/18	Issue Controversy Presentations (D)
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M	11/23	Final Papers @5pm on eCourseware
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