

**Presidents and the Press**

JRSM 4720/6720

Fall 2018

MWF, 11:30-12:25

Meeman Journalism Room 100

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS****CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Conflict and symbiosis between the White House and the news media; studies of history, journalism, and politics; how various presidents used or failed to use the media, how they were covered and represented, and how that relationship has changed over the years.

**PREREQUISITES:**

None

**TEXTBOOK:**

David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2016). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0393-35364-8. *\*One copy of this book is on three-hour reserve in McWherter Library.*

**CLASSROOM FORMAT:**

This seminar is a three-credit-hour course exploring the relationship between American presidents and the news media. Through discussion as well as lecture it combines the studies of history, journalism and politics. The approach used is primarily chronological, but we will pay particular attention to a number of key, recurring themes. These motifs are important lenses through which to view presidential-press relations, and they are especially appropriate considering the evolving, dynamic nature of the topic. For the office of the presidency has changed greatly over the last two centuries. So, too, of course have America's media and political systems.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Students will take three tests (including a final exam) covering class notes and assigned readings.

Students will also prepare a 3- to 5-page advisory report counseling the current president on how to deal with the press effectively and how better to communicate with the public. It is a practical professional assignment, involving argumentation more than investigation, strategy rather than scholarship. It will be part of the final exam.

In a seminar your contributions are essential. Please be prepared to make comments and ask questions regularly. Your classmates and I depend on you.

**GRADING:**

- Test 1: 30 points
- Test 2: 30 points
- Test 3/Final: 30 points
- Participation: 10 points
- Total 100 points**

**GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

In addition to the undergraduate components of the course, graduate students will be required to write a 20-page research paper comparing the media relations of 2-3 American presidents and present their findings to the class. The paper should include a wide variety of both primary and secondary sources. They will also write one three-page book review from a readings list prepared by the instructor. It's a good idea for the book review to be related to the research paper, though it doesn't have to be.

**GRADING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

- Test 1: 20 points
- Test 2: 20 points
- Test 3/Final: 20 points
- Paper: 30 points
- Book review: 10 points
- Total 100 points**

**PRESIDENTS**

"All men are created equal," announced the Declaration of Independence in 1776, yet that idealistic tenet clearly does not apply to the individuals who have been president of the United States. Some were greater than others, some more consequential or more memorable. In this course we will accordingly focus on these more "newsworthy" individuals, examining how they used (or failed to use) the media and how in turn they were covered by the media. Examining their administrations can highlight both the conflict and the symbiosis between the White House and the Fourth Estate. This group includes the following:

*The Revolutionaries:* Washington, Adams, Jefferson

*The Commoners:* Jackson, Lincoln

*The Executives:* T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F. Roosevelt

*The Warriors:* Johnson, Nixon

*The Imagists:* Kennedy, Reagan

*The Internet Presidents:* Clinton, Bush, Obama

### THEMES

1. **War.** Censorship, propaganda, patriotism, professionalism
2. **Management.** The “imperial presidency.”
3. **Ideology.** The objectivity ethos: Most American journalists say they still subscribe to this approach. Are there benefits to it?
4. **Partisanship.** Is the press inherently right, left, both or neither?
5. **“The New Politics.”** Is it true that there are new rules, new players, and a new game involved in running for office?
6. **Campaign advertising.**
7. **Insider v. Outsider.** Should journalists covering powerful people strive to be confidants or critics?
8. **Technology.** How have presidents used technology to communicate with the public?
9. **Public Participation.** Are ordinary citizens better able to influence politicians and the press today than they were in the past?
10. **Entertainment and politics.** Are actors, comedians, musicians and talk show hosts (and not journalists) the real media power brokers in 21<sup>st</sup>-century politics?
11. **[Your ideas here].** What do you think is important?

### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Deadline
Aug. 27-31	Introduction. Washington and Adams.		
Sept. 5-7	Jefferson.		
Sept 10-14	Jackson.		
Sept. 17-21	Lincoln.		
Sept. 24-28	<i>Review and test.</i>		<b>Test 1</b>
Oct. 1-5	T. Roosevelt.	Introduction, Chapters 1-6	
Oct. 8-12	Wilson.	Chapters 7-12	
Oct. 17-19	F. Roosevelt.	Chapters 19-27	
Oct. 24-28	<i>Review and test.</i> Eisenhower.	Chapters 28-35	<b>Test 2</b>
Oct. 29-Nov. 2	Kennedy.	Chapters 36-41	
Nov. 5-9	Johnson.	Chapters 42-44	
Nov. 12-16	Nixon.	Chapters 45, 13-18	
Nov. 19	Reagan.	Chapter 46	
Nov. 26-30	Clinton, Bush.	Chapters 47-49	
Dec. 3-5	Obama, Trump. <i>Review for final.</i>		
Dec. 10 (10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)			<b>Final exam (Test 3)</b>

## FIVE PILLARS OF JRSM4720

- *Professionalism*: Students learn about the development of professional norms, procedures and culture of news media professionals throughout the history of the United States.
- *Writing*: Students are required to write a research paper in appropriate academic style about some related topic to how presidents related to the news media.
- *Multimedia*: Students examine the origin and evolution of various media forms, including the adaptation of new technology focusing on how presidents have used emerging media.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students learn about changes in values and practices and are encouraged to reconcile those shifts with today's media landscape. Class discussion will include thinking about how presidents through the years have used media to their advantage or disadvantage.
- *Media Literacy*: Students gain perspective on present-day media industries and institutions by studying the historical forces shaping their development. Discussion will take place about how people and politicians have used the news media.

## ASSESSMENT

### PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JRSM4720:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Think critically, creatively and independently

### HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

#### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):*

- Students will obtain both a better understanding of the American presidency and the history of American mass media
- Students will analyze past events, people, and institutions from a variety of angles—social, political, economic, and cultural
- Students will explore the origin and subsequent course of the following themes: structural change; money and politics; political advertising; partisanship; electoral strategy; technology

- Students will explore the complicated relationship between journalists and politicians, particularly during times of crisis, as well as issues involving censorship and propaganda, political advertising, public relations, and news management

***Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):***

- Students will write a research paper on a topic or issue raised in the course.
- Students will write and present a report providing media-relations advice for the current president.

**HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET:**

*Awareness:*

- Becoming aware of the forces, institutions, processes, and personalities shaping presidential-press relations.

*Understanding:*

- Understanding the historical development of presidential communication, along with the underlying individuals, institutions, events, and issues surrounding them.

*Application:*

- Writing a research report.
- Writing an advisory report.
- Discussion/debate in class.

**DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

**PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

#### **EMAIL:**

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

#### **MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

#### **CHEATING:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

**ONLINE SETEs:**

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact your instructor privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.