

Presidents and the Press

JRSM 4720/6720-001, 350

Fall 2020

Class meeting: TR 11:20 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

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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.

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

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.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 4720 - 001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

Undergraduate students will take two tests (a midterm and a final exam) covering class notes and assigned readings.

They 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 this course participation is measured in three ways: occasional quizzes, social media posts, and classroom discussion. The last is especially important. In a seminar your contributions are essential. Please be prepared to make comments and ask questions regularly. Your classmates and I depend on you.

Repetition of Courses and Coursework

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the resume and logo).

Grading

There are 620 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

Midterm:	40 points
Final exam:	40 points
Participation:	20 points
Total	100 points

Honors

Any student taking this class for honors credit (section 350) must verify this with the instructor by the end of the second week of class and arrange an honors assignment.

Graduate Students

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.

Paper:	60 points
Book review:	30 points

Participation: 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, Trump

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 21st-century politics?
11. **[Your ideas here].** What do you think is important?

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

Week 1, August 18-20: Introduction, Washington, Adams, Jefferson

Readings: Introduction

Week 2, August 25-27: Jackson

Week 3, September 1-3: Lincoln

Week 4, September 8-10: T. Roosevelt

Readings: Chapters 1-6

Week 5, September 15-17: Wilson

Readings: Chapters 7-12

Week 6, September 22-24: F. Roosevelt

Readings: Chapter 19-27

Week 7, September 29-October 1

Review and Midterm test

Week 8, October 6-8: Kennedy

Readings: Chapters 36-41

Week 9, October 13-15: Johnson

Readings: Chapters 42-44

Week 10, October 20-22: Nixon

Readings: Chapters 13-18, 45

Week 11, October 27-29: Reagan

Readings: Chapter 46

Week 12, November 3-5: Clinton and Bush

Readings: Chapters 47-49

Week 13, November 10-12: Obama and Trump

Week 14, November 17: Review for Final

Final: Thursday, November 19 8-10 a.m.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in JRSM 4720

- *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.

- *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.
- *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.

Professional Values and Competencies in JRSM 4720

- 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.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel,*

October 11, 2018)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

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. Media 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.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing

All students, faculty and staff will wear masks in all public spaces, including our classroom (lab) per the COVID-19 policy. The first time a student enters a classroom without wearing a face covering, the student will be asked to leave the class until they return a covering. Further violations will be referred to the Office of Student Accountability. Students who repeatedly or flagrantly violate these community expectations may be referred for discipline under the Student Code and, if appropriate, immediately removed from campus by the Dean of Students.

Student Health

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu.

Student Accommodations

If and when we return to class, students seeking to remain remote for health or other serious reasons should discuss their options with me. Students with accessibility issues or with other learning accommodation needs due to a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. Contact DRS at 901.678.2880 or at drs@memphis.edu. (<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php>)

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.