Media and Electoral Politics in 1996

Course: **PS 100**

Professor: **Barbara Allen**  
Class Period: **Tues, Thurs 10:30-12:15**  
Class Location: **Library 344**  
Office Location: **Willis 408**  
Office Hours: **Wed 1:30-4:00 and Mon, Tue, Thurs by appt. (sign-up)**

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**The Course**

This seminar will introduce you to the basic methods of political analysis through an ase study of media and politics in the 1996 elections. We will study how media influence campaign spending and organization, consider the various methods by which candidates package their messages, and the overall effect of media on electoral politics. Various concepts from public opinion analysis and the fields of political behavior and political psychology will be used to understand campaigns and elections. Students must have access to a television and radio for nightly analysis of campaign news and will be required to subscribe to the *New York Times*. In addition to following the presidential and congressional elections in general, we will focus on the [Minnesota 7th and 1st Congressional districts](https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/POSC100/F96/index.html) and [US Senate](https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/POSC100/F96/index.html) races to learn more about local news coverage and political participation. The class will work with social scientists across Minnesota on a project known as the [Minnesota Compact](https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/POSC100/F96/index.html) and will preparing seminar papers based on this research.

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**Readings**

The following books have been ordered for the course:


**On reserve are:**

• Lynda Lee Kaid, et al. 1986. *New Perspectives on Political Advertising*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 0-8093-1264-6 (The chapters that we are using)


**Course Requirements**

Below are the readings and general topics for each of our meetings. In addition to coming to class prepared to discuss the readings you will be involved as a group in two data collection projects that will provide the basic information for your individual research papers. The first project, "Media Monitoring" involves collecting data on local newspaper and television coverage of the 1st and 7th Congressional and Minnesota's US Senate elections. The second project, "Ad Watch Analysis," focuses on specific television campaign ads, analyzing their scripts, visual texts, and evaluating the accuracy of their messages.

Grades will be computed as:

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**Topics for Discussion and Reading Assignments**

**Part 1: Democratic Theory**

Thur Sept 12

**Self-Government and Democracy**

Read: *The Federalist* 1 and 6-10; Iyengar intro, Fishkin Ch 1
Tues Sept 17

**Participation and Representation**
**Read:** *The Federalist* 15-17 and 21-24; Fishkin Ch 2; Alger Ch 1 and 15

***** Media Monitoring: NEWSPAPERS *****

Thur Sept 19

**Representation and Responsibility**
**Read:** *The Federalist* 15-17 and 21-24; Iyengar Ch 1

Tues Sept 24

**Federalism and other Multi-tiered Designs**
**Read:** *The Federalist* 45-51

**Part 2: Media and Politics: Public Opinion, Socialization, and Participation**

Thur Sept 26

**Public Opinion 1: Definitions and Measurement**
**Read:** Alger Ch 2; B. Allen "*Tocqueville* and Spiral of Silence" (on reserve); Fiskin Ch 5.

***** Media Monitoring: TELEVISION *****

Tue Oct 1

**Public Opinion 2: Narrative and Symbolism in News Reporting**
**Read:** Alger Ch 3 and Iyengar Ch 2

Thur Oct 3

**Public Opinion 3: Information Process Models and Political Socialization**
**Read:** Iyengar Ch 3 and 5; B. Allen et.al "Media and the Gulf War" (on reserve); Graber Ch 1, 5 and 7

Tues Oct 8

**Public Opinion 4: Assessing Content**
**Read:** Iyengar Ch 3 and 5; B. Allen et.al "Media and the Gulf War" (on reserve)

******** Ad Watch Analysis ********

Thurs Oct 10

**The Structure of News Organization and The Voices of Citizens**, (Political Communication and Participation)
**Read:** Fishkin Ch 5 and Alger Ch 4

Tues Oct 15

**Government - Media Links**
**Read:** Alger Ch 8 and 9

**Part 3: Electoral Politics**
Thurs Oct 17

**The Electoral System: Primaries, Conventions, and General Elections**

**Read:** in Nelson, Ch 1 (Stokes & Dijulio, "The Setting") and Ch 2 (Barilleaux and Adkins, "Nomination") and Alger Ch 10

Tues Oct 22

**Campaigns and Parties**

**Read:** Reichley, Part 4 "Contemporary Parties" (Ch 18-20) and Kaid Ch 3, (Kolar "Fighting Back: American Political Parties Take to the Airwaves")

Thur Oct 24

**Money and Interests: PACs and Campaign Financing**

**Read:** Sorauf Ch 4, 6, and 8

Part 4: Media and Elections

Tues Oct 29

Covering **Candidates and Campaigns**

**Read:** Alger Ch 11, 290-324; 334-338

Thur Oct 31

**Candidate Information 1: Speeches and Debates**

**Read:** Alger Ch 12, 338-353

Tues Nov 5

**Candidate Information 2: Campaign Advertising, Design and Coverage**

**Read:** Alger Ch 11 324-334, Kaid, Ch 1 (Jamieson, "The Evolution of Political Advertising in America,")

***** Evening Session on Election Results *****

Thur Nov 7

**Candidate Information 3: Campaign Advertising, Analysis**

**Read:** Alger Ch 12 353-378 and Kaid, Ch 2 (Devlin, "An Analysis of Presidential Television Commercials 1952-1982) and Ch 7 (Kaid and Davidson, "Elements of Videostyle")

Tues Nov 12

**Candidate Information 4: Campaign Advertising, Effects**

**Read:** Alger Ch 13; Kaid, Ch 8, (Kundy, "Political Commercials and Candidate Image: The Effect Can Be Substantial")

**Class Presentations**

Thur Nov 14

************** Final Version of Paper Due in Class ***************