

2016

246 Media and Politics

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**POLI 246 - MEDIA AND POLITICS
XAVIER UNIVERSITY**

**SUMMER INTERSESSION 2016
8:30 am – 12:15 pm, Alter Hall #103**

Instructors

Mack Mariani, Associate Professor of Political Science
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Office Hours

By appointment most afternoons. Talk to one of us after class or e-mail marianim@xavier.edu to set up an appointment.

Course Description

This course will examine the changing role of the mass media and the role that the mass media plays in our democratic system. The course will put particular emphasis on providing students with firsthand opportunities to learn about how reporters and editors select and approach political stories and how political actors work with the media to communicate to the public. Particular attention will be paid to debates about the freedom and independence of the press in the modern era and the role that public opinion should play in public policy making.

Political Science Learning Objectives

In this course, students will be required to:

- Explain the structure, goals, and purpose of various forms of mass media in the United States, how these structures have changed over time, and how the media interacts with the public, elected officials and other political actors.
- Identify, explain, analyze and critique key theories in media and politics, including:
- Relate theoretical knowledge to empirical observations of media coverage of contemporary political events.
- Engage in detailed reading and analysis of primary texts, journal articles, and/or scholarly books on subjects related to mass media and American politics.

Required Books

Doris A. Graber and Johanna L. Dunaway, [Mass Media and American Politics](#), Congressional Quarterly Press, Washington DC. Ninth Edition, 2014.

Check the bookstore to see if they have copies of the book, but do not order a hard copy of the book. If you find a hard copy at the bookstore and wish to purchase it, that's fine. If you order one, it is unlikely to come in time to do you any good. Just download either the Kindle or Vital Source versions of the book. The Kindle version of the book is \$46 on Amazon. Alternatively, you can purchase 180 days of access to an online version of the book at Vital Source for slightly cheaper (\$36). Go to www.vitalsource.com and create an account if you want to do it that way.

Course Policies

Academic needs – Xavier University will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation, please discuss it with me privately during the first few weeks of the semester or contact the Learning Assistance Center at (513) 745-3280 for assistance.

Attendance/Late Assignments – Attendance is mandatory. The instructors reserve the right to lower your overall course grade due to excessive absences.

Late Papers/Assignments – Late papers will receive a one letter grade penalty per-class period (an A paper becomes an B, and so on). Because this course is condensed, it is critically important that you hand in your work on time.

Grading and Assignments

40% Assignments
30% Paper
30% Final Exam

Grade distribution

The following point totals are needed to secure the following grades:

95%	A	79%	C+
92%	A-	75%	C
89%	B+	72%	C-
85%	B	65%	D
82%	B-	<65%	F

ASSIGNMENTS

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY ASSIGNMENT #1 (DUE FIRST WEDNESDAY):

Use the readings from Monday's class to assess whether the arguments put forward by [Tocqueville](#) support [Davis' position](#) or [Shafer's position](#) on the importance of newspapers to democracy. No more than four pages, double spaced, please. Include a works cited page (doesn't count for page number).

NEWSMAKER ASSIGNMENT #2 (DUE FIRST THURSDAY): Bring in 3 recent press releases from local politicians. In no more than four double spaced pages, consider whether you would consider each of the three press releases newsworthy for a daily newspaper, a local television news program, and a radio talk show. On what basis did you make your determination? How did your perspective of what is newsworthy change depending on the medium?

5 -PAGE PAPER (DUE SECOND MONDAY): Answer the following question in no fewer than 5 double-spaced pages: *Is journalism essential to democracy? If so, what kind of journalism do we need for our democracy to function well? Is our current media system up to the task? If not, what if anything should be done?* Though this question should incorporate some of the course readings, a strong answer will also include additional independent research on this topic. Consider a visit to the [Columbia Journalism Review](#), as well as right leaning media criticism sites such as [Media Research Center](#), and left-leaning media criticism sites such as [Media Matters](#). The Pew Studies linked at the bottom of this page may also be helpful. As a general rule of thumb, a 5-page paper should have no fewer than 5 outside sources. Personally, when I see 7 or 8 sources for a paper of this size, I think that's pretty good. Please don't use Wikipedia as a source. Format requirements: double spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins. Include a title and a works cited page (this doesn't count toward the 5-pages).

PRESS RELEASE ASSIGNMENT #3 (DUE SECOND TUESDAY): Write a press release from the perspective of one of the Hamilton County Commissioners on one of the issues that is scheduled to be debated at Wednesday's commission meeting. You can find the agenda for Wednesday's meeting [here](#). For basic info on press releases, take a look through the first part of the powerpoint presentation that we went over in class. More importantly, read through John Czwartacki's guide on how to write a press release (we read it last week). You can select any issue on the agenda for the meeting. We will discuss this more in class.

STORY ASSIGNMENT #4 (DUE SECOND WEDNESDAY by 10 PM): Write a 750 to 1,000 word news story on the Hamilton County Commissioner's Meeting. Refer back to Prof. Weiser's class discussion and Bill Parks basic newswriting reading (see syllabus) for help in crafting the story. Story should include a headline and a nutgraph

Media and Politics Intersession Course, Summer 2016: Agenda

Date	Topic	Event	Assignment Due
Mon. May 9	Course Introduction	8:15 am Introduction <i>End at 11:00 am today.</i>	
Tue. May 10	The 24-Hour News Cycle, Social Media and the Future of News	Guest Speaker: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm: Seth Walsh, Candidate for Hamilton County Treasurer	
Wed. May 11	What is News?	Field Trip: Cincinnati Enquirer	Assignment #1: Media and Democracy Essay
Thurs. May 12	Media, Policy and Politics How to Write a Press Release	Guest Speaker 9:30 am – 10:30 am: Howard Wilkinson, WVXU	
Fri. May 13	Television News	Field Trip: WKRC Local 12 News, 1906 Highland Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45219 10:45 am: Meet Nancy (513-763-5421) at Local 12 News for tour 11:15 am: Meet with Reporter 12:00 pm: Watch Noon News in Studio (<i>Finish at 12:30 pm/Return at 12:45 pm</i>)	Assignment #2: Newsmaker Assignment
Mon., May 16	TBA	Field Trip: Cincinnati City Council, City Hall 9:00 am: Meet with PG Sittenfeld at City Hall 10:00 am: City Council Human Services Committee Meeting	Paper Due
Tue. May 17	Newswriting 101		Assignment #4: Press Release
Wed. May 18	Covering the News	Field Trip: Hamilton Cty. Commission, Hamilton Cty. Office Building 10:00 am: Meet with Kellie Wise 11:00 am: Hamilton County Commission Meeting	Assignment #5 Story Assignment (Due 10pm)
Thurs. May 19	Media Critics and Defenders		
Friday, May 20	Final Exam	8:00 am – 10:15 am: Film: Spotlight (early start) 10:30 am – 12:15 pm: Final Exam	

Course Readings

Every Day

- Keep track of the local news using Cincinnati.com and the Politics Extra Blog at: <http://cincinnati.com/blogs/politics/>

Monday, May 9: Course Intro., Newspapers & Democracy, State of Journalism

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Course Introduction	Carl/Mack	8:30 am	9:00 am
Newspapers and Democracy Discussion	Carl/Mack	9:00am	9:45 am
The State of Journalism/Pew Discussion	Carl	10:00 am	11:00 am

* Mariani leaving at 9:45 am for Columbus; Class Ends at 11 am today.

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, Mass Media and Politics, Chapter 1 (Media Power and Governmental Control)
- Tocqueville, Book II, Chapter 6: [Of the Relation Between Public Associations and the Newspapers.](#)"
- Jack Shafer, "[Democracy's Cheat Sheet? It's time to kill the idea that newspapers are essential to democracy.](#)" Slate, March 27, 2009.
- Kevin Davis, "[Why Local Newspapers are the Basis of Democracy.](#)" Cranford Chronicle/NJ.Com, April 25, 2009.
- Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, Summary Essays on State of the News for [Newspapers](#), [Network News](#), and [Digital Media](#).

Tuesday, May 10: The Changing Media Environment

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Changing Media Environment. What is a Journalist? What is Journalism?	Mack/Carl	8:30 am	9:20 am
Wisdom Journalism	Carl	9:30 am	10:00 am
Guest Speaker: Seth Walsh	Mack	10:00 am	11:00 am
Hayek and Habermas Discussion	Mack	11:15 am	12:15 pm

* Carl can leave at 10:00 am

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 4: (Media and Politics in the Changing Media Landscape).
- The Economist, "[Tossed by a gale: It isn't just the newspapers: much of the established news is being blown away. Yet News is thriving.](#)" May 14, 2009.
- Matt Karolian, "[Facebook will be Every Publisher's CMS and that is Probably a Good Thing.](#)" *The Startup* (November 1, 2015).

- Anne Saker, "[Raising Zay: A Family's Journey with a Transgender Child.](#)" Cincinnati Enquirer (February 21, 2015).
- Stephens, Mitchell. "[Beyond News: The Case for Wisdom Journalism.](#)" 2009.
- Nicholas Lemann, "[Amateur Hour: Journalism without Journalists.](#)" The New Yorker/Wayward Press, August 7, 2006.
- Cass Sunstein, "Neither Hayek nor Habermas," *Public Choice* (2008): 134: 87-95.

Wednesday, May 11: What is News? Press Freedom and the Law

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
What is News Discussion	Carl	8:15 am	8:50 am
Editorial Board Meeting	Carl	9:00 am	10:00 am
Guest Speaker	Carl/Mack	10:00 am	11:00 am
Discussion: Press Freedom and the Law	Carl/Mack	11:00 am	12:00 pm

* Carl can leave at 10:00 am

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 3: Press Freedom and the Law
- Bates, Stephen. *The Reporter's Privilege, Then and Now.* 2000.
- Lawrence Lessig, "[TNR Debate: Against Transparency: The Perils of Openness in Government.](#)" The New Republic, October 9, 2009.
- Tim Wu, "[TNR Debate: Too Much Transparency? \(Part 1\): Why more transparency actually makes politicians less likely to act in the public interest.](#)" The New Republic, October 11, 2009.
- Ellen Miller and Michael Klein, "[TNR Debate: Too Much Transparency \(Part II\): More Scrutiny of Government is the Solution, Not the Problem.](#)" The new Republic, October 11, 2009.
- David Weinberger, "[TNR Debate: Too Much Transparency? \(Part IV\): Greater Transparency will build - not diminish - the public's trust.](#)" The New Republic, October 13, 2009.
- Ben Watson, wmctv.com, "[Gun Owners Outraged About Commercial Appeal List.](#)" February 12, 2009.
- Chris Peck, "[Case for Gun-Permit Listings Trumps Emotional Opposition.](#)" The Commercial Appeal, February 15, 2009.

Thursday, May 12: Media as Policy Makers; Press Release Writing

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Media & Government: Watchdog?	Mack/Carl	8:15 am	9:20 am
Guest Speaker: Howard Wilkinson, WVXU	Mack/Carl	9:30 am	10:20 am
Political Campaigns & the Media	Mack/Carl	10:30 am	11:15 am
How to Write a Press Release	Mack	11:30 am	12:15 pm

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics*, Chapter 7 (The Struggle for Control: News from the Presidency and Congress).
- Paul Fahrl, "[Obama Official Says he pushed 'narrative' to media to sell the Iran nuclear deal.](#)" May 6, 2012.
- Siegal, Allan. "[Secrets about Secrets: The Backstage Conversations between Press and Government.](#)" 2007.
- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 11 (Elections in the Internet Age)
- Albert Hunt, "[Media Share Blame for Negative Ads,](#)" New York Times, October 14, 2012.
- Jack Schafer, "[Did the media create Donald Trump?](#)" Politico Magazine (March 2, 2016).
- Geer, John G. "[Fanning the Flames: The News Media's Role in the Rise of Negativity in Presidential Campaigns.](#)" 2010
- John Czwartacki, "[Press Releases,](#)" Chapter 13 in *The Insider's Guide to Political Internships*, Reeher and Mariani, eds., Westview Press, 2003.

Recommended:

- David Samuels, "[The Aspiring Novelist Who Became Obama's Foreign Policy Guru,](#)" New York Times, May 5, 2016.

Friday, May 11: Local TV News

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Discussion about Local News	Mack/Carl	9:00 am	10:15 am
Tour of WKRC Local 12 News	Mack/Carl	10:45 am	11:15 am
Meet with Reporter	Mack/Carl	11:15 am	12:00 pm
Watch Noon News in Studio	Mack/Carl	12:00 pm	12:30 pm

* Will return from Field trip at 12:30 pm

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 2 (Ownership, Regulation and Guidance of the Media)
- Steven Waldman, "[The Information Needs of Communities](#)" Federal Communication Commission Report, Read pp. 76-91 (Start at "The Current State of Local TV News")
- Perry Schaible, "[From Poverty to Promise, Pt. 1: Breaking the Cycle.](#)" Local 12 News (watch video).
- Howard Ain, "[Troubleshooter: Counterfeit Checks in Mystery Shopper Fraud,](#)" Local 12 News (watch video).
- Josh Harkinson, "[Ever Wonder why Your Local TV News Stations Run the Same Damn Stories?](#)" Mother Jones, April 4, 2014.

Also Recommended (Not Required):

- Natalie Wolchover, [“Why do News Anchors all talk the same?”](#) Live Science, September 30, 2011.
- Charlie Booker: [How to Report the News](#) (BBC)
- The Onion: [Some Bullshit Happening Somewhere](#)
- Conan O’Brien: [“Newscasters Agree: A Christmas Present or Two Edition.”](#)
- Pew Foundation: [Local News in a Digital Age](#)
- Pew Foundation: [Local TV News Fact Sheet](#).
- Pew Foundation: [Does Local Ownership Matter in Local Television News?](#)

Monday, May 14: Field Trip to Cincinnati City Hall

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Meet with PG Sittenfeld	Mack/Carl	9:00 am	10:00 am
Human Services Committee Meeting	Mack/Carl	10:00 am	11:00 am
Discussion	Mack/Carl	11:00 am	12:00 pm

Readings:

- Something on PG Sittenfeld TBA
- Something on topics considered in Human Services Committee Meeting TBA

Tuesday, May 15: Newswriting; The Press and Public Opinion.

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Review Press Release Assignments	Mack/Carl	8:30 am	9:30 am
Newswriting 101	Carl	9:45 am	10:45 am
News and Public Opinion	Mack	11:00 am	12:00 pm

- Bill Parks, ["Basic Newswriting,"](#) Ohlone College.
- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 10 (Media Influence on Attitudes and Behavior)
- Megan Anderle, [“How Facebook and Google’s Algorithms are Affecting our Political Viewpoints,”](#) Huffington Post, October 15, 2015.
- [Three Little Pigs, Advert - The Guardian](#)
- Recent news articles from Enquirer for newswriting discussion?

Wednesday, May 16: Hamilton County Commission

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Discussion of Commission Agenda/Stories	Mack/Carl	8:30 am	9:30 am
Meet with Kellie Wise and/or Commissioner	Mack/Carl	10:00 am	11:00 am
Commission Meeting	Mack	11:00 am	12:00 pm

Readings:

- Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 8 (Media Covering Justice System and Local News)
- Recent news articles related to Hamilton County Commission assignment tomorrow?
- Background on Commissioners/County Website

Thursday, May 17: Critiques & Defenses of the Media & Review for Final Exam

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Go Over Newspaper Story Assignment	Carl	8:30 am	9:30 am
Discussion of Media Critiques	Mack/Carl	9:45 am	10:45 am
Review for Final Exam	Mack	11:00 am	12:00 pm

Readings

- Schultz, Richard. *Measuring Media Diversity: Problems and Prospects*. 2005.
- Meg Sullivan, "[Media Bias is Real, Finds UCLA Political Scientist](#)."
- Valeria Pelet, "[How Trump is Exposing Media's Diversity Problem](#)," The Atlantic, January 24, 2016.
- Tim Redmond, "[Project Censored 2015: Top 10 News Stories the Media Chose to Ignore](#)," Cascadia Weekly.
- Ashley Lutz, "[These 6 Corporations Control 90% of the Media in America](#)." Business Insider, June 14, 2012.
- Patrick B. Pexton, "[A Journalist's No. 1 'platform-neutral' duty](#)," Washington Post, April 29, 2011.

Also Recommended:

- Chris Hansen: [To Catch a Predator](#).
- What would you do? [Racist Realtor](#).
- Youtube: [So You Want to Be a Reporter](#).
- Wikipedia: [List of Gannett Company Assets](#).
- Wikipedia: [List of GE Company Assets](#)
- ABC News 20/20: [Stephanie Nielson's Story: After Tragic Crash, Mom Nearly Lost it All](#), May 12, 2011.
- [Bill Moyers Journal](#)
- [A climate of Deception](#)

Friday, May 18: Film and Final Exam (8:00 am start!)

Topic	Faculty	Start	End
Film: Spotlight	Mack/Carl	8:00 am	10:15 am
Final Exam	Mack/Carl	10:30 am	12:15 pm