This course considers the determinants of media content and the degree to which Americans’ political opinions and actions are influenced by that content. Specific topics include:

- the history of the news media
- recent media trends
- theories of attitude formation and change
- media bias
- the role of sources in the construction of the news
- the economics of news production and consumption
- the ways in which media shape public perceptions of the political world
- campaign communication, and
- the general role of the mass media in the democratic process.

**Assigned Work and Grading**

Your grade is based on three equally-weighted exams (48% total), in-class reading quizzes (5%), participation (12%), and a group commercial project (35%).

**Tests**

Each exam is worth 16% and will be composed of a mixture of short-answer questions. I will post last year’s exams on the website prior to the exam so you can get an idea for the format. The final exam will occur during finals week and will be identical in format to the prior two tests, although it may be slightly longer. The tests are for the most part not cumulative, although the final may draw on topics studied throughout the course.

**Reading Quizzes**

On most days I will have a one-question reading quiz to test whether students have completed and understood the readings assigned for that day. (On days that there are audio or video segments assigned, these may also be tested.) These quizzes count toward your grade in two ways. First, you receive participation credit regardless of how you answer the question. Second, you receive performance credit based on whether or not you get the answer correct. The final grade you receive for both participation and performance will be out of N-3 classes, where N is the number of classes in which we have a quiz. This means that if we have a quiz in 17 classes,
that your final grade will be out of 14 points. In other words, you can skip three days or leave your clicker at home three days and still maximize your participation score. (I cap this score at 14 points – i.e. there is no extra credit.) I do this to allow students to miss class for whatever reason, but also because the clicker hardware and software can sometimes cause problems. You are responsible for making sure your clicker works. Please bring your clicker with you on the second day of class (Wed. 1/19) when we will make sure that everyone’s software is working correctly and you will have your first clicker grade. Please also check frequently to make sure your quiz grades are uploaded correctly to CCLE. I will upload the quiz grades for each week after Wednesday’s class at the latest.

**Participation**
Active participation in the class is essential. Some of the material for this class will only be covered in lecture. Beyond in-class clicker surveys, you will also fill out peer-evaluations of the commercial projects (see below), which will count for two participation points. You are also asked to participate in several other ways, including suggesting exam questions and completing an audience survey questionnaire for the commercial projects.

**Group Commercial Project**
Each student will participate in a group of three to create a political advertisement for a fictitious presidential candidate. This project will give students insight into the respective roles of sources and the news media in producing political communication. It will also familiarize students with practical methods of video production. The instructions for this project will be distributed separately. Storyboards will count as 5 points of your final grade, while the final video project will be 30 points. You must also demonstrate proficiency in movie editing software in order to receive full credit.

**All grading related issues will be handled by Tyler.**

**Readings**

All readings and podcasts for this class are available online only. These readings are made available through links found in this syllabus or on the course website. Note that you will need to use a VPN connection (see http://www.bol.ucla.edu/services/vpn/) or proxy server (http://bol.ucla.edu/services/proxy/) to view much of this content from computers outside the campus network. If a reading has gone offline, please let me know asap and I will provide an updated link. Readings marked with “CCLE” can be found online.

Some readings are noted as “optional.” You are welcome to cite these readings in exams (and they will count toward the number of citations if I require that for the question). But they are not necessary to get full credit on the exam (or any of the reading quizzes). I recommend reading the abstract, skimming it, and reading it if you are especially interested.

The readings include a mix of research articles, magazine and online popular articles, podcasts, and even a movie (which will be shown in class as well). Note that some days will have a number of short readings (particularly those about campaigns toward the end of the class).
**Clickers**

Students must purchase, rent, or borrow an iClicker remote for use in class quizzes (available at the bookstore). Any of the iClicker models *should* work fine, except for the web iClicker phone app, which requires wifi (which is unreliable) or iClickerGo, which is not compatible. You might also be able to reserve a free iClicker rental through UCLA’s lendme.oid.ucla.edu site.

I have had students with faulty clickers that they either purchased, rented, or borrowed. This is why it is imperative that you be sure your clicker is working correctly as soon as possible. We will have a practice clicker session on the second day of class where students can make sure their clickers are functioning properly.

**Academic Integrity**

I take academic integrity very seriously. You may not copy other people’s quiz answers/clicks, click for anyone else, bring a cheat sheet to class on the days of tests, plagiarize, copy answers from an online source, or obtain the answer key for any textbook. These are only several examples of academic integrity violations. If any of these or other violations occur, you will most likely fail the class and may face other repercussions from UCLA. The department and school does not take these violations lightly. People have been suspended from cheating in my class and expelled from UCLA for cheating in COMM 160. Please read information on UCLA’s academic integrity policy here: [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf). I reserve the right to upload your work to turnitin (plagiarism detection software).

**Other**

If you miss class, you are responsible for securing notes from another student. Students who are very sick and contagious should not come to class or *office hours!* Absences on the day of a test will only be excused in cases of an unforeseen emergency or illness. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. I do not give early exams.

Please do not use computers, electronic tablets, or phones in class. Lecture slides will be made available *after* class each week.

All students with disabilities that may require special accommodations should contact the UCLA Center for Accessible Education (A255 Murphy Hall; 310-825-1501; 310-206-6083 [telephone device for the deaf]) as soon as possible.
**Schedule**

**Mon. Jan. 7.** Introduction.
*Readings:* none

**Wed. Jan. 9.** Early American Press.
*Readings:*

*Other:* Test clickers; practice quiz. (Real quizzes will take place in almost every class after this. This quiz will count for participation.)

**Section:** No section this week.

*Readings:*

*Other:* Discuss commercial project. Start working on Lynda.com tutorial.

**Wed. Jan 16.** Local News & Online News.
*Readings:*
- “The Facebook Dilemma” Part I from minutes 44:34-52:30, Part II all. (Note: this is about 65 minutes of video content.)

*Section:* Form groups of three for your commercial projects. These must be finalized by 1/23.

*Readings:*
- “We Tracked Down a Fake-News Creator In the Suburbs: Here’s what we Learned” NPR. (Listen to this.) (8min)

*Other:* Discuss exam format and procedures.

*DUE:* (1) Post 1-2 suggested exam questions by 7pm on CCLE. (2) Send Tyler the names of everyone in your group by email by 7pm. Only one email is required per group, but be sure to cc all group members.

**Section:** Exam Review.

**Mon. Jan. 28. Exam #1.**

**Wed. Jan 30. Issue Advocacy and the Knowledge Gap**
Guest Speaker, Felix Schein, RALLY

*Readings:*
- Review CA Proposition 8, and Supreme Court decisions that struck down this law. You can review this using any source you like ([here](#)) is one article discussing the SC cases).

**Section:** iMovie tutorial; go over storyboards; discuss audience survey questions.

*DUE:* (1) Complete the iMovie tutorial on Lynda.com by 12pm on 1/30. Upload your certificate onto CCLE. (2) Audience survey questions due by 7pm Fri. Feb. 2 on CCLE (one file per group).

**Mon. Feb. 4. The Return of the Partisan Media (2).**

*Readings:*
- Listen to *This American Life* “Red State/Blue State” Prologue and Act ONE.


*Readings:*

**Section:** Hand back and go over exam #1.
Due. Fill out audience surveys (CCLE) by 7pm.

Other: Tyler will hand back audience survey results by Fri. Feb. 8th on email.

Mon. Feb. 11. Legal Setting.
Readings:
- “How Not to Leak” Interview from On The Media, WNYC. (12 min; starts ~ 2 ½ min in)

Guest Speaker: Suzi Emmerling, Director of Communications for Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
Readings:

Due: Storyboards. Hand storyboards for both commercials in as paper copies at the start of class. Tyler will collect them, and they will be considered late if they arrive after 2:02. You can draw them out – they do not need to be digital since they are simply drafts. Alternatively, if you already have a draft of your video, you can upload that instead. Or you can submit part digital and part drawn. If you anticipate being late or absent, please scan and upload the full storyboard to us before 2pm. Only one assignment should be turned in for each group.

Section. Exam Review.
Due: Post 1-2 suggested exam questions by 7pm on CCLE. I will then post previous year’s exam.

Other. Hand back storyboards in section.

Readings:

Wed. Feb. 27. Marketing.
Guest Speaker: Mich Matthews, former Senior Vice President for Microsoft’s Central Marketing Group.
Readings:
- OPTIONAL: Meet ABC’s off-air producers

Section. Hand back and go over Exam #2.

Mon. Mar. 4. Directing Communications & Objectivity and Bias.
Readings:

Wed. Mar. 6. Covering Campaigns (2)
Readings:
- Listen to this Freakonomics podcast, “How Biased is Your Media?” (36min)

Section. Go over final questions on commercial projects with Tyler. Perhaps meet in individual groups.

Due: Final Commercials due Fri. Mar. 8 at 6pm on CCLE.

Mon. Mar. 11. Sources: Presidents, Oppo Research. Commercial Film Festival.
Readings:

Due: Fill in commercial evaluations by Tuesday, March 12 at 3pm. These are worth 2 participation points! Budget at least an hour for this.


Readings:
- Vavreck, Lynn. 2016. NYTimes “Do Campaign Ads Matter? Donald Trump Offers a Rare Chance to Find Out”
- Issenberg, Green, Joshua and Sasha Issenberg 2016. “Inside the Trump Bunker with 12 Days to Go”
- Vavreck, Lynn. 2016. NYTimes “The Ad that Moved People the Most: Bernie Sanders’s ‘America’”

Due: Suggested exam questions due by 7pm.

Section. Exam Review.

Tues. Mar. 19. 3:30-5:30pm. Final Exam. (Note: This is a two-hour exam only, starting 30 min past the original scheduled time. Location TBD on Schedule of Classes Final Exam List.)