



**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & EDUCATION**

**COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2013**

**PO 3030 (A3/VC): POLITICS AND THE MEDIA**

**3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763  
**OFFICE:** E401-5 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Tues. & Thurs., 9:30 – 11:20, or by appointment

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** None

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

- Mediating Canadian Politics. Ed. Shannon Sampert & Linda Trimble. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2010.
- News: The Politics of Illusion. W. Lance Bennett. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2012.
- Internet & database readings as listed in the syllabus appendix.
- Readings assigned by instructor in class.

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** This is a critical examination of the roles and behaviour of the mass media in the political process with primary emphasis on the Canadian experience. Communications theories such as those of Innis and McLuhan, political propaganda, the mass media and elections, opinion formation, and selected Canadian communications policies are among the topics studied.

**CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS:** 3 credits (3-0-0)/45 hours

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lecture

**OBJECTIVES:** This course is based on the premise that while all of us consume information via “the media,” we generally do so without much thought about how that information is produced, who wants us to consume it, and what the larger effects, intended or otherwise may be. As such, this course should:

- Introduce you to fundamental theories about the media and its interaction with society, political institutions, and citizens.
- Provide factual information about the media, and Canadian media specifically, and put this information in a larger geopolitical & societal context.
- Give you the tools to evaluate the information you consume and understand how it affects you with a critical perspective.

You should note that this class will require significant participation, both in-class and online. Discussion of current events and media coverage of them will be a part of every class. You will need to familiarize yourself with online media, both traditional (newspapers & magazines) and social (Facebook & Twitter at a minimum). You do not necessarily need this knowledge prior to class, but you will need to be willing to engage with each other and the wider online community as the course progresses.

**TRANSFERABILITY:** This course has university transferability to Athabasca University, Concordia University College of Alberta, Grant MacEwan University, King’s University College, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge. For complete information, consult the Alberta Transfer Guide ([www.transferralberta.ca](http://www.transferralberta.ca)).

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A <sup>+</sup>	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A <sup>-</sup>	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B <sup>+</sup>	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B <sup>-</sup>	2.7	70 – 72	
C <sup>+</sup>	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C <sup>-</sup>	1.7	60 – 62	
D <sup>+</sup>	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

**EVALUATIONS:**

- Participation ..... 10%
- Group Presentation.....20%
- Research Design Proposal.....20%
- Research Paper..... 30%
- Research Presentation OR Take-home Final Exam.... 20%

**Participation:** You will be required to complete 5 in-class quizzes or take-home assignments at random throughout the semester. Each assignment will be worth 2% the participation grade.

**Group Presentation:** You will choose one or two partners and give a 10 – 15 minute presentation to the class, either based on a summary of assigned readings from the syllabus, or a media journal assignment. ***These presentations will be scheduled between Tues., Jan. 29 and Thurs., Mar. 21.*** More information on this assignment will be handed out in class.

**Individual Research Project:** For your term paper, you will conduct original media research and analysis, using the methodology of either content or discourse analysis. This will entail two parts, the first being a research design, worth 10% of your grade, and the paper itself, worth 30% of your grade. Our class on Thurs., Jan. 24, I will present on research methodologies and approaches to media research and analysis. More information will also be given in a detailed handout on the project. The ***Research Design Proposal will be due on Thurs., Feb. 28,*** and the ***Research Paper will be due on Thurs., Apr. 11.***

**Research Presentation OR Take – home Final Exam:** For the final portion of your grade, you may choose between presenting the findings of your research project in class, or a take-home final exam. The presentation would be a 15 minute presentations on your research process, findings, and conclusions you draw. This would be scheduled between Mar. 28 and Apr. 11, depending on how many people choose this option.

The take-home exam is based on required readings and class discussions, including group presentations. You will be required to provide 3 short essays, chosen from no less than six comprehensive questions. Each essay should be no more than 4 double-spaced, typewritten pages, and should demonstrate your knowledge of the both the readings and concepts discussed in class. ***You will need to advise which of these options you are choosing when you submit your Research Design Assignment.***

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Full participation in class will require demonstration that you have completed the assigned readings, as well as an active role in group work and class discussions.

### **Punctual submission of assignments:**

- Assignments will be submitted on paper in class, and electronically by 5 p.m. on the due date. Paper copies are easier for me to read, and allow me to provide you with notes on specific elements of your assignment. Electronic copies provide me with the option of submission to an online plagiarism detection service in the case that plagiarism is suspected.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE COPY WHICH IS SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY MATCHES THE PAPER COPY RECEIVED IN CLASS.

- Late assignments will be docked 3% (i.e. an A becomes an A-) for each day they are late. If extenuating circumstances necessitate an extension on an assignment, you are required to speak with me AHEAD OF TIME, and appropriate paperwork (i.e. a medical note) may be required. Also, please note that you are required to write the final exam on the date scheduled by the College. You should take this into account when making any travel plans.

### **Classroom Conduct:**

GPRC has committed to promote an environment free of harassment or discrimination where respect will be given to ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity, and expects individuals will conduct themselves with respect for one another. This means your behavior should exhibit respect for yourselves, each other, the instructor, and the course material. As such:

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared.
- Laptops and cellphones are permitted in class, with a few caveats.
  - Cellphones should be on silent or vibrate mode, and I expect you wait to check calls or messages until after class. If an emergency requires otherwise, I expect you to advise me at the beginning of class.
  - Laptops are to be used for class work ONLY. Students carrying out other activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home.
- Working on assignments for other courses is not permitted. Students doing so will be asked to leave the class.
- I encourage an atmosphere of positive and constructive debate. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through a comment, audible noise, facial expression or body language, is not acceptable, unless you are prepared to debate your position openly & respectfully in class.
- Regular attendance. If you know you are going to be absent from class, I expect you to contact me prior to class with a reason. Students who miss more than 1/3 of classes (9 or more) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in GPRC's Examination Policy ([www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/)).

For information on key dates and other important matters, please refer to the GPRC Calendar, available [www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/).

### **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Plagiarism and/or cheating can result in serious consequences (i.e. a grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: A Grade of F assigned

for academic dishonesty) and/or suspension or expulsion from the College). If I suspect plagiarism on assignments, I reserve the right to submit these to an online plagiarism detection service, as specified in Section 1.4 of the GPRC Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating ([www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/)).

It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating. If you have any question as to what these acts involve, please refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at [www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/).

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

<b>Schedule of Lectures &amp; Readings</b> (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
Jan. 8 – 11 (Week 1)	<p><b>Introductory Class</b></p> <p><b>Unit I: Foundations</b></p> <p>A. About Politics and the News</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennett text, Ch. 1</li> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, Ch. 1</li> <li>• (M) Tom Enders, "A Primer on Canadian and American Political Systems."</li> </ul>
Jan. 14 – 18 (Week 2)	<p>B. Media theory: What do journalists do?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, Ch. 2</li> <li>• Bennett text, Ch. 5 (&amp; 6)</li> <li>• (M) Paul Nesbitt-Larking. Ch. 8, "The decline and fall of the American empire: space and time in the work of Innis, Grant, and McLuhan." In <i>Politics, Society, and the media</i>. 2nd ed. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007.</li> </ul>
Jan. 21 – 25 (Week 3)	<p>C. Media structure and ownership</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble, Ch. 3</li> <li>• (M) Rand Dyck, "Political Socialization, The Mass Media, and Public Opinion Polls." In <i>Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches</i>. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Nelson Education, 2011. P. 281 – 311.</li> <li>• Larry Patriquin. "Introduction," p. 1 – 8, &amp; "Conclusion," p. 155-67. In <i>Inventing Tax Rage: Misinformation in the National Post</i>. (Available as an e-Book through the Library website.)</li> </ul> <p>Jan. 24: Class on Research Methodology</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, "Primer on Content and Discourse Analysis" 326---337, and Ch. 4.</li> <li>• Cindy Burke and Sharon R. Mazarella. "'A Slightly New Shade of Lipstick': Gendered Mediation in Internet News Stories." <i>Women's Studies in Communication</i> 31.3 (2008: 395-418. (Available through the Academic Search Complete database.)</li> </ul>
Jan. 28 – Feb. 1 (Week 4)	<p>D. The Crisis in Journalism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennett text, Ch. 7.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elly Alboim. "On the Verge of Total Dysfunction: Government, Media, and Communications." In <i>How Canadians Communicate IV</i>. Eds. Taras &amp; Waddell. Edmonton: AU Press, 2012. 71-107. (Available as an e-Book through the Library website.)</li> <li>• Clay Shirky: "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable." <a href="http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/">http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/</a></li> </ul>
Feb. 4 – 8 (Week 5)	<p><b>Unit II: Are We Buying What They're Selling?</b></p> <p>A. The Press and Politicians</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennett text, Ch. 4</li> <li>• John Street. Ch. 5, "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture." In <i>Media &amp; the Restyling of Politics</i>, John Corner &amp; Dick Pels (eds.). (Available as an e-Book through the Library's webpage.)</li> </ul>
Feb. 11 – 15 (Week 6)	<p>B. Media Influence on Elections and Voting</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, Ch. 7 &amp; Ch. 9</li> <li>• David Taras &amp; Christopher Waddell. "The 2011 Federal Election and the Transformation of Canadian Media and Politics." In <i>How Canadians Communicate IV</i>. Eds. Taras &amp; Waddell. Edmonton: AU Press, 2012. 71-107. (Available as an e-Book through the Library website.)</li> </ul>
Feb. 18 – 22	<b>READING WEEK</b>
Feb. 25 – Mar. 1 (Week 7)	<p>C. Media &amp; Culture</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (M) Paul Nesbitt-Larking. Ch. 4, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Culture, Ideology, and the Media." In <i>Politics, Society, and the media</i>. 2nd ed. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007.</li> <li>• Marcus Prior. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 49.3 (2005): 577-92. (Available through the Academic Search Complete database.)</li> <li>• (M) Geoffrey Baym. "The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism." <i>Political Communication</i> 22.3 (2005): 259-76.</li> </ul> <p><b>**Research Proposal Due – Feb. 28**</b></p>
Mar. 4 – 8 (Week 8)	<p>D. Socialization &amp; Propaganda/Indirect Mediation &amp; Silences</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (M) Augie Fleras. "Couched in Compromise: Media-Minority in Relations in a Multicultural Society." in <i>Communications in Canadian Society</i>, Benjamin Singer and Craig McKie, eds. 5th ed. Toronto: Thompson (2001).</li> <li>• William M. O'Barr. 2011. "Mad Men: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality and Class." <i>Advertising and Society Review</i> 11 (4). (Available in the Project Muse Standard Collection database.)</li> </ul>

<p>Mar. 11 – 15 (Week 9)</p>	<p><b>Unit III: Media: Present and Future</b></p> <p>A. Interest Groups and Alternative Media</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, Ch. 12</li> <li>• Bennett, Ch. 8.</li> <li>• Habibal Haque Khondker. "Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring." <i>Globalizations</i> 8.5 (2011): 675-79. doi: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2011.621287">http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2011.621287</a></li> <li>• Malcolm Gladwell. "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," <i>The New Yorker</i>, October 4, 2010: <a href="http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell">http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell</a></li> </ul>
<p>Mar. 18 – 22 (Week 10)</p>	<p>B. Blogs &amp; Social Media</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampert &amp; Trimble text, Ch. 10, Ch. 11?</li> <li>• Small (2008), "The Facebook Effect?: Online Campaigning in the 2008 Canadian and US Elections," <i>Policy Options</i> November: 85-87</li> <li>• Clicktivism series, <i>Policy Options</i>. Nov. 2012. 10–23. <a href="http://www.irpp.org/po/">http://www.irpp.org/po/</a></li> </ul> <p>C. Net Neutrality &amp; Online Privacy</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined.</li> </ul>
<p>Mar. 25 – 29 (Week 11)</p>	<p><i>Research Presentations</i></p>
<p>Apr. 1 – 5 (Week 12)</p>	<p><i>Research Presentations</i></p>
<p>Apr. 8 – 12 (Week 13)</p>	<p><i>Research Presentations</i></p> <p><b>**Research Paper Due – Apr. 11**</b></p>
<p>Apr. 15 – 16 (Week 14)</p>	<p>REVIEW CLASS</p>