DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2016

PO3030 (A3): POLITICS AND THE MEDIA - 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
OFFICE: C415 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Tues. & Thurs, 10:00 – 11:30 am, or by appointment

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

- Digital Mosiac: Media, Power and Identity in Canada. David Taras. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.
- News: The Politics of Illusion. W. Lance Bennett. 9th 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 hours per week

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and discussion

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.

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- 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the importance of media to formal and informal political processes
- Describe how the institutions and processes of both media and politics are changing, and assess what impacts may be at both public and personal levels.
- Work with classmates to conduct basic media &/or text analysis, and present findings to the class.
- Carry out original, beginner-level quantitative &/or qualitative research, including project design, hypotheses, and methodologies
- Communicate the results of research in both oral and written form.

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.transferalberta.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**

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GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	**4-point Equivalent**	**Percentage Guidelines**	**Designation**
A^+	**4.0**	**90 – 100**	**EXCELLENT**
A	**4.0**	**85 – 89**	
A^-	**3.7**	**80 – 84**	**FIRST CLASS STANDING**
B^+	**3.3**	**76 – 79**	
B	**3.0**	**73 – 75**	**GOOD**
B^-	**2.7**	**70 – 72**	
C^+	**2.3**	**67 – 69**	**SATISFACTORY**
C	**2.0**	**64 – 66**	
C^-	**1.7**	**60 – 63**	
D^+	**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%

Readings Summary…….10%

Group Media Journal Presentation…..…….15%

Research Design Proposal…….…….…….15%

Research Presentation ……20%

Research Paper…….…….. 30%

Participation: Your participation grade will be awarded for completion of at least 80% of peer evaluations for Group Presentations AND Research Presentations. For example, if there are three group presentations and seven research presentations scheduled, you will need to submit at least

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two group peer evaluations and five individual evaluations to receive the participation grade. This is an example only; the number of actual scheduled presentations will depend on the number of students in the class.

Reading Summary: You will choose a topic and provide a 5 – 10 minute oral summary of assigned readings in class. This should include either a presentation (PowerPoint or similar) &/or a written handout of your summary notes. ***These will be scheduled on the same week the topic is covered in class.*** More information on this assignment will be handed out in class.

Group Media Journal Presentation: You will choose a partner, and give a 10 – 15 minute presentation to the class based on a media journal assignment. ***These presentations will be scheduled during regular classes.*** 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. 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. This will entail three parts:

1. Research proposal (15%): This is a paper outlining your design for original research project.
2. Research presentation (20%): You will present the findings of your research project in class. This will be a 15-20 minute presentation on your research process, findings, and the conclusions you have drawn from your research to date. ***These will be scheduled during the final weeks of classes***, based on the topic you are researching.
3. Research paper (30%): This will be a paper which formally outlines your research and presents your findings. ***Due on a date determined by Student Services during the Final Exam period.*** You will be required to attend class on the scheduled date and sign in on a Final Exam Sign-In Form, as per GPRC's new final exam policy.

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.

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Punctual submission of assignments:

- An electronic copy is due by midnight on the due date. It should be submitted via Moodle, and should be formatted as a PDF. If you do not know how to save a document as a PDF, please contact me.
- Please title your assignments as follows: LASTNAMEFirstname-Assignment-3030W2016. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-ResearchPaper-3030W2016.)
- 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.

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. This includes having completed assigned readings for the classes. All readings should be available in the text or online, through the Moodle webpage. They can be read online, or printed, should you choose to do so. If you have questions regarding the Student Printing Policy, please visit https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/policies/admin/StudentPrintingPolicy.pdf.
- Students are expected to make use of the Moodle webpage for the course, including course readings, resources, and messages. You will also need to regularly check your GPRC email address for communications from me.
- 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.

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- 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/).

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

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, 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
http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/
**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Schedule of Lectures & Readings (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
Jan. 6 – 8	Introduction and Syllabus Review
Jan. 11 – 15	Lecture 1: About Politics and the News Readings: • Bennett text, Ch. 1 • Taras text, Ch. 1 • (M) Tom Enders, "A Primer on Canadian and American Political Systems."
Jan. 18 – 22	Lecture 2: Media theory – What do journalists & news organizations do? Readings: • Bennett text, Ch. 5 (& 6 - Recommended) • (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 *Politics, Society, and the media*. 2nd ed. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007.

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Jan. 25 – 29	Lecture 3: Research Methodology Readings: • (M) "Primer on Content and Discourse Analysis" 326---337, Mediating Canadian Politics. Ed. Shannon Sampert & Linda Trimble. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2010. • (M) Ch. 8: "Covering Muslim Canadians & Politics in Canada…" – Example of Content Analysis • (M) Ch. 17: "Covering Canada's Role in the 'War on Terror'." – Example of Discourse Analysis.
Feb. 1 – 5	Lecture 4: Media structure and ownership Readings: • Taras text, Ch. 3 & 7 • Larry Patriquin. "Introduction," p. 1 – 8, & "Conclusion," p. 154-67. In Inventing Tax Rage: Misinformation in the National Post. (Available as an e-Book through the Library website.)
Feb. 8 – 12	Lecture 5: The Crisis in Journalism Readings: • Bennett text, Ch. 7. • Taras text, Ch. 6 • Clay Shirky: "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable." http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/
Feb. 15 – 19	**WINTER BREAK – NO CLASS**
Feb. 22 – 26	Lecture 6: Media & Culture Readings: • Taras text, Ch. 4 • (M) Paul Nesbitt-Larking. Ch. 4, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Culture, Ideology, and the Media." In *Politics, Society, and the media*. 2nd ed. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007. • Marcus Prior. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49.3 (2005): 577-92. (Available through the Academic Search Complete database.) • (M) Geoffrey Baym. "The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism." *Political Communication* 22.3 (2005): 259-76. ****Research Proposal Due – Thurs., Feb. 25****
Feb. 29 – Mar. 4	Lecture 7: Socialization & Propaganda Readings: • Taras text, Ch. 2 & 9 • William M. O'Barr. 2011. "Mad Men: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality and Class." Advertising and Society Review 11 (4). (Available in the Project Muse Standard Collection database.)

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Mar. 7 – 11	Lecture 8: The Press & Politicians, Elections and Voting Readings: • Bennett text, Ch. 4 • Taras text, Ch. 8 • (Recommended) John Street. Ch. 5, "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture." In Media & the Restyling of Politics, John Corner & Dick Pels (eds.). (Available as an e-Book through the Library's webpage.)
Mar. 14 – 18	Lecture 9: Alternative Media, Social Media & Blogs Readings: • Taras text, Ch. 5 • Bennett, Ch. 8. • Clicktivism series, *Policy Options*. Nov. 2012. 10–23. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/issues/come-together/clicktivism/ • Malcolm Gladwell. "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *The New Yorker,* October 4, 2010: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell
Mar. 20 – 25	Lecture 10: Net Neutrality, Online Privacy & Surveillance Readings: • Tim Wu & Christopher S. Yoo. "Keeping the Internet Neutral?: Tim Wu and Christopher Yoo Debate." Columbia Law and Economics Working Paper No. 310. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=953989 • Jules Polonetsky & Omer Tene. "Privacy and Big Data: Making Ends Meet." 66 Stanford Law Review Online 25, 3 Sept. 2013. Available at http://www.stanfordlawreview.org/sites/default/files/online/topics/PolonetskyTene.pdf • Robert McMillan. "What Everyone Gets Wrong in the Debate Over Net Neutrality." Wired.com. 23 Jun. 2014. Available at http://www.wired.com/2014/06/net_neutrality_missing/ • Robert McMillan. "The Father of Net Neutrality Returns to Do Battle with Comcast." Wired.com. 25 Jun. 2014. Available at http://www.wired.com/2014/06/tim-wu/ • Robert McMillan. "The Case for Net Neutrality's Nuclear Option." Wired.com. 27 Jun. 2014. Available at http://www.wired.com/2014/06/common-carrier/ • Michael Geist. "The Trouble with Bill C-13: why the "Cyberbullying Bill" is About Much More than Cyberbullying." – Interview with Steve Paiken on TVO's The Agenda. www.michaelgeist.ca. 14 Nov. 2013. Available at http://www.michaelgeist.ca/2014/01/c-13-the-agenda/ (Be sure to watch the video embedded.)
Mar. 28 – Apr. 1	*Research Presentations*
Apr. 4 – 8	*Research Presentations*
Apr. 11 – 13	*Research Presentations*

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