

PIA3120: POLITICS AND MEDIA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Politics and Media

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3120

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

POL3120 Politics and Media

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to investigate the complex relationship between politics and media in modern society. We explore how politics is represented in media and how the latter impacts on the policy process, how the role of media is conceived

differently under the liberal understanding of politics as compared with the collective understanding, and how new information and communication technology (ICT) may affect political development. Students are expected to learn and reflect on freedom of the press, the political economy of mass media, the interaction among power, the press and society, and the theory and public diplomacy in global contexts.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand the relationship among the state, the media and society in different regime types.		x	x	
2	Identify the effects of new media technology on political participation and development.			x	
3	Evaluate the role of the market on media plurality and the political information environment.		x	x	
4	Assess controversies in political communications and their implications with empirical evidence.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	Explain key concepts and theories related to political communication; discuss controversies of roles of the state, media, market and society on political information environments	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Individual Essay	Each student to write up an individual essay to critically analyse basic concepts and theories related to politics and media.	1, 2, 3, 4	

3	In-class Test	Students to critically analyse issues on political communication by applying concepts and knowledge in the course	1, 2, 3, 4	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation	1, 2, 3, 4	15	Including lectures and guest lectures	No
2	Individual Essay	1, 2, 3, 4	35	1,200-1,500 words.	Yes
3	In-class Test	1, 2, 3, 4	50	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Class Participation;
2. Individual Essay;
3. In-Class Test

Criterion

Ability to critically explain and evaluate basic concepts and theories related to politics and media and to develop student' s own ideas on the subject; writing and presentation skills

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

freedom of the press; political communication; political information environment; mass media; social media; agenda setting, framing; democratic education; right to access to information; regime types; censorship; self-censorship; partisan

media; propaganda; misinformation; disinformation; fake news; slackitivism; polarisation; public diplomacy; soft power; sharp power

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Bennett, W. Lance, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston. 2007. <i>When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago.
2	Bogaards, Matthijs. 2009. "How to classify hybrid regimes? Defective democracy and electoral authoritarianism." <i>Democratization</i> 16 (2): 399-423.
3	Diamond, Larry. 2021. "Democratic regression in comparative perspective: scope, methods, and causes." <i>Democratization</i> 28 (1): 22-42.
4	Egelhofer, Jana Laura, and Sophie Lecheler. 2019. "Fake news as a two-dimensional phenomenon: a framework and research agenda." <i>Annals of the International Communication Association</i> 43 (2): 97-116.
5	Guriey, Sergei, and Daniel Treisman. 2019. "Informational Autocrats." <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 33 (4): 100-127.
6	O'Flaherty, Michael. 2015. "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: interpreting freedom of expression and information standards for the present and the future." In <i>The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives</i> , edited by Tarlach McGonagle and Yvonne Donders, 55-72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7	Schudson, Michael. 2017. "How to Think Normatively about News and Democracy." In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication</i> , edited by Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 95-106. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8	Tai, Qiuqing. 2014. "China's Media Censorship: A Dynamic and Diversified Regime." <i>Journal of East Asian Studies</i> 14 (2): 185-210.
9	United Nations Human Rights Committee. 2011. General Comment No. 34: Article 19: Freedom of opinion and expression (CCPR/C/GC/34), 12 September.
10	Van Aelst, Peter, Jesper Strömbäck, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Claes de Vreese, Jörg Matthes, David Hopmann, Susana Salgado, Nicolas Hubé, Agnieszka Stępińska, Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, Rosa Berganza, Guido Legnante, Carsten Reinemann, Tamir Sheafer, and James Stanyer. 2017. "Political communication in a high-choice media environment: a challenge for democracy?" <i>Annals of the International Communication Association</i> 41 (1): 3-27.
11	Zhao, Kejin. 2015. "The Motivation Behind China's Public Diplomacy." <i>The Chinese Journal of International Politics</i> 8 (2): 167-196.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Coudray, Sylvie. 2015. "UNESCO: freedom of expression, information and the media." In <i>The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information: Critical Perspectives</i> , edited by Tarlach McGonagle and Yvonne Donders, 208-234. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2	Hanitzsch, Thomas, Tim P. Vos, Olivier Standaert, Folker Hanusch, Jan Fredrik Hovden, Liesbeth Hermans, and Jyotika Ramaprasad. 2019. "Role Orientations: Journalists' Views on Their Place in Society." In <i>Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe</i> , edited by Thomas Hanitzsch, Folker Hanusch, Jyotika Ramaprasad and Arnold S. de Beer, 161-197. New York: Columbia University Press.
3	Kovalev, Alexey. 2021. "The political economics of news making in Russian media: Ownership, clickbait and censorship." <i>Journalism</i> 22 (12): 2906-2918.
4	Nye, Joseph S. 2008. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> 616: 94-109.
5	Scheufele, Dietram A., and David Tewksbury. 2007. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." <i>Journal of communication</i> 57 (1): 9-20.

6	Vaca-Baqueiro, Maira T. 2017. <i>Four Theories of the Press: 60 Years and Counting</i> . New York: Routledge.
7	Whitten-Woodring, Jenifer. 2009. "Watchdog or Lapdog? Media Freedom, Regime Type, and Government Respect for Human Rights." <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> 53 (3): 595-625.
8	Wong, Mathew Y. H., and Ying-ho Kwong. 2019. "Academic Censorship in China: The Case of <i>The China Quarterly</i> ." <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> 52 (2): 287-292.
9	Yang, Jisheng. 2016. "Yang Jisheng Speech Transcript." Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard. Last Modified March 10. Accessed July 3. https://nieman.harvard.edu/awards-2/louis-lyons-award/yang-jisheng-speech-transcript/