

COM 4930 Political Communication
Fall 2024

Professor: Amy Martinelli, PhD

Classroom Meeting: Rolfs 314

Office: Rolfs Hall 403

Email: acmart@ufl.edu (preferred communication, but any conversation about grades must be done on Canvas)

Class Times: Tuesday, Period 5-6 (11:45am-1:40pm); Thursday, Period 6 (12:50-1:40pm)

Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00pm and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Political communication involves studying the ways that politicians, advocacy groups, the media, and citizens use and interpret language and rhetorical strategy in efforts to shape the world around them. The language of persuasion looks both outwards and inwards: politicians promise a better future based on an evaluation of the current external reality, but they communicate this vision by activating deep-seated ideas, values and feelings that are hidden within the audience. Advocacy groups and media outlets may extend, amplify, contradict, or even deny those messages, and citizen consumers of media respond to and interact the ideas presented in their role as members of society. Collectively, the interplay between these various actors create the political climate in which we live. This course examines the current political landscape through a Communication Studies lens, and asks critical questions about how each party shapes a democratic society. This is an upper-level course. You will develop your critical thinking, your skills in rhetorical analysis, better understand metaphor and how it relates in society, as well as your own presentation and argumentation skills.

Required Text

- *The Dynamics of Political Communication: Media and Politics in a Digital Age, 3rd edition* (2021), Richard M. Perloff, Routledge, 978367279417

All other readings and text materials will be provided via Canvas.

Suggested Books (NOT REQUIRED):

- *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor 2nd edition* (2016), Jonathan Charteris-Black, Palgrave Publishing, 9780230251656 (ISBN)
 - *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, The University of Chicago Press, 0226468011 (ISBN)
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ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Assignment	Description
In Class Activities	Throughout the course of the semester, we will do five in class activities listed on the course schedule. In order to receive full points you must be present and on time during the activity, bring materials required for the activity, and fully participate in the activity. Instructions provided in class.
In Class Activity Reflections	For each in class activity, a reflection is due the following week. Instructions provided on Canvas.
Group Presentation	For this assignment, small groups will examine a political topic and use course concepts to create a final presentation at the end of the semester. There are multiple parts of this assignment. Instructions provided on Canvas.
Group Project Planning Report	For this assignment, small groups will create a vision and plan for their final presentation. Instructions provided on Canvas.
Class Participation and Attendance	This class is hands-on and discussion based. Attendance and full participation is vital. Participation comes in varied forms; speaking in every class is not required, but encouraged.

COURSE EVALUATION & GRADING CRITERIA

In Class Activities	5 x 50 (points each) Total 250 points
In Class Activity Reflections	5 x 50 (points each) Total 250 points
Group Presentation	300 points
Group Project Planning Report	100 points
Class Participation and Attendance	100 points
TOTAL	1000 points

A	=	930-1000	A-	=	900-929	B-	=	800-829
B+	=	870-899	B	=	830-869	C-	=	700-729
C+	=	770-799	C	=	730-769	D-	=	600-629
D+	=	670-699	D	=	630-669			
F	=	599-						

Tentative Course Schedule

While not anticipated, the schedule may change to accommodate unforeseen events.

Dates	Topics Covered	Assignments (in Bold) & In-Class Tasks
Week One		
Welcome to the Class		
Thursday (8/22)	Introduction to course details.	Homework: Prepare for Community Standards activity
Week Two		
Preparing for Group Work		
Tuesday (8/27)	Creating a Productive Learning Environment, Together	Reading: "Willing to be Disturbed" (Wheatley)
Thursday (8/29)	Learn about group communication dynamics and create group identity	In Class Activity: Creating Your Group Identity Reading: Understanding Small Groups Reading: Small Group Development
Week Three		
Group Project		
Tuesday (9/3)	Learn about the Group Project that you will engage in throughout the semester.	
Thursday (9/5)	Class will not be held; Dr. Martinelli out of town. Get together with your group and complete the Group Project Planning Assignment.	DUE by Monday, September 9 at 9:00am: Group Project Planning Assignment and Creating Your Group Identity Reflection
Week Four		
Introduction to Political Communication		
Tuesday (9/10)	Learn about the foundational concepts of Political Communication	Reading: Chapter 2: Introduction to Political Communication
Thursday (9/12)	Understand different views on Democracy	Reading: Chapter 3: Philosophy, Democracy, and Political Communication In Class Activity: What Should Democracy Look Like?
Week Five		
Models of Political Communication		
Tuesday (9/17)	Learn about the history and progression of models of Political Communication	Reading: Chapter 4: The Study of Political Communication
Thursday (9/19)	Digging into Diffusion of Information and the Emergence of Social Media Influencers in Political Communication	Reading: Two-Step Flow, Diffusion, and the Role of Social Networks in Political Communication (on Canvas) Reading: A Visual Guide to the Influencers Shaping the 2024 Election (Amado, 2024) Reading: Political Influencers on Social Media: An Introduction (Riedl, Lukito, Wooley, 2023) (on canvas) Due: What Should Democracy Look Like? Reflection
Week Six		
Social Influence of Political Communication		
Tuesday (9/24)		Readings Continued from week five
Thursday (9/26)		In Class Activity: Visualizing your Political Social Network
Week Seven		
Political Socialization		

Tuesday (10/1)	Learn about the various ways that groups make decisions.	Reading: Chapter 6: Contemporary Political Socialization
Thursday (10/3)	In today's class, you'll have time to work in groups on your final presentation.	Due: Visualization of Your Political Social Network Reflection Extra Credit Due: Create Your Voter Plan
Week Eight	Agenda-Setting and Framing of Political Topics and Discussions	
Tuesday (10/8)	Learn about Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory in relation to Political Communication	Reading: Chapter 7: Setting and Building the Agenda Reading: Chapter 8: Framing Reading: Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate (Lakoff, 2004) (Canvas)
Thursday (10/7)		In Class Activity: Framing the Debate—A look at the VP Presidential Debate from Oct. 1, 2024
Week Nine	Discussing Politics with Others	
Tuesday, (10/15)	Learn about and reflect on the ways that Political Communication intersects with Interpersonal and Family Communication dynamics.	Reading: Disagreement in Political Discussion (Nir, 2014) Available on Canvas Reading: Self-Censorship, the Spiral of Silence, and Contemporary Political Discussion (Hayes & Matthes, 2014) Available on Canvas Reading: Most say their family is OK with discussing politics—but it helps if the family agrees (Oliphant, 2018)
Thursday (10/17)		Due: Framing the Debate Reflection
Week Ten	Communication and the Presidential Election Campaign: Speeches and Advertisements	
Tuesday (10/22)	Learn about how presidential candidates use rhetorical strategies in campaigns.	Reading: Chapter 10: Presidential Rhetoric from Television to Tweeting Reading: Chapter 15 Political Advertising in Presidential Campaigns
Thursday (10/24)		In Class Activity: Rhetorical Analysis of Political Campaign Speeches and Advertisements
Week Eleven	Memes in Political Communication	
Tuesday (10/29)		
Thursday (10/31)	In today's class, you'll have some time to work in groups on your final presentation.	Due: Rhetorical Analysis of Political Campaign Speeches and Advertisements Reflection
Week Twelve	Reflection on the Election	
Tuesday (11/5)	ELECTION DAY	
Thursday (11/7)	Election Reflection	TBA
Week Thirteen	Political Engagement: Cultivating Political Voice	

Tuesday (11/12)	Final Presentations	
Thursday (11/14)	Final Presentations	
Week Fourteen	Interpersonal Communication and Civic Engagement	
Tuesday (11/19)	Final Presentations	
Thursday (11/21)	Dr. Martinelli out of town: No class held this day	
Week Fifteen	THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS THIS WEEK	
Tuesday (11/26)		
Thursday (11/28)		
Week Sixteen	End of Semester	
Tuesday (12/3)	End of Semester Summary and Celebration	

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Policies Regarding Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows (from the [2018 revision](#)):

Plagiarism. A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

Important Tip: Anytime you cut and paste another person's/website's words, and you don't give the source credit for those words by using citations, you are committing plagiarism. **Best practice: DON'T cut and paste anything beyond citation-like information, such as titles of essays, journals, author's names, DOIs, web addresses.** If the information is going into the actual text of your paper, and you cut and paste without giving credit, even if you change a few words, you are committing plagiarism, and you will get a zero on the assignment in question, and you face the risk of failing the entire course as well.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click [here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor before work is due.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. Click [here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Campus Resources

1. Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Dean of Students Office*: Students who experience a family or personal emergency (death in the family, unplanned hospitalization, etc.) may contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) and request notification letters be sent to their professors. 325-392-1261
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

2. Academic Resources

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Public Speaking Lab* Rolfs Hall 5th Floor, to make an appointment go to website. Open in Fall and Spring semesters. Email questions to publicspeakinglab@clas.ufl.edu
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming,

formatting, and writing papers.

- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

In-class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.