

**Graduate Seminar in Media and Politics**  
**Media and Politics**  
**Prof. David Greenberg**  
**Spring 2025**

**Class Time:** Monday  
**Email:** [davidgr@rutgers.edu](mailto:davidgr@rutgers.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Mon. 6.00-8.30  
**Course No.:** 16:194:665:01

**Room:** Zoom  
**Phone:** (646) 504-5071  
**Office:** 106 DeWitt (185 College Ave.)

**Syllabus**

**Description.** The course examines relationship between the news media and presidential politics. The course has a particular focus on media and presidential elections. Topics include the rise of mass-media politics; presidential debates; TV advertising; journalistic objectivity; and the role of the internet in today's campaigns.

**Course Requirements.**

- Short Paper. Due February 10. There will be an initial 10-page essay, designed to evaluate facility with the readings, ability to frame an argument, and writing skill.
- Term Paper. Due May 5. The final piece of writing for the course is a 20-page paper that explores some aspect of presidential elections.
- Readings. Each week there will be assigned readings on the given topic. Usually it will consist of a single book, but some weeks it will be a collection of articles.

**Reading List.**

1. Larry Bartels and Christopher Achen, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton University Press, 2017. ISBN: 0691178240.
2. W. Joseph Campbell, *Lost in a Gallup: Polling Failure in U.S. Presidential Elections*. University of California Press, 2020. ISBN: 0520300963.
3. Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003. ISBN: 0812968204.
4. John G. Geer, *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, 2006. ISBN: 0226284999.
5. David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency*. W.W. Norton, 2016. ISBN: 0393353648.
6. Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized*. Simon & Schuster, 2020. ISBN: 147670032X.
7. Robert Mann, *Daisy Petals and Mushroom Clouds: LBJ, Barry Goldwater, and the Ad That Changed American Politics*. Louisiana State University Press, 2011. ISBN: 080714293X.
8. Andrew Marantz, *Antisocial: Online Extremists, Techno-Utopians, and the Hijacking of the American Conversation*. Viking Press, 2019. ISBN: 0525522263.
9. Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*. University of Chicago Press, 1994. ISBN: 0226675459.
10. Alan Schroeder, *The Presidential Debates: Risky Business on the Campaign Trail*. Columbia University Press, 2016. ISBN: 0231170572.

**Weekly Assignments.**

Books can be purchased online or at bookstore or found in Alexander Library  
Articles are available on the class Canvas website.

Jan. 27

**Introduction**

Alexis de Tocqueville, "Election of the President" and "Re-Election of the President," in *Democracy in America*.

James Bryce, "The President" and "Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President" in *The American Commonwealth*.  
 Gil Troy, "The Campaign Triumphant," *Wilson Quarterly* 36:3 June 2012.

Feb. 3

### **Media and the Transformation of Presidential Politics**

David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency, Part I*.  
 Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Introduction, Chs. 4 & 5.

Feb. 10

### **Presidential Spin, Then and Now**

David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency, Parts II-IV*.  
 Richard Jensen, "Armies, Admen and Crusaders: Types of Presidential Election Campaigns," *The History Teacher*, 2 (1969): 33-50.  
 Sidney Blumenthal, "Introduction," and "Edward Bernays," in *The Permanent Campaign* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1982), pp. 17-26, 27-43.  
 Fred Barnes, "The Myth of Political Consultants," *The New Republic*, June 16, 1986, pp. 16-19.

### **★ First Paper Due**

Feb. 17

### **The Debates, Then and Now**

Alan Schroeder, *The Presidential Debates*, Chapters 1-3, 6-9 [168 pp.]  
 Fergus Bordewich, "How Lincoln Bested Douglas in Their Famous Debates," *Smithsonian*, September 2008. [12 pp.]  
 Michael Schudson, "The Informed Citizen in Historical Context," *Research in the Teaching of English*, 30:3, (October 1996), 361-369.  
 David Greenberg, "Torchlight Parades for the Television Age: The Presidential Debates as Political Ritual," *Daedalus*, Spring 2009, pp. 6-19.  
 Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, pp. 44-50.

Feb. 24

### **Television I: The Rise of the Image**

David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency, Part V*.  
 Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, Ch. 1, "From News Gathering to News Making: A Flood of Pseudo-Events," pp. 7-44.  
 Daniel C. Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World*, Ch. 7, "Sound-Bite News: Television Coverage of Elections, 1968-1988," pp. 133-152.  
 Kiku Adatto, *Picture Perfect*, Ch.2, "The Rise of Image-Conscious Television Coverage," pp. 24-60.  
 Michael Schudson, *The Power of News*, Ch. 5, "Trout or Hamburger: Politics and Telemythology," pp. 113-123.

Mar. 3

### **Television II: Advertising**

John Geer, *In Defense of Negativity*.  
 Frank Rich, "Nuke 'Em," *New York Magazine*, June 17, 2012.

Mar. 10

### **Polling**

W. Joseph Campbell, *Lost in a Gallup: Polling Failure in U.S. Presidential Elections*.  
 J. Michael Hogan, "George Gallup and the Rhetoric of Scientific Democracy," *Communication Monographs* 64 (1997): 161-179.  
 Lawrence Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "The Rise of Presidential Polling: The Nixon White House in Historical Perspective," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 59 (Summer, 1995): 163-195.  
 June Woong Rhee, "How Polls Drive Campaign Coverage: The Gallup/CNN/USA Today Tracking Poll and USA Today's Coverage of the 1992 Presidential Campaign," *Political Communication* (1996): 213-229.

Larissa MacFarquhar, "The Pollster," *New Yorker*, October 18, 2004.

- Mar. 24      **Reporters and the Campaign**  
Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus* (especially sections 1, 2, 4, 7, 11, 14, 17).  
David Grann, "Inside Dope: Mark Halperin and the Transformation of the  
Washington Establishment," *New Yorker*, October 25, 2004.
- Mar. 31      **Polarization**  
Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized*
- Apr. 7      **The Age of Social Media**  
Andrew Marantz, *Anti-Social*
- Apr. 14      **Does the System Work – I**  
Larry Bartels and Christopher Achen, *Democracy for Realists*
- Apr. 21      **Does the System Work – II**  
Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*
- Apr. 28      **Review**
- May 5      **✪ Second Paper Due**