

**Media Studies Program**  
**Political Media & Communication**

**Fall 2012**

4:00-5:50 Tuesday / 2 W. 13<sup>th</sup> St. / Room 1210

Professor Carol Wilder

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Office Hours: 4-5 p.m. Tuesday/Thursday; other times by appointment

These are drop-in hours, but it is always better to have an appointment.

Please email me directly to set-up a meeting. If you don't get a response try my personal email: [REDACTED]

**Course Description:**

*The Political Age Of: Can You Believe This?? Tea Parties and Wacky Candidates. Corporations as people. Occupy Everything. Government Takeovers and National Socialism. Obamacare. Bloggers and Shouters and Birthers. 35,000 Lobbyists. Town Halls and Talk Radio. Polarization and More Polarization. Income Disparity. Volatile Financial Markets. Foreclosure and Under Water. Socialism for Wall Street and Capitalism for the rest of us. War, War, War by Proxy and Private Contractors. Gun violence, climate change, food by Monsanto.*

*These are compelling times for political media and communication, and we will look at it all while trying to stay reasonably civil, sane and optimistic. The upcoming presidential election is turning up the rhetorical heat and we will take a look back at other campaigns and debates as well as examine the political discourse around a range of social and political issues.*

Political communication can include any media or communication exchange having to do with the allocation of power and resources. In this seminar we will look at the nature and role of political communication in political campaigns, social movements, and popular culture. We will study both new media and alternative forms of political discourse such as theatre, music, and direct action. While the course will focus on U.S. political communication, it is expected that international students in the class will contribute a global perspective.

You will keep a political media journal or blog with at least one entry per week, complete readings as assigned, participate in class discussions both onsite and online (occasionally), and write two 7-10 page papers during the course of the semester: one paper on a political speaker and one paper analyzing a social movement or political campaign and in addition one paper or media project on a course-related topic of your choice. For the final assignment students have done a wide range audio and video and web projects. You are encouraged to collaborate with classmates for the final assignment.

**Required Texts:**

Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. 350 B.C.E. Trans. by W. Rhys Roberts. Available online at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html> or through Amazon

John Waite Bowers, et al. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*. 3rd edition. Waveland Press, 2009. (earlier editions ok)

Joe McGinniss. *The Selling of the President*. 1988. Any edition.

Todd Gitlin. *Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street*. IT Press 2012. (available for Kindle)

**All other readings will be posted in "Resources" on Blackboard.**

Please read *The New York Times* daily and choose a political blog to follow and report on to the class. A directory of political blogs can be found at <http://directory.etaalkinghead.com>

We begin every class with an **"In the News"** segment where we share on-topic events of the preceding week. This part of the class is only as good as your eagle eye in spotting interesting and relevant items. It is designed to encourage you to stay aware 24/7 of activity in your political media and communication environment. . .

**Assignments:**

- 20% Attendance and Participation. This includes active discussion in-class. This is a seminar, and its success depends upon the punctual, engaged and informed participation of everyone. More than two absences will affect your grade.
- 20% Each week in class 2 or 3 of you will report on your media commentary and/or blog watch. This is generally voluntary and not assigned, but expected.
- 20% Political Speaker Paper. Due October 2
- 20% Social Movement/Political Campaign Paper. Due October 30
- 20% Final Open Topic/Open Format Project December 4, 11, 18 presented in-class.

***Required and Recommended Reading***

- Zachary Abrahamson and Eamon Javers. "Obama's Words Downplay Wars." [www.political.com](http://www.political.com). August 13, 2009
- Peter Applebome. "Is Eloquence Overrated?" *The New York Times*. January 13, 2008.
- Matt Bai. "The Framing Wars." *The New York Times*. July 17, 2005.
- Gregory Bateson. "A Theory of Play and Fantasy." *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 177-193.
- Jean Baudrillard. "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media." *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*. Semiotext(e): 1982, pp. 95-110.
- Robert Benford and David Snow. "Framing Processes and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2000. 26:611-39.
- John Bowers & Donovan Ochs. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, 2nd or 3rd edition. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1992, 2009.
- David Brooks. "The Medium is the Medium." *The New York Times*. July 9, 2010.
- Manuel Castells. "Communication and Power in an Information Age." Milano Lecture. September 28, 2007.
- Center for Media and Democracy. "Fake TV News." [prwatch.org](http://prwatch.org). 2007.
- Noam Cohen. "Twitter on the Barricades: Six Lessons Learned." *The New York Times*. June 21, 2009.
- Climate Control. *Severe Storms, Deadly Heat Waves, Relentless Drought, Rising Seas, and the Weather of the Future*. NY: Pantheon, 2012.
- Davin Deblatt. *The Fox and the Peacock: FOX New' War on NBC*. M.A. Thesis, The New School, 2010.
- Tim Dickinson. "Roger Ailes and the Rise of Fox News." *The Guardian*. August 10, 2011.
- The Economist*. "Among the Audience." (new media survey). April 2006.  
[http://economist.com/surveys/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=6794156](http://economist.com/surveys/displayStory.cfm?story_id=6794156)
- Stanley Fish. "Yes I Can." *New York Times*. June 7, 2009
- Al Gore. "A Coalition of Fear." Presentation at The New School, New York. February 11, 2004 <http://www.thinkingpeace.com/pages/Articles/arts146.html>
- Chris Hedges. *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*. New York: Nation Books, 2009.
- Katie Heimer. *Madame President in Prime Time: Gendered Representations of the Presidency in Popular Culture*. M.A. Thesis, The New School, 2010.
- Edward Herman & Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent*. Pantheon, 1988. Excerpts.
- John Heilemann & Mark Halperin. *Game Change*. HarperCollins 2010.
- Michael Hirschorn. "Closing the Digital Frontier." *The Atlantic*. July/August 2010.
- Nicholas Johnson. "History of the Media Reform Movement."
- Barbara Kaye. "It's a Blog, Blog, Blog, Blog World." *Atlantic Journal of Communication*. 13(2). Summer 2005, pp. 73-95.
- Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. "The Disinformation Society." *Vanity Fair*. May 2005,
- George Lakoff. "The PolicySpeak Disaster for Health Care." *Huffington Post*. August 20, 2009.
- Mark Landler. "In Hanoi, Clinton Criticizes Vietnam on Rights." *The New York Times*. July 22, 2010.

- Ryan Lizza. "Leap of Faith: The Making of a Republican Front-Runner." *The New Yorker*. August 15, 2011.
- Robert Love. "Before Jon Stewart." *Columbia Journalism Review*. March/April 2007.
- McChesney, Robert. *The Problem of the Media* (excerpt). New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004.
- McChesney, Robert and John Nichols. "The Making of a Movement." *The Nation*, January 7, 2002.
- Henry McGuckin, Jr. "A Value Analysis of Richard Nixon's 1952 Campaign Fund Speech." *Southern Speech Journal*. v33. Summer 1968, pp.259-269.
- Mark Crispin Miller. "None Dare Call it Stolen." *Harpers*. August 2005.
- Bill Moyers. "Speech to the National Conference for Media Reform." *Free Press*. [www.freepress.net](http://www.freepress.net), May 16, 2005.
- Stephen Nachmanovitch. "This is Play." *New Literary History*. Volume 40, Number 1, Winter 2009, pp. 1-24.
- Network Neutrality. [www.savetheinternet.com](http://www.savetheinternet.com)
- Michael Niman. "Spinning the War: Lessons in Propaganda." *ArtVoice*. April 1, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Media Whores and Propaganda." *ArtVoice*, January 18, 2005.
- Martha Nussbaum. "Veiled Threat." *The New York Times*. July 11, 2010.
- Michael Parenti. *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the News Media*, 2nd edition (excerpts). New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- Pew Research. "Obama More Popular Abroad than at Home." [www.pewresearch.org/pubs/1630](http://www.pewresearch.org/pubs/1630)
- David Plouffe. *The Audacity to Win: The Inside Story and Lessons of Barack Obama's Historic Victory*. New York: Viking, 2009.
- Frank Rich. "Kiss This War Goodbye." *The New York Times*. August 1, 2010.
- Lois Romano. "The Queen of Rage." *Newsweek*. August 15, 2011.
- Charlie Savage. "Gates Assails Wikileaks Over Release of Reports." *The New York Times*. July 29, 2010.
- Jeremy Sherman. "Teflon Rhetoric: 18 Easy Ways to say 'Well, don't look at me!'" *Mind Readers Dictionary*. June 8, 2010.
- Alessandra Stanley. "Obama Takes in 'The View'." *The New York Times*. July 29, 2010.
- Sheryl Gay Stolberg, et al. "Obama Expresses 'Regret'" to Sherrod." *The New York Times*. July 23, 2010.
- Brad Stone and Noam Cohen. "Social Networks Spread Iranian Defiance Online." *The New York Times*. June 16, 2009.
- Ron Suskind. "Without a Doubt." *New York Times*. October 17, 2004.
- Matt Taibbi. "The Big Takeover." *Rolling Stone*. March 19, 2009.
- John Tierney. "Will You Be E-Mailing This Column: It's Awesome." *The New York Times*. February 9, 2010.
- Joseph Tuman. *Political Communication in American Campaigns*. Sage: 2008. Excerpts.
- Michael Wolff. "Which Rich Person Should You Vote For?" *Newser.com*, August 12, 2010.
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## ***Political Media and Communication Fall 2012***

### **Weekly Schedule**

#### **Politics in the Age of the Mediasphere**

1. **Tuesday 28 August -- Introduction and Overview**
2. **Tuesday 2 September -- Political Communication and Power**

**Read:** Jean Baudrillard. 1982. "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media"  
Manuel Castells. 2007. "Communication and Power in an Information Age."

#### **The Tradition of Political Rhetoric**

3. **Tuesday 11 September -The "Great Man" Tradition of Political Rhetoric**

**Read:** Joseph Tuman. 2008. "Campaign Oratory & the Political Process." And  
"Methods of Deconstructing Political Oratory."  
Bring to class: one example of "great 'man' political oratory." Many examples at  
[www.americanrhetoric.com](http://www.americanrhetoric.com)

4. **Tuesday 18 September -- Classical Rhetoric for a Modern Age**

**Read:** Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric>  
Chapters 1-3.  
Hank McGuckin. "A Value Analysis of Richard Nixon's 1952 Campaign Fund  
Speech."

#### **Collective Political Behavior: Social Movements and Campaigns**

5. **Tuesday 2 October -- Naming and Framing**                    **\*[Paper #1 Due]**

**Read:** Stephen Nachmanovich. 2009. "This is Play." *New Literary History*. Winter  
2009. 1-24.  
Gregory Bateson. 1972. "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" from *Steps to an  
Ecology of Mind*.  
Matt Bai. 2005. "The Framing Wars." *The New York Times*. July 17.  
Michael Parenti. 1992. "Methods of Misrepresentation" from *Inventing Reality*

**6. Tuesday 9 October -- The Rhetoric of Social Movements & Campaigns**

**Read:** John Bowers et. al. 2009. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, excerpts.  
Robert Benford and David Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26:611-39.

**7. Tuesday 16 October - From Persuasion to Propaganda (Presidential Debate)**

**Read:** Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing Consent*. Excerpt.  
Joe McGinniss. *The Selling of the President*. All.

**8. Tuesday 23 October -- The Political Uses of Fear in Fact and Fiction**

**Read:** Joseph Tuman. 2010. *Communicating Terror*. Chapters 1-2.  
Al Gore. 2004. "A Coalition of Fear."  
"Rhetoric of 9/11." 2010. <http://americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricofterrorism.htm>  
Clips in class from : *Birth of a Nation, Why We Fight, Japoteurs, The Commies are Coming, The Searchers, Manchurian Candidate, Green Berets, Hearts and Minds, Rambo, etc.*

**9. Tuesday 30 October – Paper #2 Due**

**Inconvenient Truths: New Media, Old Politics**

**10. Tuesday 6 November -- Political discourse and climate change, gun violence, and food politics. Reading TBA.**

**11. Tuesday 13 November - above continued**

**No Class 20 November**

**12. Tuesday 27 November - Alternative Discourse: Political Humor, "Fake News," and the Fox Phenomenon**

**Read:** Robert Love. 2007. "Before Jon Stewart." *Columbia Journalism Review*.  
March/April  
Center for Media and Democracy. 2007. "Fake TV News."  
[www.prwatch.org/fakenews/execsummary](http://www.prwatch.org/fakenews/execsummary)

**13. Tuesday 4 December - Final Paper/Project Presentations**

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**14. Tuesday 11 December - Final Paper/Project Presentation**

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**15. Tuesday 18 December - Final Paper/Project Presentations**

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