News Impact in the Digital Age

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Nieuwsframes, Nieuwsimpact en Burgerschap

Lecturer & Coordinator: dr. Mariken van der Velden, Assistant Professor
Tutorial Instructor: Mickey Steijaert, PhD Candidate

Department of Communication Science, *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*
Online Office Hours: Fridays, 11:00 - 12:00 o'clock

Syllabus Seminar - Period 2 2020
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ECTS points: 6.0.

This course syllabus combines the information for the two – strongly related – courses *News Impact in the Digital Age* (S_NIDA) and *Nieuwsframes, Nieuwsimpact en Burgerschap* (L_NCMAJOU010) from the respective Master programs *Political Communication* and *Journalism*. The lectures, corresponding literature, and evaluation are identical for both programs.

Passing this course yields you with 6 ECTS. Each credit stands for 28 hours work. Hence, 6 ECTS is the equivalent of 168 hours work. Divided over 7 weeks, you are expected to spend 24 hours per week on this course. In Section 6, you will find the course overview including the estimated hours per task.

1   Course Description

In almost no political systems do citizens have direct contact with their political representatives. One could say – and scholars of political communication have done so – that politicians operate in a highly mediatized environment, where media are citizens' principal source of political information. The field of political communication researches how politics is portrayed in media (i.e. by journalists), and subsequently how citizens process and use that mediatized information about politics. For example, which political issue is on the agenda, and how does that influence people's vote choice, or which part of the argument is made salient by the journalist (i.e. how is an issue *framed* in a news article), and how does that enhance or hinder political knowledge? Political Communication is a vast academic field and one period (i.e. six weeks) is not enough time to give even a tacit introduction to all of the content and issues within its purview. In this course, we therefore focus on news impacts – that is, how news is made, and what its effects are on public opinion and behavior. The readings are a capita selecta. Many other articles could have been chosen. Because Political Communication is an inherently diverse and interdisciplinary field, this is reflected in the readings.

This course helps students to find answers to political communication questions with a combined theoretical and practical approach. Theoretically, students will study classic and recent literature on political communication – see Table 1 for an overview of the covered topics in this course.

Table 1: Overview of Topics Covered in Course

Week	Topics
1	Introduction to Political Communication: Theoretical Perspectives & New Developments
2	**US Presidential Elections** Negativity & Biases in the News
3	Agendas & Frames in Comparative Perspective
4	Information Processing & Learning from the News
5	Media, Campaigns & Polarisation
6	Effects of Social Media & Censorship
7	Oral Exam

During the meetings, then, we spend time to contextualize the readings assigned for each topic, as well as discuss the societal and pragmatic implications. Moreover, during the tutorials, students will try to replicate (part of) the results in the literature assigned for each week. These so-called replication mini-hackathons will familiarize students with the program R to retrieve, link, analyze, and present digitally available data on the news linked to public opinion and behavior. Data analytical skills as well as the skill to judge the veracity of a study and the certainty with which claims can be made are indispensable for current days political communication advisors and journalists. Given that this is a political communication course, you are expected to follow news on politics pretty closely during this period. Make sure that you either read a daily newspaper (paper version or online), watch national television news, or listen to news analyses on the radio, podcasts or another communication medium every day.

2 Course Objectives

After completion of the course, the student is able to:

1. Apply theories on political communication and journalism:

   (a) To critically analyze and give feedback on research literature about the news impact on citizens' attitudes and behavior;

   (b) To assess theoretical and empirical alternatives of citizens' information processing, by e.g. using different frames;

   (c) To evaluate your own work and the work by others on the real-world impact of news in the digital age;

   (d) To argue and contribute in a discussion on the impact of news in the digital age on citizenship;

   (e) To orally present and discuss choices made by politicians, journalists and citizens in terms of democratic citizenship.

2. Apply methodological insights and data analytical skills for data collection, linkage, analysis and presentation using R.

3 Organization & Structure of the Course Meetings

3.1 Academic Attitude

We expect an active academic participation, which means that you are prepared for every meeting, participate actively and positively in class. This includes both class discussions and (in)formal in-class assignments, including writing tasks. If we observe that your academic attitude is not at the level of a Master student, the lecturer will set up a meeting to discuss how to improve your academic attitude. When you do not improve your attitude, we will maintain the right to give you an additional assignment or eventually remove you from the course.

3.2 Preparation

Students have to read all the literature before the first meeting of the week. Moreover, the lecturer might ask you to bring real-life examples or other small assignments such as writing tasks. These are not graded, but each student will have to prepare these. If you are unprepared, you cannot participate in the meeting.

3.3 Presence

Participation is compulsory in all meetings. By exception, two classes may be missed. Yet, if you do not notify the coordinator before the start of the meeting by e-mail (m.a.c.g.vander.velden@vu.nl) you will be given an additional assignment that has to be completed before the next week starts. Missing more than two classes – for whatever reason – means the course cannot be completed.

3.4 Netiquette

Due to current high levels of infection of COVID-19, all meetings will be organised online. While there are benefits to face-to-face teaching, the current situation necessitates to make difficult choices. Given the global COVID-19 pandemic, all lectures and tutorials will be organized online using the Canvas integrated tool *Zoom*. To facilitate orderly meetings, we all will adhere to a netiquette. Most important, when you join a virtual classroom, make sure that both your camera and microphone are active and when you chat to everyone, or to the lecturer or tutorial instructor, you do consider your written tone of voice. For all of us, we are still learning when it comes to switching from face-to-face teaching to hybrid forms of education. We ask you to keep this in mind, while providing us with – without a doubt, much needed and appreciated – feedback on how to (re)structure the class.

3.5 Structure

Monday Lectures The theoretical understanding of each week's topic is central during the Monday lectures. To enhance students' theoretical understanding, students will make use of the Canvas integrated tool *FeedbackFruits* to study the literature – for more explanation, see Section 4.1. The theoretical investigation Course Objectives #1(a) and #1(b) are central. To facilitate this, the Monday lectures have the structure of a podcast, where a reading group will interview the lecturer based on the reading assignments. During the lecture, we try to identify what parts of the theory are relevant to understand the cause, consequence or mechanism in the literature and what parts could be improved (Course Objectives #1(a) and #1(b)), based on the reading questions you prepared. Based on our theoretical investigation, every student works on a weekly challenge in which a concept is tied to a news event – for more information, see Section 4.1.

Figure 1: Summary of Netiquette
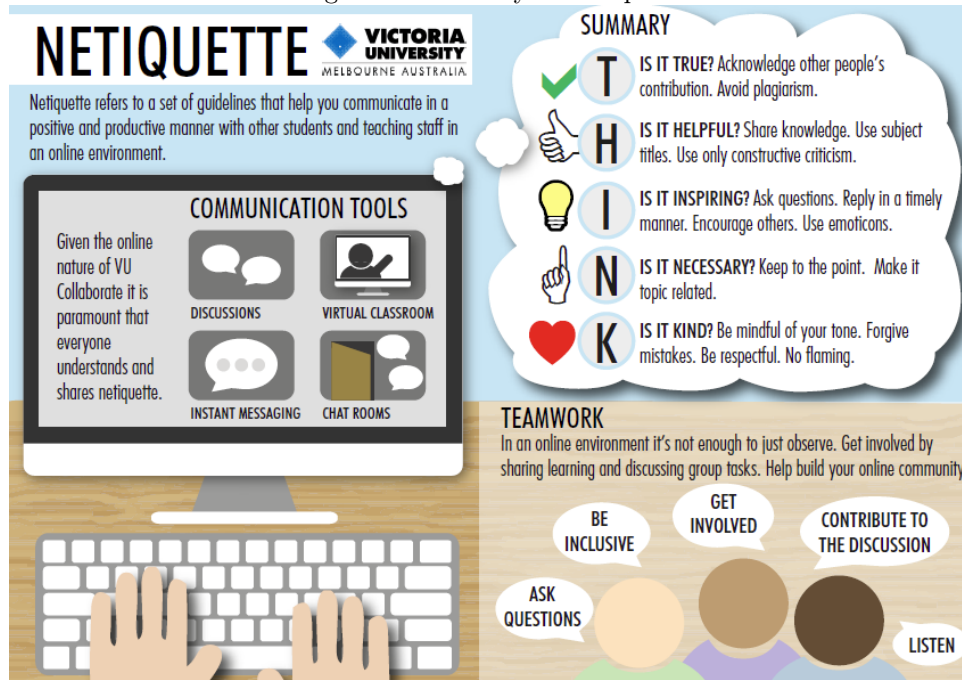
Wednesday Lectures Subsequently, in the Wednesday lectures, we pay attention to the empirical implications of the theories under study that week. In the first part of the lecture, students will be placed in so-called *jigsaw-groups* – that is, groups of 4 students that are different from their literature assignment groups – and discuss each weekly challenge with the aim to improve the challenge. Thereby, students assess what is still unclear from the readings and discuss these matters in the light of the first weekly challenge (Course Objectives #1(c)). Students will also receive peer-feedback on their written report for the weekly challenge. The jigsaw-groups will be published on Canvas – in Modules on the page for each Wednesday lecture. In the following 45 minutes, we will discuss the empirical implications of the literature in a group setting (Course Objectives #1(d) and #1(e)) – often with a practitioner of the field (if possible given the circumstances).

Tutorials The tutorials are designed as mini-hackathons: Students will work in duo's – made during the first Monday introduction lecture – on replicating (part of) that week's literature in R. These solutions result in methodological insights and data analytics for data collection, linkage, analysis and presentation (Course Objectives #2). In week 1, 3, and 5, the tutorials will be on campus. In week 2, 4, and 6, the instructor is available to answer questions using the Canvas discussion board. Outside of the scheduled hours, you are able to ask questions, but answers from the instructor might take longer.

4 Grading

The final grade exist of (1) A Portfolio of Assignments; and (2) An Oral Exam. Both elements make up 50% of your final grade. The portfolio of assignments consists of 3 parts: (a) Literature Assignments in *FeedbackFruits* (peer-review based) for 10% of your portfolio grade (i.e. 5% of your final grade); (b) Individual Reports based on the Weekly Challenges for 40% of your portfolio grade (i.e. 20% of your final grade) ; and (c) The Solutions of the Mini-Hackathons (in duo's) for 50% of your portfolio grade (i.e.

25% of your final grade). There is no compensation possible between the portfolio of assignments and the oral exam. That is, both have to be higher than a 5.5. What is possible, however, is to compensate within the portfolio of assignments. Yet, at least two out of the three parts of the portfolio should be sufficiently graded.

4.1   Portfolio of Assignments: 50% of the Final Grade

A.) Literature Assignments   *FeedbackFruits* is an online tool, integrated in Canvas, that is designed to read and annotate the literature collectively. Students can annotate the readings and respond to each other in threads. This aids the understanding of the literature. Students will be assigned in groups of 4 for the literature assignments in which they:

1. Highlight the **Key Quote** from the assigned reading of that week that provides an apt summary of the article - note, this should only be a quote of one sentence and not a whole paragraph;

2. Use the annotations function to summarize in your own words the main theoretical **Argument** of the article - here you do not use any direct citations;

3. Use the annotations function to discuss the **Relationship** between the argument in the study and the theoretical arguments put forward in the other articles that you have read in that specific week;

4. Use the annotations to formulate two **Questions** you have after you have completed the required reading for that week - e.g., think about those issues that are not addressed in this particular literature or what should be a relevant future research question.

Annotations should be done by **Mondays 10:00 o'clock**.

Students will be graded based on the peer-assessed quality of the annotations and feedback using *FeedbackFruits* in Canvas (Pass/Fail). Each week's annotation graded with either a Pass (P) or Fail (F), converting to a final grade for the weekly challenge as follows:

- **5 P's = 10**
- **4 P's = 8**
- **3 P's = 6**
- **$\leq$ 2 P's = 4**

B.) Weekly Challenges   Students are presented with 5 weekly challenges in week 2 till week 6. During the Monday lecture, students have discussed the theoretical concepts of that week's theme. Their challenge is to tie one of the concepts to a recent news event. Based on the concept, students write a short analysis of the news event. Let's take the example of the second week's concept *negativity* here. Students are required to connect negativity bias in this example to let's say the US 2020 Presidential elections that will be held in a week from that moment. You make a news analysis for example of a presidential debate through the lens of negativity bias. In this analysis you identify how the news on the presidential debate 'suffers' from negativity bias, and e.g. how this might influence readers' perception of this event. Students could present alternative interpretations or write about the counterfactual(s) in their analysis. These news analyses should be written in a **blog format of 500 words,** excluding references and tables, including footnotes, and figures. Blogs can be written in English or Dutch. Students will write this blog in two phases. First, they make a draft between Monday (after the first lecture) and Wednesday before the lecture. They **upload this first draft on Canvas before the Wednesday lecture**,

in which they receive peer-feedback. Second, using their peer-feedback, students finalize their blog-post and hand in a final draft on **Friday 17:00 o'clock**. This allows students to ask their last questions during the online office hours on Friday between 11:00 and 12:00 o'clock. Each blog is graded with either a High Pass (2 points), a Pass (1.3 points) or Fail (0 points). The final grade for this part of the portfolio is the sum of the points of the five assignments. For example, two times a High Pass and three times a Pass amounts to a 7.9: $Grade\ Weekly\ Challenges = (2*2) + (3*1.3) = 7.9$

In order to receive at least a Pass for your weekly challenge, students' blogs have to meet the following criteria:[1]

1. *Your blog must be interesting for your readers*: Irrespective of the topic, it is essential that you can clearly explain why your blog is interesting and relevant for the audience, and what the reader will gain from reading your post. Therefore, it is pertinent that you figure out what the message is that you want to convey to your readers. This message must be clear right from the start (i.e., the title and the first paragraph).

2. *Your blog should have a clear focus*: One blog, one topic!

3. *The text must be well structured*: The blog text should have an opening paragraph, a main body (usually consisting of a number of separated paragraphs) and a concluding paragraph.

   - *Opening paragraph*: Upon reading the first few lines, or only the headline, the reader should get a good idea of the blog's main focus. It is important that this paragraph immediately catches the reader's attention and interest.When the reader knows what they will gain from reading the post, they will be lured to continue reading. Don't be afraid to use provoking ideas and titles to trigger people. You can for instance use an anecdote, a quote, a bold statement, pose an important (research) question, or refer to a current happening. Also explain its importance and relevance, and announce what this blog will add. In this opening you thus raise a relevant question or issue, and suggest it will (at least partly) be answered in the remainder of the blog.

   - In the *main body* of the text you work out a number of subtopics in separate paragraphs that work towards resolving the issue raised in the opening paragraph. This may differ depending on your topic, but usually you follow an hourglass structure; start out broadly and only then specify to details of lesser importance. When you discuss research on a particular important research questions separate paragraphs usually cover prior research, method, and results.

   - The *concluding paragraph* ideally refers back to your broad and catchy opening. Here you provide the resolution or answer to the issue or question raised in the title and opening paragraph. If this is done well the reader will be left satisfied, as (s)he has gained a learning that was promised at the start of the blog.

4. *The topic must be easy to understand*: Keeping in mind the goal of our blog to translate a scientific concept to a news event with the aim of reaching a broad target audience, your blogs should have a 'popular scientific flavor'. This means that potentially difficult information should be well explained, interesting, easy and pleasant to read. Also avoid details or terms that are only understandable or relevant in your scientific subfield (no jargon), remember your diverse potential audience!

5. *The text should be easy to read*: Note that reading online content is structurally different from reading print content. Content on the Internet therefore has to be particularly easy to digest

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[1]Criterion received from: `https://fsw.vu.nl/en/Images/ScienceBloggingManualMar17_tcm250-834426.pdf`

and easily scannable, otherwise you will quickly loose a reader. This is already facilitated by the above points, which help the reader to quickly understand the main points and organization of the content, and allowing them to scan for the information they need, while bypassing the rest (if they wish). The following textual aspects are also important:

- Keep it concise: max. 500 words. When you extensively violate this norm you run the risk of "TLDNR" responses (too long did not read).

- Avoid large blocks of narrative text; make sure it's "chunked out" (broken down into smaller paragraphs of text separated by a white line break, and/or subheadings). The first line of each new paragraph should reveal the paragraph's content. You may also want to highlight buzzwords, important passages or quotes in your blog in bold.

- Use brief sentences! When a sentence is much longer than approximately one line, break it up.

- Make it personal: Use of the I-perspective, and/or address the audience directly (you).

- Use active voice (I conducted a news analysis) rather than passive voice (news analysis was conducted by me).

6. *Your blog must look good*: Powerful visuals that are relevant to the main topic are also important to make it appealing (e.g., photos, drawings, figures; check copy rights or use free stock photos), so please submit these with your blog. Also make sure to add references and links to other sources (other blogs or articles) in your blog. This does not only contribute to your credibility but will also help you in terms of search engine optimization, links are also typically reciprocated.

Students blogs will all be published on `https://socializingsciencevu.com/`. When you write an **outstanding blog,** I will invite you to post it on the Dutch blog `http://stukroodvlees.nl/`. This blog is frequently read by journalists, and therefore creates an excellent opportunity for those who aspire to work within the realm of journalism.

C.) Mini-Hackathons   During the lectures, student learn not only about the theories, but also about several ways of conducting research, compliant with Open Science norms. The mini-hackathons are designed as such that each week, students are presented with a problem set. For week 1, 3, and 5, these will be live tutorials. For week 2, 4, and 6, the mini-hackathons will be supervised using the Discussion Board in Canvas. Each solution for the problem set is a (conceptual) replication of the literature under study that week. Students will learn to retrieve publicly available data from news papers and economic indicators – such as GDP and Consumer Confidence (Mini-Hackathon 1). They will build upon their knowledge of text analysis gained in Period 1, and use that to indicators in survey (Mini-Hackathon 2) data or outcomes of economic indicators (Mini-Hackathons 3, 4 & 5). During the mini-hackathons, they work in duo's on a solution. Ideally, students are able to finish the solution during the tutorial. Yet, students have to hand in their solutions in RMarkdown on Canvas before the **next Tuesday**, **midnight**. Students can ask questions during the online office hours on Friday between 11:00 and 12:00 o'clock, in case they were not finished yet with their solution. Each mini-hackathon is graded with either a High Pass (2 points), a Pass (1.3 points) or Fail (0 points). The final grade for this part of the portfolio is the sum of the points of the five assignments. For example, two times a High Pass and three times a Pass amounts to a 7.9: *Grade Weekly Challenges* $= (2*2) + (3*1.3) = 7.9$

To get at least a Pass for your mini-hackathon, they have to meet the following standards:

- Replicable RMarkDown script with a solution for the problem-set;

- Concise code;

- Annotations for short interpretations.

All deadlines of the course can both be found in Section 6 as well as on the Canvas Calendar for this course. Late submissions for parts of the portfolio assignments will not be graded, i.e. automatically receive a fail for that submission.

4.2 Oral Exam: 50% of the Final Grade

In week 7, students will partake in an individual oral exam. During the exam, the first 7 minutes are given to the student to demonstrate that (s)he has reached the learning objectives (see Section 2). For Course Objectives #1(a) till #1(e) you can receive 2 points (Excellent), 1.67 points (Good), 1.33 (Sufficient), or 0 points (Fail). The final grade is the sum of the obtained points for each course objective. Students are allowed to make a presentation. After these 7 minutes, the lecturer will ask questions. This part will take a maximum of 8 minutes. The oral exams will be recorded. Your data will be processed according to GDPR rules.

4.3 Resit

If students do not pass the portfolio of exams or the oral exam – i.e. one or either have a grade <5.5 – students need to resit the entire course by writing a research paper, integrating theory (Course Objectives 1(a) - 1(e)) and data analytical skills using R (Course Objective 2). The deadline for the resit will be decided in agreement with the coordinator – most likely due end of January.

5 Readings

All readings are accessible via Canvas. The recommended, yet optional, readings could help you to either deeper delve into the topic – e.g. for your weekly challenge. Or, additionally, it could help you when you are starting to think about your master thesis topic, and would like to read more about a topic.

Week 1: Introduction to Political Communication: Theoretical Perspectives & New Developments (66 pages)

1. De Beus, J. (2011). Audience democracy: An emerging pattern in postmodern political communication. In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy* (pp. 19–38). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

2. Foos, F., Bischof, D. (2018). *Can the tabloid media create Eurosceptic attitudes? A quasi-experiment on media influence in England.* Available at: bit. ly/2xn78QU (last accessed 10/4/2018).

3. Jamieson, K. H. (2017). Creating the Hybrid Field of Political Communication. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication.* Oxford University Press.

4. Rojas, H., Valenzuela, S. (2019). A call to contextualize public opinion-based research in political communication. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 652-659.

5. Salgado, S. (2019). Never Say Never... Or the Value of Context in Political Communication Research. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 671-675.

Optional readings:

- Bartels, L. M. (1993). Messages received: The political impact of media exposure. *American Political Science Review, 87* (2), 267–285.

- Brants, K., & Voltmer, K. (2011). *Political communication in postmodern democracy. Challenging the primacy of politics.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics.* Cambridge: CUP.

- Iyengar, S., & Simon, A. F. (2000). New perspectives and evidence on political communication and campaign effects. *Annual Review of Psychology, 51,* 149–159.

- Kenski, K., Jamieson, K. H. (2017). The Power of Political Communication *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication.* Oxford University Press.

- Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies.* Cambridge: CUP.

- Schudson, M. (2002). The news media as political institutions. *Annual review of political science,* 5(1), 249–269.

- Simon, A. F., & Jerit, J. (2007). Toward a theory relating political discourse, media, and public opinion. *Journal of communication,* 57(2), 254–271.

- Vavreck, L. (2009). *The message matters. The economy and presidential campaigns.* Princeton: PUP.

Week 2: Negativity & Bias in the News   (74 pages)

1. Ahn, T. K., Huckfeldt, R., Mayer, A. K., & Ryan, J. B. (2013). Expertise and bias in political communication networks. *American Journal of Political Science,* 57(2), 357–373.

2. Loecherbach, F., Moeller, J., Trilling, D., van Atteveldt, W. (2020). The Unified Framework of Media Diversity: A Systematic Literature Review. *Digital Journalism,* 1-38.

3. Soontjens, K., Van Remoortere, A., Walgrave, S. (2020). The hostile media: politiciansâ perceptions of coverage bias. *West European Politics,* 1-12.

4. Soroka, S., & McAdams, S. (2015). News, politics, and negativity. *Political Communication,* 32(1), 1–22.

Optional readings:

- Althaus, S. L. (2003). When news norms collide, follow the lead: New evidence for press independence. *Political Communication,* 20(4), 381–414.

- Bail, C. A. (2012). The fringe effect: Civil society organizations and the evolution of media discourse about Islam since the September 11th attacks. *American Sociological Review,* 77(6), 855–879.

- Baum, M. A., & Gussin, P. (2007). In the eye of the beholder: How information shortcuts shape individual perceptions of bias in the media. *Quarterly Journal of political science,* 3(1), 1–31.

- Farrell, H., & Drezner, D. W. (2008). The power and politics of blogs. *Public choice,* 134(1–2), 15.

- Fridkin, K., Kenney, P. J., & Wintersieck, A. (2015). Liar, liar, pants on fire: How fact-checking influences citizens? reactions to negative advertising. *Political Communication,* 32(1), 127–151.

- Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2006). Media bias and reputation. *Journal of political Economy*, 114(2), 280–316.

- Gilens, M., & Hertzman, C. (2000). Corporate ownership and news bias: Newspaper coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. *The Journal of Politics*, 62(2), 369–386.

- Groseclose, T., & Milyo, J. (2005). A measure of media bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(4), 1191–1237.

- Hayes, D., & Guardino, M. (2010). Whose views made the news? Media coverage and the march to war in Iraq. *Political Communication*, 27(1), 59–87.

- Krupnikov, Y. (2011). When does negativity demobilize? Tracing the conditional effect of negative campaigning on voter turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), 797-813.

- Kuklinski, J. H., & Sigelman, L. (1992). When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of US Senators and the "Paradox of Objectivity". *The Journal of Politics*, 54(3), 810–833.

- Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., & Rovner, I. B. (2007). The effects of negative political campaigns: a meta?analytic reassessment. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1176–1209.

- Lengauer, G., Esser, F., & Berganza, R. (2012). Negativity in political news: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism*, 13(2), 179–202.

- Molotch, H., & Lester, M. (1975). Accidental news: The great oil spill as local occurrence and national event. *American Journal of Sociology*, 81(2), 235–260.

Week 3: Agendas & Frames in Comparative Perspective (48 pages)

1. Berinsky, A. J., & Kinder, D. R. (2006). Making sense of issues through media frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(3), 640-656.

2. Oxley, Z. (2020). Framing and Political Decision Making: An Overview. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

3. Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 9–20.

4. Vargo, C. J., Guo, L., & Amazeen, M. A. (2018). The agenda-setting power of fake news: A big data analysis of the online media landscape from 2014 to 2016. *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 2028–2049.

Optional readings:

- Aar/oe, L. (2011). Investigating frame strength: The case of episodic and thematic frames. *Political communication*, 28(2), 207–226.

- Andrews, K. T., & Caren, N. (2010). Making the news: Movement organizations, media attention, and the public agenda. *American sociological review*, 75(6), 841–866.

- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing public opinion in competitive democracies. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), 637–655.

- Druckman, J. N. (2004). Political preference formation: Competition, deliberation, and the (ir) relevance of framing effects. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), 671–686.

- Druckman, J. N., & Nelson, K. R. (2003). Framing and deliberation: How citizens' conversations limit elite influence. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(4), 729–745.

- Lenz, G. S. (2009). Learning and opinion change, not priming: Reconsidering the priming hypothesis. American *Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 821–837.

- Shah, D. V., Watts, M. D. W., Domke, D., & Fan, D. P. (2002). News framing and cueing of issue regimes: Explaining Clinton?s public approval in spite of scandal. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 66(3), 339–370.

Week 4: Information Processing & Learning from the News   (77 pages)

1. Ashworth, S., & De Mesquita, E. B. (2014). Is voter competence good for voters?: Information, rationality, and democratic performance. *American Political Science Review*, 108(3), 565–587.

2. Barrera, O., Guriev, S., Henry, E., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2020). Facts, alternative facts, and fact checking in times of post-truth politics. *Journal of Public Economics*, 182, 104–123.

3. Carlson, T. N. (2019). Through the grapevine: Informational consequences of interpersonal political communication. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 325-339.

4. Prior, M. (2014). Visual political knowledge: A different road to competence?. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(1), 41–57.

Optional readings:

- Barabas, J., & Jerit, J. (2009). Estimating the causal effects of media coverage on policy?specific knowledge. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 73–89.

- Baum, M. A. (2002). Sex, lies, and war: How soft news brings foreign policy to the inattentive public. *American Political Science Review*, 96(1), 91–109.

- Baum, M. A. (2003). Soft news and political knowledge: Evidence of absence or absence of evidence?. *Political communication*, 20(2), 173–190.

- Cichocka, A., Bilewicz, M., Jost, J.T., Marrouch, N., & Witkowska, M. (2016). On the grammar of politics ? or why conservatives prefer nouns. *Political Psychology* 37(6), 799–815.

- Gilens, M., Vavreck, L., & Cohen, M. (2007). The mass media and the public's assessments of presidential candidates, 1952?2000. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1160–1175.

- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Public Opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

- Kim, Y.M., & Garret, K. (2012). On-line and memory-based: Revisiting the relationship between candidate evaluation processing models. *Political Behavior*, 34(2), 345–369.

- Knight, B., & Tribin, A. (2019). *Opposition Media, State Censorship, and Political Accountability: Evidence from Chavez's Venezuela* (No. w25916). National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Lyons, J., & Sokhey, A. (2014). Emotion, motivation, and social information seeking about politics. *Political Communication*, 31(2), 237–258.

- Mutz, D. C., & Reeves, B. (2005). The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust. *American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 1–15.

- Neuman, W. R., Neuman, R. W., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge: News and the construction of political meaning.* University of Chicago Press.

- Prior, M. (2003). Any good news in soft news? The impact of soft news preference on political knowledge. *Political communication*, 20(2), 149–171.

- Ryan, T. J. (2012). What makes us click? Demonstrating incentives for angry discourse with digital-age field experiments. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(4), 1138–1152.

- Soroka, S., et al. (2013). Auntie knows best? Public broadcasters and current affairs knowledge. *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(4), 719–739.

- Tsfati, Y.; & Capella, J. (2003). Do people watch what they not trust? Exploring the association between news media skepticism and exposure. *Communication Research*, 30 (5), 504–529.

- Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion.* Cambridge university press.

Week 5: Media, Campaigns & Polarization   (80 pages)

1. Kalmoe, N., Gubler, J.R., & Wood, D.A. (2018). Toward conflict or compromise? How violent metaphors polarize partisan issue attitudes. *Political Communication*, 35(3), 333–352.

2. Kleinnijenhuis, J., Van Hoof, A. M. J., Van Atteveldt, W. (2019). The combined effects of mass media and social media on political perceptions and preferences. *Journal of Communication*, 69(6), 650–673.

3. Prior, M. (2013). Media and political polarization. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 101–127.

4. Simon, F. M. (2019). "We power democracy": Exploring the promises of the political data analytics industry. *The Information Society*, 35(3), 158–169.

Optional readings:

- Arceneaux, K., Johnson, M., & Murphy, C. (2012). Polarized political communication, oppositional media hostility, and selective exposure. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), 174–186.

- Bartels, L. M. (2014). Remembering to forget: A note on the duration of campaign advertising effects. *Political Communication*, 31(4), 532–544.

- Caprara, G.V., & Zimbardo, P.G. (2004). Personalizing politics. A congruency model of political preference. *The American Psychologist*, 59(7), 581–594.

- Laustsen, L. & Petersen, M.B. (2016). Winning faces vary by ideology: How nonverbal source cues influence election and communication success in politics. *Political Communication* 33(2), 188–211.

- Farrell, D. M., & Schmitt-Beck, R. (2002), *Do political campaigns matter? Campaign effects in elections and referendums.* London: Routledge.

- Kam, C. D. (2006). Political campaigns and open-minded thinking. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(4), 931–945.

- Lilleker, D. G., & Negrine, R. (2002). Professionalization of what? Since when? By whom?. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 7(4), 98–103.

- Mazzoleni, G., & Shulz, W. (1999). Mediatization of politics: A challenge for democracy. *Political Communication*, 16, 247–261.

- Meffert, M. F., Chung, S., Joiner, A. J., Waks, L., & Garst, J. (2006). The effects of negativity and motivated information processing during a political campaign. *Journal of Communication*, 56(1), 27–51.

- Minozzi, W. (2013). Endogenous beliefs in models of politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3), 566-581.

- Neiheisel, J. R., & Niebler, S. (2015). On the limits of persuasion: Campaign ads and the structure of voters? interpersonal discussion networks. *Political Communication*, 32(3), 434–452.

- Sides, J. (2006). The origins of campaign agendas. *British Journal of Political Science*, 36(3), 407–436.

- Stasavage, D. (2007). Polarization and publicity: rethinking the benefits of deliberative democracy. The Journal of Politics, 69(1), 59-72.

- Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four phases of mediatization: An analysis of the mediatization of politics. *The International Journal of Press/Politic*s, 13 (3), 228–246.

Week 6: Effects of Social Media & Censorship   (80 pages)

1. Chen, Y., & Yang, D. Y. (2019). The impact of media censorship: 1984 or brave new world?. *American economic review*, 109(6), 2294–2332.

2. Hobbs, W. R., & Roberts, M. E. (2018). How sudden censorship can increase access to information. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 621–636

3. Lewis, S. C., & Molyneux, L. (2018). A decade of research on social media and journalism: Assumptions, blind spots, and a way forward. *Media and Communication*, 6(4), 11–23.

4. Silva, B., Proksch, S. (2020). Fake It 'Til You Make It: A Natural Experiment to Identify European Politicians' Benefit from Twitter Bots. *American Political Science Review*, 1-7. doi:10.1017/S0003055420000817

Optional readings:

- DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Neuman, W. R., & Robinson, J. P. (2001). Social implications of the Internet. *Annual review of sociology*, 27(1), 307–336.

- Farrell, H. (2012). The consequences of the internet for politics. *Annual review of political science*, 15.

- Hassid, J. (2012). Safety valve or pressure cooker? Blogs in Chinese political life. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 212–230.

- Huang, V. G. (2016). Speaking out: Testimonial narratives of Chinese cyberpetitioners under networked authoritarianism. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 14, 18–27.

- Tucker, J. A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M. E., & Barbera, P. (2017). From liberation to turmoil: Social media and democracy. *Journal of democracy*, 28(4), 46–59.

- Vaidhyanathan, S. (2018). Antisocial media: How Facebook disconnects us and undermines democracy. Oxford University Press. Introduction.

- Zhuravskaya, E., Petrova, M., & Enikolopov, R. (2019). Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media. Forthcoming, *Annual Review of Economics*. DOI/10.1146/annurev-economics-081919-050239.

6 Schedule

Date	Theme	Readings & Assignments	Prep.
Week 1			
26/10	L: Introduction to Political Communication	De Beus (2011), Jamieson (2017), Kenski & Jamieson (2017), Rojas & Valenzuela (2019), Salgado (2019)	4h.
28/10	L: Guest Lecture: Jan Kleinnijenhuis		1h.
28/10	T: Intro to R Markdown & Data Retrieval		
30/10	Online Office Hours		
Week 2			
02/11	L: Negativity & Bias in the News	Ahn et al. (2013), Loecherbach et al. (2020), Soontjes et al. (2020), Soroka & McAdams (2015) **Literature Assignment**	6h.
04/11	L: Negativity & Bias in the News Gastcollege Dieuwertje Kuijpers, journalist SPIT & Vrij Nederland, columnist Atlantisch Perspectief	**1st draft Weekly Challenge 1**	5h.
04/11	T: Mini-Hackathon 1: Sentiment Analysis & Ideological Scaling		
06/11	Online Office Hours	**Hand-in Weekly Challenge 1**	3h.
Week 3			
09/11.	L: Agendas & Framing in Comparative Perspective	Berinsky & Kinder (2006), Oxley (2020), Scheufele & Tewsbury (2007), Vargo et al. (2018) **Literature Assignment**	3h.
10/11		**Hand-in Solutions to Mini-Hackathon 1**	4h.
11/11	L: Reflection on US Elections	**1st draft Weekly Challenge 2**	5h.
11/11	T: Mini-Hackathon 2: Topic Models		
13/11	Online Office Hours	**Hand-in Weekly Challenge 2**	3h.
Week 4			
16/11.	L: Information Processing & Learning from the News	Ashworth & De Mesquita (2014), Barrera et al. (2020), Carlson (2019), Prior (2014) **Literature Assignment**	6h.
17/11		**Hand-in Solutions to Mini-Hackathon 2**	4h.
18/11	L: Information Processing & Learning from the News	**1st draft Weekly Challenge 3**	4h.
18/11	T: Mini-Hackathon 3: Working with Panel Data		
20/11	Online Office Hours	**Hand-in Weekly Challenge 3**	3h.
Week 5			
23/11.	L: Media, Campaigns & Polarization	Kalmoe et al. (2018), Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2006), Prior (2013), Simon (2019) **Literature Assignment**	6h.
24/11		**Hand-in Solutions to Mini-Hackathon 3**	4h.
25/11	L: Media, Campaigns & Polarization Guest Lecture Jasper van de Pol (GroenLinks Campagne Team)	**1st draft Weekly Challenge 4**	4h.

25/11	T: Mini-Hackthon 4: Times-Series Analysis		
27/11	Online Office Hours	**Hand-in Weekly Challenge 4**	3h.

		Week 6	
30/11.	L: Effects of Social Media & Censorship	Chen & Yang (2019), Hobbs & Roberts (2018), Lewis & Molyneux (2018), Silva & Proksch (2020) **Literature Assignment**	6h.
1/12		**Hand-in Solutions to Mini-Hackathon 4**	4h.
02/12	L: Effects of Social Media & Censorship	**1st draft Weekly Challenge 5**	5h.
02/12	T: Mini-Hackathon 5: Times-Series Analysis		
04/12	Online Office Hours	**Hand-in Weekly Challenge 5**	3h.

		Week 7	
07/12		Oral Exams	10h.
08/12		**Hand-in Solutions to Mini-Hackathon 5**	4h.
09/12		Oral Exams	10h.