Introduction to Political Inquiry (PAIR 1005)

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Lecture 1: Thursday 11am - 12pm
Lecture 2: Thursday 12pm - 1pm
Tutorial: Friday 1pm - 2pm

Contact and feedback hours:
Thursday 1pm - 2pm
Friday 2pm - 3pm
Make an appointment:
j.mp/schedule_meeting

This module provides a theoretical and empirical overview of the role played by information, communication, and media within the politics of the modern state. Students are introduced to canonical, scholarly, popular, as well as marginal and emerging perspectives on media politics and asked to weigh them against the historical record. Course materials are in a wide variety of media. All of the materials are digital and freely available through links on the module website (http://jmrphy.net/.

Each week will be devoted to a theme. Typically, each week's materials have been curated to expose the student to the dominant theoretical perspective, a dissident or heterodox perspective, and something empirical (qualitative or quantitative) to help fix ideas. The balance of these materials will be variable and depend on the nature of theme.

Summary of teaching and learning strategies

Focused, directed readings which students complete before each session will provide the core material around which each session is organized. Each session will include a lecture providing a general overview of the main points which will be followed by discussion questions in response to which students will exercise their command of the material. These teaching and learning methods will achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the module by providing a focused, consistent, and supportive environment where students engage with the material in multiple ways (through reading, audible/visual lectures, and through their own speaking).

Aims and objectives

- Students will gain an independent and critical command of the essential questions in media politics. They will learn to engage with historical texts, theoretical texts, contemporary academic research, as well as cutting-edge contemporary discussions of media politics on the internet. In other words, students will acquire the theoretical tools required of any global citizen who would seek to produce new knowledge in the state-of-the-art of media politics.
- Students will be able to apply their knowledge to diverse real-world issues, questions, and historical trends. - Students will improve their ability to develop original research questions and write formal academic research papers.
- Students will develop the oral and verbal skills necessary to communicate their ideas effectively to a wide range of audiences. In particular, through their engagement with contemporary theorists and practitioners of media politics online, students will learn the skills and norms required to become active and networked participants in both theoretical discussions and on-the-ground developments in media politics.

What students will gain from this module

Having successfully completed the module, students will:

- Have a considered, critical, independent perspective on the role of media in the politics across contemporary states.
- Be able to speak, write, and disseminate online their independent perspectives on the main questions and issues in the politics of media.
- Have a basic working knowledge of today's incipient trends and questions in the politics of media, and their institutional landscape.
- Have a more reflexive awareness of how the politics of media shape their own perceptions and behaviors.

Assessment

Students will submit a mid-term essay (maximum of 1500 words) worth 30% of the overall module mark (due at 3:00pm on Monday November 9th). Students will also submit an end-of-term essay (maximum of 3000 words) worth 60% of overall module mark (due at 3:00pm on January 8th). Also, an internet-based political communications practicum, used throughout the semester, will be worth 10% of the overall module mark.

Re-sits

The student will re-write both essays following the same instructions as found on the module handbook but the word counts will be a maximum of 2000 words for the first essay and 2500 words for the second essay, and with two additional exceptions. As stated in the module handbook, the student is free to design their own essay questions so long as it pertains to the course material and the answer uses material and knowledge gained through the module. However, whereas the handbook states students may pursue the same question in both assessments to improve their first effort, students re-sitting this module must ask and answer different questions for each essay given that they will be doing them at the same time. Also, if a student re-sitting prefers to have a question prompts, the convenor will gladly provide one optional prompt per question to any students re-sitting the module.

Schedule

An up-to-date week schedule with readings is available at jmrphy.net/political_inquiry/