A revolution has unfolded in the structure and operations of the mass media in the United States. The previous domination by an elite media composed of ABC, CBS, NBC, the New York Times, and the Washington Post has given way to a proliferation of new networks, cable outlets, chat-rooms, bloggers, talk radio, Web sites, and tabloid shows. In this course, we will discuss how the media have changed over the last century and a half. What do these changes mean for American politics? How should we evaluate this revolution in communications? How can the media do better?

**Course Format:** Students are expected to attend class and complete the reading assignments by the assigned time. This course will feature a variety of instructional techniques, including lectures, videos, readings, paper assignments, discussions, and Internet materials.

Assigned Books and other required readings:


*President Kennedy Has Been Shot (with CD)*, Bennett, Sourcebooks, Incorporated, Naperville, IL, 2003.

Articles: REQUIRED

You will access the additional required readings (as noted in the syllabus) from CQ Press/CQ Researcher. To access these readings, log on to my.emich and go to the Halle Library link. Under “Find Articles, Books & More in Esearch” type in CQ Researcher; click on “search.” The first listing that will appear will be “The CQ Researcher.” After clicking on that, type the title of the article in the search bar; you will be given a link to the article and an option to save it “to favorites.”

Media Viewing: There are a number of media outlets to which you should devote attention. Throughout the semester, you should read a daily newspaper. EMU has an arrangement with the New York Times whereby you can order the paper for home delivery, on campus or off (nytimes.com/student). You should also watch the evening news on television and explore politically-oriented Web sites. Pay attention to what gets covered, how it gets covered, and what the differences are across media outlets.

Videos and Documentaries: There are a number of videos and documentaries that we will incorporate in this class. These presentations will only be shown in class during our course meeting time. You need to come to class to see these materials. Videos will not be lent out!

Paper Assignment One: Choose a major issue in the current Presidential campaign and compare mainstream news coverage (such as New York Times, Washington Post, NBC, or CNN) to that of “citizen media” (such as Instapundit, DailyKos, Hot Air, Powerline, Talking Points Memo, or Little Green Footballs). Write a 2,500 word paper in which you analyze how citizen journalism compares to the mainstream news. Who does the best job? Make sure you define your criteria of what constitutes “good coverage”. Your paper is due when we meet for class on Oct. 14. The paper is worth 90 points. Late papers penalized two points per late day.*

Paper Assignment Two: Write a 2,500 word paper that examines media coverage of the JFK assassination and related events, through the funeral on 11/25/63. The television networks experienced a “coming of age” that weekend. Did they deserve all the accolades they received? How do you think the electronic media would cover a similar tragedy today? This paper could draw information from the West and the Graber books. Your paper is due when we meet for class on Nov. 18. The paper is worth 90 points.*

Paper Assignment Three: when we began this class in early September, Donald Trump was leading the Republican field, followed by Ben Carson,
with Jeb Bush in single digits coming in third. On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton was leading over Bernie Sanders, and the parlor game of the day was whether or not VP Biden would enter the race. With the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays upon us, what does the race for the White House look like now? What role has the media played in creating the present contours of the race? Describe the three most effective advertisements or messages that you have seen on television or found online. What made them effective? When we reach the conventions in the summer of 2016, who do you think will be the two major party nominees, and who do you think will win in November?

**Journal Assignment:** Each student will be assigned a media outlet to follow throughout the semester. Using that media outlet, collect at least one article per week on the state of the race for the White House. For each piece that you select, comment on whether or not you perceive that piece to be accurate. Additionally, indicate whether you think the article constitutes meaningful news. Explain why or why not. Turn in your collection of articles and commentaries with your third paper. The Journal assignment is worth 30 points.

**Grades**

There are three 90 point written assignments, and a 30 point Journal, allowing 300 points total for this class. The grading scale follows:

**Grading Scale**

- A  280-300
- A-  270-279
- B+  265-269
- B   250-264
- B-  240-249
- C+  235-239
- C   220-234
- C-  210-219
- D+  205-209
- D   190-204
- D-  180-189

**Schedule of Subjects and readings**

  Begin reading Bernstein now.
- CQ Researcher, Media Bias “Is Slanted reporting objectivity?” by Robert Klener

  **We will not meet on 9/14.**
10/5-10/12 Media roots 19th and early 20th century.

10/14 FIRST PAPER DUE

10/14-10/26 The radio arrives.
Begin reading West book now.
CQ Researcher, Shock Jocks “Should racist and misogynistic speech be regulated?” by Marcia Clemmitt

CQ Researcher, Free Speech at Risk “Will it survive government repression?” by Alan Greenblatt
CQ Researcher, Combat Journalism “Is reporting on global conflict worth the risk?” by Frank Greve

11/9-11/23 1960-1964
Read President Kennedy has been shot

11/18 Second Paper Due

11/14-11/26 1970s-1980s
Read Graber, On Media
CQ Researcher, Internet and Media “Would a two-tiered Internet hurt consumers?” by Carol Kaufmann
CQ Researcher, Civic Journalism “Can press reforms revitalize democracy?” by Chris Conte

11/30-12/7 The rise and fall of the media establishment.
CQ Researcher, Cyberpolitics “Do computers and the Internet enhance Democracy?” by Tom Price
CQ Researcher, Blog Explosion “Are blogs a passing fad or a lasting revolution?” by Kenneth Jost, Melissa J. Hipolit

12/9-12/14 Internet and Citizen Journalism.

12/12 Third Paper Due

* I do not accept emailed papers. The reason for this is quite practical. We do not necessarily use the same word processing programs. When I did allow emailed papers, I always had difficulty opening some of them, and my computer froze from others. Consequently, I expect to receive a hard copy of your papers, stapled in the upper left hand corner of the title page, pages in order, no binders, folders, petrochemical plastic covers, etc. You will properly cite material in your papers. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source.
** Dates are approximate

Addendum (material the university administration wants on the syllabus) aka the small print.

Please be aware of these Fall Semester 2015 dates:

Part of Term 1: 9/8/15 - 12/18/15 (15 weeks)

- 9/14/15 Last date to add courses via the web (a)
- 10/29/15 Last date to add courses with departmental authorization
- 9/17/15 Last date for 100% tuition refund (individual or total withdraw from term)
- 11/16/15 Last date for individual class withdrawal (with W grades) - No Refund
- 10/2/15 (b) Last date for 50% tuition refund (total withdrawal only) with W grades
- 10/29/15 (b) Last date for 25% tuition refund (total withdrawal only) with W grades
- 12/14/15 (b) Last date for total withdrawal from term (with W grades) - No Refund
- 9/17/15 Last date to declare pass/fail grading option or select to audit a course
- 12/14/15 Last date to remove pass/fail grading option and receive letter grade

More University Mandated Information

Completion of this course fulfills a requirement in the Knowledge of the Disciplines/Social Sciences:

In Knowledge of the Disciplines courses, students will

- Acquire introductory knowledge about the discipline.
- Develop questions for inquiry that reflect an understanding of the discipline(s) in which they are asked.
- Learn how knowledge is developed and disseminated in particular disciplines.

In Social Science courses, students will

- Acquire an understanding of social science methods and of how they are used to engage in the systematic study of society and culture.
- Understand and compare formal and informal social and political structures, organizations, and institutions.
- Explore and understand power relationships and the impact of social change on different groups and on society in general.
- Develop an appreciation of different interpretations of contemporary issues, institutions, or structures.
- Use social science methods and content to interpret and analyze data and reports in the media and to make informed decisions regarding local, national, and international issues.
- Use basic social scientific research techniques to examine and present information in a clear and concise manner.
- Understand the relation between qualitative and quantitative research.
These objectives will be addressed through our examination of the historical and constitutional context of American government, the evolving nature of civil liberties and civil rights, the mobilization of political participation by interest groups and political parties, the behavior of individuals in the political arena, the measurement of public opinion, the role of the media, the power and procedures of national governmental institutions and agencies, and an assessment of the processes by which domestic and foreign policy is made.

Note this statement from the university administration:
Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. Students also may be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Services for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code details definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty, but if you are not sure about whether something you are doing would be considered an act of academic dishonesty, consult with the course instructor.

**And Finally, Still More University Material**

**EMU Writing Support**

**University Writing Center**

The University Writing Center (UWC) provides writing support through multiple means to all members of the EMU community—undergraduate and graduate students, international students, post-baccalaureate students and faculty.

[Click here to learn about the services offered by the UWC](#), such as one-to-one consulting, online writing consulting for select programs, and workshops.