

## **POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

Journalism and Mass Communication 829 – Spring 2011  
(Cross-Listed with Political Science)  
5013 Vilas Communication Hall  
Monday 1:00-3:00 PM

### **Dhavan Shah**

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### **Course Description:**

This course examines the connection between mass media, citizens, and politics. We will take a social-psychological perspective on these issues, placing the individual and their place in society at the center of our inquiry. The course will focus on the complex interrelationships between consumption of various types of media content and the motives, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of democratic citizens. This is not to say that we will ignore the normative, organizational, or extra-media factors that shape mass media content, or that we will fail to consider the economic processes at play. Still, a majority of our efforts will concern research at the intersection of communication, social-psychology, and political science conducted in Western democracies.

The encapsulated aim of this course: *To consider classics and controversies in the existing political communication literature and propose measurable concepts and testable theories that illuminate the relations between the consumption and content of the mass media in democratic societies and the political judgment, public opinion, and collective action of democratic citizens.*

### **Course Requirements:**

Grades in the class will be based on your performance on the following requirements: (1) final research paper — 50%, (2) review reports as class discussant — 20%, (3) weekly comment papers — 20%, and (4) participation in seminar discussion — 10%.

### **Research Paper**

The major requirement for this course is an original research paper written individually by each student and presented to other seminar participants. The paper should grow out of one of the topics or theories covered in the course and contain the following sections: (1) brief

introduction, (2) literature review, (3) statement of hypothesis or research model, (4) actual or proposed methodology, (5) results or proposed analysis, (6) concluding discussion about what was or will be learned. The methodology may be quantitative or qualitative. The goal of the paper is to contribute, however modestly, to research in the area of political communication. The paper can present findings based on existing and available data sets (e.g., National Election Study, General Social Survey, DDB Life Style Archive, The Pew Internet and American Life Project, the National Annenberg Election Study, the Mass Communication Research Center Archive, etc.) or the collection of original data. Some of you may wish to extend projects you have developed elsewhere or to refine ideas toward completion of Master's or Doctoral theses; please consult with me if this is the case.

Your paper will be evaluated on whether it integrates the concepts encountered in class into coherent and testable propositions that have implications for theory in political communication. Your research paper should reflect an original extension of the ideas we have encountered in class, not a simple recapitulation of past work. A two-page prospectus for your seminar paper is due on April 4. Seminar presentations will be held during the last class period and one additional out-of-class session. The final paper is due May 6<sup>th</sup> by 4:00 P.M. and should be between 15-20 pages of text, not including cover, bib, tables, and figures. **This paper will be worth 50 percent of your final grade.**

### Review Reports

In addition, every student will be required to serve as a discussant for two class sessions. Discussants will write a 6 to 8 page **summary and critique** of the week's readings (including recommended readings) and provide a brief list of questions to facilitate discussion. As a discussant, you will be responsible for spurring but not necessarily leading student discussion of the readings by pointing out what you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the readings and encouraging debate about your reflections. Ideally, you will choose a week that coincides with your broader interests. That way, your review of the reading materials will be useful to you when preparing your paper. Review reports will be sent to the class listserv as an .rtf or .pdf at least 6 hours before class. These reports will be graded by the next class period and **will be worth 20 percent of your grade, 10% each.**

### Comment Papers:

Every week, with the exception of the weeks you prepare review reports, you will produce a brief set of written comments on the readings. You may miss 4 weekly comment papers (that

is, you will complete six comment papers, omitting the two weeks you will be producing review reports). These comment papers should be 1-2 pages in length, though they may be shorter on weeks that are of less interest to you and longer on weeks that you feel inspired. Papers do not need to follow any particular format or necessarily cover all the readings, as long as they illustrate that you made an effort to process that week's reading and have reflected on the research you encountered. Some of you may use these comment papers to summarize the key points of each of the readings into notes for their own future use. Others may organize their comments into critical essays or critiques on the general themes of the week. Yet others may focus on detailed reviews of a few readings or even a single reading, digging deeply into a topic of particular interest. Bring your comment papers to class and turn them in to me at the end. If you do not complete your comment paper for a particular week, do not avoid class. Come to seminar, listen and learn, and comment when you can. **These six comment papers will be worth 20 percent of your final grade;** evaluation will be based on the number completed; I will not be evaluating the content of these papers.

#### Seminar Participation:

**The final 10 percent of your class grade** will be based on participation in seminar discussion. It is not enough that you just come to class. You must actively discuss the readings and engage in discussion with other seminar participants. Your weekly comment paper should be the starting point for ideas you want to share with the class. I am hopeful that the discussion that ensues will lead to the development of a classroom environment where ideas are discussed and debated in an open, maybe even heated, yet respectful way.

#### **Required Texts:**

Geer, J. (2006). *In defense of negativity: Attack advertising in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mutz, D., (2006). *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Zaller, J. (1992): *The nature and origins of mass opinion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Recommended Texts:**

Cappella, J. N. and Jamieson, K. H. (1997) *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Delli Carpini, M. X. and Keeter, S. (1996) *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gamson, W. A. (1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mutz, D. (1998) *Impersonal influence: How perceptions of mass collectives affect political attitudes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion, our social skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Weekly Readings

(◆) Required Book; (\*) Required Reserve Reading

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(#) Recommended Book; (†) Recommended Reserve Reading

**Week 1, January 24:**            Introduction

**Week 2, January 31:**            The nature of political communication and media effects

Discussants:

- \* McQuail, D. (1987) *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Chapter 6, pp 135 – 174; Chapter 9, pp. 250 – 295)
- \* Price, V., and Tewksbury, D. (1996). News values and public opinion: A theoretical account of media priming and framing. In G. Barnett and F. Boster (Eds.) *Progress in communication sciences*. Norwood, N.J., Ablex Pub. Corp.
- \* Blumler, J. (1999). The third age of political communication. *Political Communication*, 16, 209-230.
- \* McLeod, D. M., Kosicki, G. M., and McLeod, J. M. (2002). Resurveying the boundaries of political communication effects. In J. Bryant and D. Zillmann (Eds.). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 215-267). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- \* Bennett, W. L. & Iyengar, S. (2008) A new era of minimal effects? The changing foundations of political communication, *Journal of Communication*, 58, 707-731

**Week 3, February 7:**            The construction and analysis of news discourse

Discussants:

- \* McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Chapter 7, pp. 175 - 212).
- \* Pan, Z. & Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political Communication*, 10, 55-75.
- \* Edelman, M. J. (1993). Contestable categories and public opinion. *Political Communication*, 10, 231-242.
- \* Shoemaker, P. and Reese, S. (1996) *Mediating the message: Theories of influence on mass media content*. White Plains, NY: Longman. (Chapters 1-4, pp. 1 – 62)

- \* Patterson, T. (1998). Political roles of the journalist. In D. Graber, D. McQuail, and P. Norris (Eds.), *The politics of news, the news of politics* (pp. 17-32). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- \* Bennett, W. L. (2000) Toward a theory of press-state relations in the U.S. *Journal of Communication*, 40, 103-125.
- \* Iyengar, S., Norpoth, H., & Hahn, K. S. (2004) Consumer demand for election news: The horserace sells, *Journal Of Politics*, 66, 157–175

**Week 4, February 14:** No Class

**Week 5, February 21:** Agenda-setting and Priming: Effects on Social Evaluations

Discussants:

- ◆ Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D. (1987): *News that matters: Television and American opinion*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
  - \* McCombs, M. E. & Shaw, D. L. (1993). The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 58-67.
  - \* Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Problems and opportunities in agenda-setting research. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 100-127.
  - \* Althaus, S, & Tewksbury, D. (2002) Agenda setting and the “new” news: Patterns of issue importance among readers of the paper and online versions of the New York Times. *Communication Research*, 29, 180-207.
  - \* Valentino, N. A. Hutchings, V. L., and White I. K. (2002). Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns, *American Political Science Review*, 96, 75-90.
  - \* Althaus, S. & Kim, Y-M (2006). Priming effects in complex information environments: Reassessing the impact of news discourse on presidential approval, *Journal of Politics*, 68, 960–976.
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- † Miller, J. M. & Krosnick, J. A. (2000) News media impact on the ingredients of presidential evaluations: Politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by a trusted source. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 301-315.
  - † Boyle, T. P. (2001) Intermedia agenda setting in the 1996 presidential election, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*; 78, 26-44.
  - † Tedesco, J. C. (2005) Intercandidate agenda setting in the 2004 Democratic presidential primary, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49, 92-113.

**Week 6, February 28:**      News framing and political judgment

Discussants:

- ◆ Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- \* Cappella, J. N. & Jamieson K. H. (1996) News frames, political cynicism, and media cynicism, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546, 71-84
- \* Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91, 567-583.
- \* Druckman, J. N (2004). On the limits of framing effects: Who can frame? *Journal of Politics*, 63, 1041-1066.
- \* Shah, D. V., Kwak, N., Schmierbach, M. & Zubric, J. (2004). The interplay of news frames on cognitive complexity, *Human Communication Research*, 30, 102-128.
- \* Chong, D. & Druckman, J. N. (2008). The Influence of democratic competition on public opinion, *American Political Science Review*, 101, 637-655

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- # Cappella, J. N. and Jamieson, K. H. (1997) *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - † Druckman, J. N. and Nelson, K. R. (2003). Framing and deliberation: How citizen conversation limits elite influence. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47, 729-745
  - † Shah, D., Domke, D., and Wackman, D. (1996). “To thine own self be true”: Values, framing, and voter decision-making strategies. *Communication Research*, 23, 509-560.
  - † Valkenburg, P. M., Semetko, H. A., and DeVreese C. H. (1999). The effects of news frames on readers’ thoughts and recall. *Communication Research*, 26, 550-569.

**Week 7, March 7:**      Media cueing, cue-taking, & opinion change

Discussants:

- ◆ Zaller, J. (1992): *The nature and origins of mass opinion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \* Kuklinski, J. H., and Hurley, N. L. (1994). On hearing and interpreting political messages: A cautionary tale of citizen cue-taking. *Journal of Politics*, 56, 729-751.
- \* Shah, D. V., Watts, M. D., 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*, 339-370.

- \* Bailenson, J. N., Garland, P., Iyengar, S. & Yee, N. (2006) Transformed facial similarity as a political cue: A preliminary investigation, *Political Psychology*, 27, 373-385.
- \* Bennett, W. L., Lawrence, R. G., & Steven Livingston (2006). None dare call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the Abe Gharib Scandal. *Journal of Communication*, 56, 467-485.

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- † Conover, P. J., & Feldman, S. (1989) Candidate perception in an ambiguous World: Campaigns, cues, and inference processes. *American Political Science Review*. 33, 912-940.
  - † Mondak, J. (1993). Source cues and policy approval: The cognitive dynamics of public support for the Reagan agenda. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37, 186-212.
  - † Domke, D. (2001) Racial cues and political ideology: An examination of associative priming. *Communication Research*, 28, 772-801.
  - † Cho, J., Gil de Zuniga, H., Shah, D. V., & McLeod, D. M. (2006) Cue convergence: Associative effects on social intolerance. *Communication Research*, 33, 136-154.

**\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\***

**Week 8, March 21:**                    Interpersonal verses mass influences

Discussants:

- ◆ Mutz, D., (2006). *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \* Weimann, G. (1991). The influentials: Back to the concept of opinion leaders? *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 55, 267-279.
- \* Huckfeldt, R., Beck, P., Dalton, R. & Levine, J. (1995) Political environments, cohesive social groups, and the communication of public opinion, *American Journal of Political Science* 39, 1025-1054.
- \* Sotirovic, M. & McLeod, J. (2001) Values, communication behavior, and political participation, *Political Communication*, 18, 273–300.
- \* Mutz, D. C. & Reeves, B. (2005) The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust, *American Political Science Review*, 99, 621-635.
- \* Rojas, H. (2008) Strategy versus understanding: How orientations toward political conversation influence political engagement, *Communication Research*, 35, 452-480



- # Gamson, W. A. (1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- † Gastil, J. & Dillard, J. P. (1999). Increasing political sophistication through public deliberation. *Political Communication*, 16: 3-23.
- † Chaffee, S. H. and Mutz, D. (1988) Comparing mediated and interpersonal communication data. In R. P. Hawkins, J. M. Wiemann, and S. Pingree (Eds.) *Advancing communication science: Merging mass and interpersonal processes* (pp. 19-43). Newbury park, CA: Sage.
- † McLeod, J. M., Scheufele, D. A., & Moy, P. (1999) Community, communication, & participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation. *Political Communication*, 16, 315-336.
- † Mutz, D. C. & Martin, P. S. (2001) Facilitating communication across lines of political difference: The Role of Mass Media. *American Political Science Review*, 95, 97-114.
- † Mutz, D. C. (2007) Effects of “In-Your-Face” Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition, *American Political Science Review*, 101, 621-635.

**Week 9, March 28:** Media, social capital, and political consumerism

Discussants:

- ◆ Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- \* Kraut, R., Patterson, M., Lundmark, V., Kiesler, S., Mukopadhyay, T., and Scherlis, W. (1998). Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being? *American Psychologist*, 53, 1017-1031.
- \* Shah, D. V., Kwak N., & Holbert, R. L. (2001). “Connecting” and “disconnecting” with civic life: Patterns of Internet use and the production of social capital. *Political Communication*, 18, 141-162.
- \* Prior, M. (2005) News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49, 577-592.
- \* Stolle, D. Hooghe, M., & Micheletti, M. (2005). Politics in the supermarket: Political consumerism as a form of political participation. *International Political Science Review*, 26 (3): 245-69.
- \* Friedland, L. Shah, D. V. Lee, N-J., Rademacher, M. A. Atkinson, L. and Hove. T. (2007) Capital, consumption, and citizenship: A correspondence analysis of the social positioning of taste cultures in the U.S. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 611, 31-50.

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- † Uslander, E. (1998). Social capital, television, and the mean world: Trust, optimism and civic participation. *Political Psychology*, 19, 441-67.

- † Friedland, L. A. (2001) Communication, community, and democracy: Toward a theory of the communicatively integrated community. *Communication Research*, 28, 358-391.
- † Kraut, R., Kiesler, S., Boneva, B., Cummings, J., Helgeson, V., and Crawford, A. (2002) Internet paradox revisited. *Journal of Social Issues*. 58: 49-74.
- † Schudson, M. (2007) Citizens, consumers, and the good society." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 611, 236-249.
- † Nie, N. (2001) Sociability, interpersonal relations, and the Internet: Reconciling conflicting findings. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 45: 420-435.

**Week 10, April 4:**                    The Internet and social transformation

Discussants:

- \* Bimber, B. (1998). The Internet and political transformation: Populism, community, and accelerated pluralism. *Polity*, 31, 133-60.
- \* Delli Carpini, M. X. (2000). Gen.com: Youth, civic engagement, and the new information environment, *Political Communication*, 17:341-349.
- \* Bimber, B. (2001) Information and political engagement in America: The search for effects of information technology at the individual level, *Political Research Quarterly*, 54, 53-67
- \* Norris, P. (2002). The bridging and bonding of online communities. *Press-Politics* 7(3).
- \* Bonfadelli, H (2002) The Internet and knowledge gaps: A theoretical and empirical investigation, *European Journal of Communication*, 17, 65-84.
- \* Cappella, J. N., Price, V., & Nir, L. (2002). Argument repertoire as a reliable and valid measure of opinion quality: Electronic dialogue during campaign 2000, *Political Communication*, 19:73-93.
- \* Shah, D. V. Cho, J. Eveland, W. P. Jr. and Kwak, N. (2005). Information and expression in a digital age: Modeling Internet effects on civic participation," *Communication Research*, 32, 1-35.

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- † Stromer-Galley, J. (2000) On-Line Interaction and why candidates avoid it, *Journal of Communication*. 50:111-132.
  - † Katz, J., Rice, R. and Aspden, P. (2001). The Internet, 1995-2000 Access, civic involvement, and social interaction. *American Behavioral Scientist* 45: 405-419.
  - † Borgida, E., Sullivan, J., Oxendine, A., Jackson, M., Riedel, E., and Gangl, A. (2002) Civic culture meets the digital divide: The role of community electronic networks. *Journal of Social Issues* 58:125-141.

**Week 11, April 11:**                    Political advertising, negativity, and (de)mobilizing the public

Discussant:

- ◆ Geer, J. (2006). *In defense of negativity: Attack advertising in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
  - \* Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., and Valentino, N. (1995). Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate? *American Political Science Review*, 88, 829-838.
  - \* Finkel, S. E. & Geer, J. G. (1998). A spot check: Casting doubt on the demobilizing effect of attack advertising. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42, 573-595.
  - \* Kahn, K. F. and Kennedy, P. J. (1999) Do negative campaigns mobilize or suppress turnout? Clarifying the relationship between negativity and participation. *American Political Science Review*, 93, 877-889.
  - \* Freedman, P. and Goldstein, K. (1999) Measuring Media Exposure and the Effects of Negative Campaign Ads, *American Journal of Political Science*. 43, 1189-1208.
  - \* Iyengar, S. and Simon A. F. (2000). New perspectives and evidence on political communication and campaign effects, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51, 149-169.
  - \* Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Nah, S., Gotlieb, M. R., Hwang, H., Lee, N-J., Scholl, R. M., and McLeod, D. M., (in press) Campaign ads, online messaging, and participation: Extending the communication mediation model," *Journal of Communication*.
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- † Schenck-Hamlin, W.J., Procter, D.E., & Rumsey, D.J. (2000). The influence of negative advertising on political cynicism and politician accountability. *Human Communication Research*, 26, 53-74.
  - † Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., Heldman, C., and Babbitt, P. (1999) The effects of negative political advertisements: A meta-analytic assessment. *American Political Science Review*, 93, 851-875.

**Week 12, April 18:**                    Impersonal influence and third-person effects

Discussant:

- \* Gunther, A. (1992). Biased press or biased public? Attitudes toward media coverage of social groups. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 56, 147-167.
- \* Salwen, M. B. (1998). Perceptions of media influence and support for censorship: The third-person effect in the 1996 presidential election. *Communication Research*, 25, 259-285.
- \* Perloff, R. (1999) The Third-person effect: A critical review and synthesis. *Media Psychology*. 1, 353-378.

- \* Eveland, W., Nathanson, A., Detenber, B. & McLeod, D. (1999) Rethinking the social distance corollary: Perceived likelihood of exposure and the third-person perception, *Communication Research*, 26, 275-302.
- \* McLeod, D, Detenber, B, and Eveland, W. (2001). Behind the third-person effects: Differentiating perceptual processes underlying self and other. *Journal of Communication*, 51, 678 – 695.
- \* Gunther, A. (2003). The influence of presumed influence. *Journal of Communication*, 35, 199–215.
- \* Tsfati, Y. & Cohen, J., (2005) Democratic Consequences of Hostile Media Perceptions: The Case of Gaza Settlers, *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 10, 28-51

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- # Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion, our social skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
  - # Mutz, D. (1998) *Impersonal influence: How perceptions of mass collectives affect political attitudes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Week 13, April 25:**                    Information and knowledge: Learning from the news

Discussant:

- \* Huckfeldt, R. & Sprague, J. (1987). Networks in context: The social flow of political information. *American Political Science Review*, 81, 1197-1215
- \* Price, V. and Zaller, J. (1993). Who gets the news: Alternative measures of news reception and their implications for research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 57, 133-164.
- \* Zhao, X. and Chaffee S. H. (1995). Campaign advertisements versus television news as sources of political issue information. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59, 41-65.
- \* Althaus, S. (1998) Information effects on collective preferences. *American Political Science Review*. 92, 545-558.
- \* Eveland W. (2001) The cognitive mediation model of learning from the news: Evidence from non-election, off-year election, and presidential election contexts. *Communication Research*, 28, 571-601.
- \* Baum, M. (2002) Sex, lies, and war: How soft news brings foreign policy to the inattentive public, *American Political Science Review*, 96, 91-109
- \* Prior, M. (2003). Any good news in soft news? The impact of soft news preference on political knowledge. *Political Communication*, 20, 149-172.

- # Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., and Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge: News and the construction of political meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- # Delli Carpini, M. X. and Keeter, S. (1996) *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- † Eveland, W. P. & Scheufele, D. A. (2000) Connecting news media use with gaps in knowledge and participation.

**Week 14, May 2 +:** Research presentations + additional offsite meeting/end of term party