

CMST 4100
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 - 9:00, M - Th

THE TEXT: Links to course readings will be posted on Moodle.

THE COURSE:

"We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office." - Aesop

In this course we will examine the various rhetorical genres, structures, and strategies employed in contemporary political activity. To accomplish this task, we will engage communication theories, critical assessments, and campaign artifacts concerning our political process. Additionally, we will cast an eye on the ethical tenor attending American campaigns, both formal and informal, in the early 21st century.

| THE SIMPLE MATH: | <u>PTS.</u> |
|------------------|-------------|
| Mid-Term Exam | 300 |
| Final Exam | 300 |
| Short Paper | 400 |
| Total | <u>1000</u> |

THE GRADING SCALE:

| | <u>POINTS</u> | <u>LETTER</u> |
|-----|---------------|---------------|
| 97 | ≥970 | A+ |
| 93 | 930-969 | A |
| 90 | 900-929 | A- |
| 87 | 870-899 | B+ |
| 83 | 830-869 | B |
| 80 | 800-829 | B- |
| 77 | 770-799 | C+ |
| 73 | 730-769 | C |
| 70 | 700-729 | C- |
| 67 | 670-699 | D+ |
| 63 | 630-669 | D |
| 60 | 600-629 | D- |
| <60 | <600 | F |

THE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Class introduction: What is communication? What is politics? Policy vs. identity, etc

Politics and society: Ideology and its forms.

WEEK 2

Campaigns, media, and political advertising.

Paper topic – 6/14

WEEK 3

Mid-Term Exam – 6/22

Civic discourse and public space (campaign activities, political performance, and new tech)

WEEK 4

Campaign reform, the populist present, and demagoguery.

WEEK 5

The “Tone:”

Where next?

Paper due – 7/3

FINAL EXAM

Final Exam – TBA. *University policy requires that this exam be given during the scheduled final exam period. Keep this imperative in mind when making end-of-semester plans!

THE ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams: Your mid-term and final exams will be comprised of multiple choice questions.

Paper: I will require you to select a topic of interest to you as well as relevance to the course and prepare a relatively short paper on that topic. Your effort should be about 9-10 pages in length and prepared in a generally accepted scholarly form. Additionally your work must reflect a rigor appropriate to a 4000 level class. Essentially, I’m looking for what would be called a commentary, response, or research note in the academic publishing arena. More will come later.