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COMPARATIVE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION COMM 330 - Spring 2007

Course Description

This course analyzes the links between media and political systems, based on a comparative approach. The purpose is to provide conceptual tools that will enable students to critically evaluate the role of the mass media in contemporary democracies. By identifying different forms of media and politics interaction, the course stresses how such interaction is shaped by broader social, economic, and cultural factors.

The emphasis of the course will be on societies from Europe and the Americas. This broad focus will allow a detailed comparison of political communication processes in a variety of contexts, from the postindustrial democracies of Western Europe and North America to the new emerging democracies of Latin America.

After introducing the features of the comparative method, the course presents a description of political and media systems from different parts of the world. By identifying basic models of media and politics interaction, we will discuss how the social and economic contexts of different regions are central to understanding the role of the media in political processes. The course concludes by considering whether globalization and related processes of commercialization and conglomeration are changing the role of communication technologies.

Course Texts

Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Richard Gunther and Anthony Mugham (Eds.), *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Both books available through Tulane Bookstore.

Blackboard

Blackboard will be used for posting announcements, assignments, and other information. It will also be used for online discussions. The system can be accessed at <<http://blackboard.tulane.edu>>. If you have problems using the system, you can call the help desk: 862.8888.

Required texts

Besides the two textbooks, we will work with several articles and book chapters which will be available online at Blackboard. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the classes for which they are listed in the syllabus. All students should have hard copies of the texts and bring them to the respective sessions. Failure to do so will affect your participation grade.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required and attendance will be taken in every class meeting. You can miss three class sessions without penalty in your participation grade. Seven unexcused absences will result in the final grade recommendation of a “WF”.

Evaluation

Your final evaluation will be based on the following:

1) Midterm exam: Students will take an in-class midterm exam which will cover the first unit (Part I). A list of possible questions will be delivered to students in advance and two of the questions will be on the exam. The midterm is a closed book exam. Students should bring a pen and a blank blue book on the scheduled dates for the exam;

2) Final paper: Students will be required to write a 10/12-page final paper. Specific guidelines for the paper will be given later;

3) Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. To have an effective participation, students should complete the assigned readings prior to the sessions for which they are listed in the syllabus and be ready to discuss them. Attendance will also be considered when assessing participation;

4) Readings summaries: Students should bring a one-page summary of the reading/s assigned for each session. Summaries should include the author/s’ main argument, as well as criticisms and questions about the argument, and will be due in the beginning of class. Summaries can be typed or hand-written, and should include the student’s full name and the date of the session. Summaries will be graded as “sufficient” and “insufficient” and only the former will satisfy the requirement. If you deliver all summaries and they are graded “sufficient,” you will receive full credit for this portion of your grade. If you do not, your grade will be proportionally lowered down to a possible “F” (50 points);

5) Country report: Students will develop a 15-minutes long oral presentation about media and political systems of a specific country. The presentations might be prepared in groups, depending on the number of students enrolled in the class. The student/group will also write a 6-page long report, to be delivered in hard copy and electronic formats in the day of the presentation. The electronic copy will become available in Blackboard. Guidelines for the presentation and the report will be given later;

6) Discussion board: Students will be evaluated for their participation in the “Discussion Board” area of Blackboard. This is where our online discussions will take place. There will be one forum for each part of the course. Students should use the online board to engage with issues related to the readings or class discussions. There are no major restrictions on the postings, but students should be cordial and respectful when discussing classmates’ arguments. Failure to do so will disqualify the respective postings and may result in other penalties.

How to post to a discussion board: 1) click on the discussion board button; 2) click on the respective “forum” (Part I, II, etc.); 3) add a new “thread” (a new topic, with a new subject title) to the discussion or post a message (response or comment) to an existing thread. Click "add a new thread" to create a heading or click “reply” to comment on someone’s posting.

You will be expected to post at least one message (an original thread or a response to a classmate’s posting) in each of the 13 designated weeks for online discussions (listed below). Of the 13 required messages, 5 of them need to be original threads. Whether you post more than these 13 messages is entirely up to you. As long as you complete the 13 minimum posts (five threads and eight messages in all designated weeks) with serious and thoughtful contributions, you will receive full credit for this portion of your grade. If you do not post all required messages, your grade will be proportionally lowered down to a possible “F” (50 points).

Designated weeks for online discussions - Week 1: Jan 22-28; Week 2: Jan 29-Feb 4; Week 3: Feb 5-11; Week 4: Feb 12-18; Week 5: Feb 19-25; Week 6: Feb 26-Mar 4; Week 7: Mar 5-11; Week 8: Mar 12-18; Week 9: Mar 26-Apr 1; Week 10: Apr 2-8; Week 11: Apr 9-15; Week 12: Apr 16-22; Week 13: Apr 23-29.

Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm Exam	25 %	Participation	15 %	Country report:	10 %
Final Paper	30 %	Discussion board:	10 %	Readings summaries:	10 %

Grading scale

A	94.0 to 100.0	B	84.0 to 86.9	C	74.0 to 76.9	D	64.0 to 66.9
A-	90.0 to 93.9	B-	80.0 to 83.9	C-	70.0 to 73.9	D-	60.0 to 63.9
B+	87.0 to 89.9	C+	77.0 to 79.9	D+	67.0 to 69.9	F	00.0 to 59.9

Academic dishonesty

Remember that plagiarism is a form of cheating. Do not present someone else's ideas as yours, without citing the source. This course adheres strictly to the Code of Academic Conduct of the Newcomb-Tulane College, available at: < <http://college.tulane.edu/code.htm> >

Course Schedule

PART I MEDIA AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION.

Jan 17 (Wed) - Introduction to the procedures and contents of the course.

(No readings).

Jan 19 (Fri) - The comparative method.

* Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler, "Comparative research: the extending frontier". In D. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (eds.), *New Directions in Political Communication*. London: Sage, 1990, pp. 305-315.

* Hallin and Mancini, "Introduction", pp. 1-17.

Jan 22 (Mon) - The media and the public sphere.

* Jurgen Habermas, "The public sphere: an encyclopedia article (1964)", *New German Critique*, Vol. 1, n. 3, 1974, pp. 49-55.

* Jurgen Habermas, "Political communication in media society: does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research". *Communication Theory*, Vol. 16, n. 4, 2006, pp. 411-426.

Jan 24 (Wed) - Media and democracy 1.

* James Curran, "Mass media and democracy revisited". In James Curran & Michael Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*. London: Arnold, 1996, pp. 81-104.

Jan 26 (Fri) - Media and democracy 2.

* Gunther and Munghan, Chapter 1.

Jan 29 (Mon) - Models of democracy compared: majoritarian democracies.

* Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999 (chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-30).

Jan 31 (Wed) - Models of democracy compared: consensus democracies.

* Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy* (chapter 3, pp. 31-47).

Feb 2 (Fri) - Models of democracy compared: delegative democracies.

* Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative democracy". In G. O'Donnell, *Counterpoints*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999, pp. 159-173.

Feb 5 (Mon) - Media systems compared: Europe and North America.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 2, pp. 21-45.

Feb 7 (Wed) - Media systems compared: Latin America.

* Chappell Lawson and Sallie Hughes, "Latin America's Postauthoritarian Media". In R. May and A. Milton (Eds.), *Uncivil Societies*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005, pp. 163-196.

Feb 9 (Fri) - Interactions between media and political systems.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 3, pp. 46-65.

Feb 12 (Mon) - Interactions: Italian and U.S. TV news compared.

* Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, "Speaking of the president: political structure and representational form in U.S. and Italian TV News", *Theory and Society*, 13, 1984, pp. 829-850.

Feb 14 (Wed) - MIDTERM EXAM (Part I).**Feb 16 (Fri) - MIDTERM EXAM (Part II).****Feb 19 (Mon) - No classes. Mardi Gras Break.**

PART II
THE POLARIZED PLURALIST MODEL:
FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY, PORTUGAL, SPAIN

Feb 21 (Wed) - Introducing the model.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 5, pp. 89-142.

Feb 23 (Fri) - The case of Spain.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 2, pp. 28-84.

Feb 26 (Mon) - The case of Italy.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 6, pp. 195-240.

Feb 28 (Wed) - Country reports: France and Greece.

PART III
THE DEMOCRATIC CORPORATIST MODEL: AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, DENMARK,
FINLAND, GERMANY, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND

Mar 2 (Fri) - Introducing the model.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 6, pp. 143-197.

Mar 5 (Mon) - The case of the Netherlands.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 9, pp. 303-342.

Mar 7 (Wed) - The case of Germany.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 11, pp. 375-401

Mar 9 (Fri) - No class.

Mar 12 (Mon) - Country reports: Austria and Belgium.

Mar 14 (Wed) - Country reports: Denmark and Finland.

Mar 16 (Fri) - Country reports: Sweden and Switzerland.

Mar 19-23: No class. Spring Break.

PART IV
THE LIBERAL MODEL:
BRITAIN, CANADA, IRELAND, UNITED STATES

Mar 26 (Mon) - Introducing the model.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 7, pp. 198-248.

Mar 28 (Wed) - The case of the US.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 7, pp. 241-265.

Mar 30 (Fri) - The case of Britain.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 10, pp. 343-374.

Apr 2 (Mon) - Country reports: Canada and Ireland.

Apr 4 (Wed) - Comparing the three models.

* Wolfgang Donsbach, "Lapdogs, watchdogs and junkyard dogs", *Media Studies Journal*, Vol. 9, n. 4, 1995.

April 6-9: No class. Easter Break.

PART V
IS THERE A LATIN AMERICAN MODEL?

Apr 11 (Wed) - Introducing the model.

* Daniel Hallin and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, “Political clientelism and the media: Southern Europe and Latin America in comparative perspective”. *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 24, n. 2, 2002, pp. 175-195.

Apr 13 (Fri) - The case of Brazil.

* Afonso de Albuquerque, “Another ‘Fourth Branch’: Press and political culture in Brazil”. *Journalism*, Vol. 6, n. 4, 2005, pp. 486-504.

Apr 16 (Mon) - The case of Chile.

* Gunther and Mungham, chapter 5, pp. 165-194.

Apr 18 (Wed) - Country reports: Mexico and Venezuela.

Apr 20 (Fri) - Comparing Latin America with other models.

* Heloiza Herscovitz, “Brazilian journalists’ perceptions of media roles, ethics and foreign influences on Brazilian journalism”. *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 5, n. 1, 2004, pp. 71-86.

PART VI
IS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION CHANGING?

Apr 23 (Mon) - Contemporary processes of convergence: commercialization, tabloidization, conglomeration.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 8, pp. 251-295.

Apr 25 (Wed) - New forms of journalism? The case of fake news.

* Geoffrey Baym, “The Daily Show: discursive integration and the reinvention of political Journalism”. *Political Communication*, Vol. 22, 2005, pp. 259-276.

Apr 27 (Fri) - Political communication in the Internet era.

* Peter Dahlgren, “The public sphere and the net: structure, space, and communication”. In W. Lance Bennett and Robert Entman (eds), *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 33-55.

Apr 30 (Mon). Conclusions. Class evaluation.

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 8, TUESDAY, 10:00 a.m. – noon.

Papers should be delivered at the instructor’s office: 219 Newcomb Hall. Late papers will not be received.