

## **PUBD 519: News Media and the Foreign Policy Process    Fall semester 2017**

Instructor: Professor Philip Seib

Time and location: Thursday 9-11:50, ASC 331

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Office hours: Thursday, 12-2; various other times, best by appointment

By influencing attitudes of policy makers, opinion-shaping elites, and the public at large, the news media can affect the design and implementation of foreign policy. We will examine how this worked during the twentieth century and how it is affecting policy in this new (but rapidly aging) century. In addition to developing a historical perspective on this process, we will consider theoretical and practical issues concerning the relationship between various forms of media, including the transformative effects of social media, and how they relate to foreign policy and public diplomacy. We will focus on U.S. foreign policy, while also considering other nations' media and policies.

### Assessment

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- understand the relationship between news/information and the making and implementation of foreign policy;
- recognize and evaluate media-related strategies of public diplomacy;
- identify historical precedents for contemporary international relations cases;
- understand journalists' professional practices and responsibilities when covering international news;
- make informed judgments about the scope and quality of international news coverage;
- analyze the effects of newer media on foreign policy processes.

### Required readings

W. Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, *When the Press Fails* (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, "The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model" (RAND, 2016; available through the RAND website).

Philip Seib, *The Future of Diplomacy* (Polity, 2016).

Philip Seib, *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Affects Foreign Policy* (Praeger, 1997).

Graham Spencer. *The Media and Peace: From Vietnam to the "War on Terror"* (Palgrave, 2008).

[additional readings will be sent to you by email]

### Course requirements

PAPERS: 99% (3 @ 33%). Students will write three papers, each about 3,000 words (approximately 10 double-spaced pages). The papers are due in class on **September 14, October 12, and November 9.**

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Bonus Points. These points will be added to your papers' average score at the end of the course. This covers general class discussion and performance in assigned presentations. Students with unexcused absences will, in effect, be penalized due to their lack of participation.

### Course outline (please consider this flexible)

- Aug. 24 Introduction: considering issues and process.
- Aug. 31 Past as prologue I. Seib *HD* 1-4.  
Supplemental reading:  
 John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye*  
 Philip Seib, *Broadcasts from the Blitz*
- Sept. 7 The U.S. president, American diplomacy, and the media. **Team 1 presentation.**  
Supplemental reading:  
 Marvin Kalb. *The Nixon Memo*  
 James Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans.*  
 James Mann, *The Obamians.*
- Sept.14 Past as prologue II. Seib *HD* 5-6; Seib, "The News Media and the Intelligence Community." (provided by email) **Paper 1 due.**  
Supplemental reading:  
 Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 225-248.
- Sept. 21 News coverage and US-China policy options.  
Supplemental reading:  
 Henry Kissinger, *On China*, 236-293.  
 Margaret Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 273-287.  
 Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China's Rise.*
- Sept. 28 Media as foreign policy tools: Russia, propaganda, and policy. Paul and Matthews, "The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model."
- Oct. 5 Covering the march toward war: Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, Introduction-2. **Team 2 presentation.**
- Oct. 12 News coverage and the issues agenda: Bennett, Livingston, and Lawrence, 3-5. **Paper 2 due.**
- Oct. 19 New media and diplomacy I. Seib, *Future*, Introduction, 1.
- Oct. 26 New media and diplomacy II. Seib, *Future*, 3, 5. **Team 3 presentation.**

- Nov. 2 Peacemaking and the news media: Spencer 1, 7, 8. **Team 4 presentation.**  
Supplemental reading:  
 Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace*.
- Nov. 9 War, the news media, and the public: Spencer 9, 10, Conclusion. **Paper 3 due.**  
Supplemental reading:  
 Donald Matheson and Stuart Allan, *Digital War Reporting*
- Nov. 16 New developments day: latest issues related to our topics. Reading sent by email.
- Nov. 23 No class: Thanksgiving.
- Nov. 30 Conclusion – looking back, looking ahead.

### Paper guidelines

Length: about 10 double-spaced pages (approximately 3,000 words).

Form: standard footnotes or endnotes and bibliography in proper form are required. The particular style of citation you choose doesn't matter, as long as you are consistent.

Due dates and general topic areas:

PAPER #1: September 14; analyze the news media's role in a pre-2000 foreign policy-related case. (If you choose, you may examine a case cited in *Headline Diplomacy*.) This paper should help you appreciate more recent developments by providing historical perspective. Nothing is new.

PAPER #2: October 12; effects of new media on foreign policy; among possible topics are the geopolitical impact of Al Jazeera and other satellite channels, as well as information delivered through social media and other online venues. This paper should reflect an understanding of how new media tools influence media content and effects.

PAPER #3: November 9; your choice – anything relevant to the course (including topics that we have not addressed). If in doubt, check with the professor.

For all the papers, submitting specific topic ideas and/or outlines in advance is optional. They may be presented for the professor's comments and suggestions about research material.

Late papers will lose at least one letter grade.

### Class discussion teams

During the semester, teams of students will be responsible for leading conversation about topics related to the reading. One of the goals of this course is to

enhance your ability to discuss, fluently and thoughtfully, issues and events. This format may prove helpful in achieving that.

Each team will be responsible on the assigned dates for a joint presentation that should include research findings about the topic and discussion questions for your colleagues in the class. The presentation should last about an hour.

TEAM 1:

TEAM 2:

TEAM 3:

TEAM 4:

#### DATES/TOPICS:

*[Please do not cover the same topics that we will be addressing in class on the day of your presentation.]*

September 7: Team 1. Discuss cases related to how the U.S. president(s) used the news media as a diplomatic tool during the pre-Internet, pre-9/11 era.

October 5: Team 2. Analyze (defend and critique) news coverage of several specific foreign policy stories (e.g., WMD; Ukraine-Russia; Egypt's upheaval; or something from the more distant past). Consider the quality of the coverage in terms of its impact on the public; did the public get the information it needed to make an informed judgment about events/policy?

October 26: Team 3. Discuss how social media may be superseding traditional media in affecting foreign policy. Illustrate with specific cases.

November 2: Team 4. Discuss ways that news coverage has affected the public's views of contemporary conflict (e.g., Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine....).

#### Grading policies

Papers will receive numerical grades that will be converted into letter grades at the end of the semester. This is the conversion table, as prescribed by the university:

95-100	A
90-94	A-

87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D

The university defines the letter grades as A="excellent"; B="good"; C="fair." C is the minimum passing grade for graduate credit. I define D as "dismal."

"Incomplete" and other special situation course grades are given at the discretion of the professor (i.e., not solely at the request of the student), and the professor is strictly limited by university rules related to this.

I will be happy to discuss the content of your papers. I will not, however, discuss the grade you have received. If you wish to appeal a grade, a formal process is available for doing so.

In grading your work, I consider quality of research and clarity of expression. Good research needs to be presented through good writing, and good writing needs to be backed up by good research. Clarity of expression also involves good organization. Don't wander and don't take an overly broad approach to your topic. Doing so can seriously detract from the power of your writing. Factual errors and mistakes in spelling, grammar, etc. will cost grade points, so proofread carefully.

Additionally, I look for evidence of insight into the topic -- do you seem to really grasp the subject matter and say something interesting about it?

In research papers you may interject your opinion, but only if you support it with evidence. In other words, beware of lapsing into polemic, no matter how passionately you may feel about the topic. For this class and your future endeavors, you want your work to be compelling and convincing. Achieving that balanced combination is always difficult but always possible.

One more very important point: Many of the issues/cases you might address in your papers change rapidly in the fast-moving modern political environment. Be certain that sources you cite related to current or near-current events are not outdated.

### Mobile phones

Turned off and put away during all class sessions. If you have urgent need to have access to your phone during class, talk with the professor beforehand. Laptops and tablets are okay; you might actually be taking notes on them, but I've learned that mobile phones are merely distractions.

### Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### *Plagiarism*

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/b/11-00-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

### *Equity and Diversity*

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

### *Support with Scholarly Writing*

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

### *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

### *Stress Management*

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

### **About the Instructor:**

Philip Seib is Professor of Journalism and Public Diplomacy, and Professor of International Relations. He was director of USC's Center on Public Diplomacy, 2009-2013. He is author or editor of numerous books, including *The Global Journalist: News and Conscience in a World of Conflict*; *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War*; *Broadcasts from the Blitz: How Edward R. Murrow*

*Helped Lead America into War; New Media and the New Middle East; The Al Jazeera Effect; Toward A New Public Diplomacy; Global Terrorism and New Media; and Religion and Public Diplomacy.* His new book, *As Terrorism Evolves: Media, Religion, and Governance*, will be published in late 2017. He is editor of the Palgrave Macmillan Series in International Political Communication, co-editor of the Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy, and was a founding co-editor of the journal *Media, War, and Conflict*. He is also an attorney, and on a part-time basis while teaching he worked as a television and print journalist.