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# **Media and Public Opinion**

**POL3030**

**Syllabus**

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### Course Description

Media and Public Opinion is an analysis of the influence of the media on the opinions of the citizenry and public policy. Special emphasis will be given to the interaction among the media, elected officials and interest groups.

### Course Objectives

Readings, written assignments, and small group discussions are designed to help you learn how to analyze the dynamic influences related to the study of American government. In addition, this course will help you:

- Understand the characteristics of the U.S. mass media system as well as the political, economic and technological forces propelling the current transformations in communications.
- Comprehend and analyze the ethical problems and political consequences of political activism by journalists.
- Recognize how governmental structures and functions affect journalists and media institutions and vice versa.
- Articulate the role of the news in fostering pro-social and asocial behaviors along with the conflicting theories of how circumstances increase or decrease media influence on political action.
- Identify and apply a Biblical worldview in light of media and public opinion pressure.

### Course Materials

Graber, D. (2015). *Mass Media and American Politics*. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press. ISBN-10: 1452287287

Olasky, M. (2013). *Prodigal Press: Confronting the Anti-Christian Bias of the American News Media*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company. ISBN-10: 1596385979

Postman, N. (2005). *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. New York: Penguin Books. ISBN-10: 014303653X

**Course Assessment**

<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>Points For Item</b>
WK1 Devotional (forum)	25
WK1 TEDtalk Discussion (forum)	25
WK1 Graber Discussion (forum)	50
WK1 Postman/Olasky Essay (drop box)	75
WK1 Blogpost: Local Media Newsmaker (drop box)	25
<b>Total Points For Week 1</b>	200
WK2 Devotional (forum)	25
WK2 TEDtalk Discussion (forum)	25
WK2 Graber Discussion (forum)	50
WK2 Postman/Olasky Essay (drop box)	75
WK2 Blogpost: Media Freedom Newsmaker (drop box)	25
<b>Total Points For Week 2</b>	200
WK3 Devotional (forum)	25
WK3 TEDtalk Discussion (forum)	25
WK3 Graber Discussion (forum)	50
WK3 Postman/Olasky Essay (drop box)	75
WK3 Blogpost: Media Bias Newsmaker (drop box)	25
<b>Total Points For Week 3</b>	200
WK4 Devotional (forum)	25
WK4 TEDtalk Discussion (forum)	25
WK4 Graber Discussion (forum)	50
WK4 Postman/Olasky Essay (drop box)	75
WK4 Blogpost: C-SPAN Newsmaker (drop box)	25
<b>Total Points For Week 4</b>	200
WK5 Devotional (forum)	25
WK5 TEDtalk Discussion (forum)	25
WK5 Graber Discussion (forum)	50
WK5 Postman/Olasky Essay (drop box)	75
WK5 Blogpost: Public Opinion Newsmaker (drop box)	25
<b>Total Points For Week 5</b>	200
<b>Total Points for Course</b>	<b>1000</b>

Percentile	Points	Letter Grade
94-100%	940-1000	A
91-93%	910-939	A-
88-90%	880-909	B+
84-87%	840-879	B
81-83%	810-839	B-
78-80%	780-809	C+
74-77%	740-779	C
71-73%	710-739	C-
68-70%	680-709	D+
64-67%	640-679	D
61-63%	610-639	D-
60% and below	0-609	F

**To receive an "A" (*EXCEPTIONAL*) the student**

- constantly exceeds minimum requirements
- is always prompt and thorough with assignments
- uses outside research for self-evaluation
- integrates learning with life goals

**To receive a "B" (*EXCELLENT*) the student**

- frequently exceeds minimum requirements
- is always prompt with assignments and is generally thorough
- is eager to profit from instructor's evaluation
- integrates learning with peer values and relationships

**To receive a "C" (*ACCEPTABLE*) the student**

- usually meets minimum requirements
- completes assignments reasonably well
- is willing to respond to evaluation
- integrates learning with course requirements

**To receive a "D" (*MARGINAL*) the student**

- occasionally meets minimum requirements
- sometimes does not complete assignments or does them inaccurately
- is slow to improve under instruction
- integrates learning only to avoid failure

**To receive an "F" (*UNACCEPTABLE*) the student**

- rarely meets minimum requirements
- usually does not complete assignments or does them inaccurately
- ignores or resists instruction
- is unable to integrate learning

**Due Dates and Late Penalties**

All submitted assignments are *due the last day of each school week*; therefore, a Tuesday to Monday school week would require all submitted assignments to be due by midnight of each Monday.

All initial posts within the Discussion forums are *due the fourth day* (see Discussions rubric for details), but students are encouraged to post sooner. This is in order to ensure quality interaction throughout the week.

**Late Penalties**

Assignments submitted within 24 hours past the due date will have a 10% late penalty of the final assignment grade.

Assignments submitted within 48 hours past the due date will have a 20% late penalty of the final assignment grade.

Assignments submitted between 3-7 days late will receive a 50% late penalty of the final assignment grade.

Assignments submitted beyond six days past the due date are not accepted.

## Rubrics Descriptions

### Discussion Rubrics

Discussions promote enhanced comprehension and critical thinking. Your satisfaction and the overall quality of the class are highly dependent on the interactions arising from discussions.

It is very helpful to your fellow students to include the previous statement when responding in the discussion forums; however, it is important to copy and paste only the *piece of the message* to which you are responding to clarify the context and to avoid the need to scroll through long messages.

Only interactions that include quality analysis and development of the topic within the time allotted count towards the grade. Disagreement is permitted, but must be done with complete respect and recognition of the other opinion. It is always the best scenario to provide textbook and/or articles to support your statements. It should be noted that faculty in higher level courses may require it.



This is essentially what is happening when students do not respond to questions that the facilitator or other students ask them in the discussions! Try and keep this image in mind as you engage with other students.

See the Discussion rubrics for more details about expectations. There is one for the weekly TEDtalk forums (25 points) and one for the Graber forums (50 points).

Discussion Rubric for TEDtalk forums			
Initial Post (13 points)			
13-11 points	10-9 points	8-7 points	6-0 points
Initial responses are posted no later than the fourth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the fifth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the sixth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the last day of each week.
<p>The following actions are considered substantive for <b>initial</b> posts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The response was well researched and involved thoughtful, detailed analysis.</li> <li>2. While there may be some mechanical errors, the writing is professional.</li> <li>3. Definitions and terms from the reading assigned were applied in the post.</li> <li>4. The post should contain 200-300 words.</li> <li>5. Proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and standard English are used.</li> <li>6. Resources are provided to support your opinions and may be required by a facilitator.</li> </ol>			
Interaction Posts (12 points)			
12-10 points	6 points	5-3 points	0 points
There are at least two substantive interactions with other students posted on <u>separate</u> days.	There is at least <b>one</b> substantive interaction with other students.	There is <b>no substantive</b> interaction with other students.	There is no interaction with other students.
<p>The following actions are considered substantive for <b>interaction</b> posts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The post should contain 50-150 words.</li> <li>2. Proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and standard English are used.</li> <li>3. At least one of these options was clearly used in the interaction.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A question that is probing.</li> <li>b. An insight gained from reading a post.</li> <li>c. An opinion on the conversation that is substantiated with an outside resource.</li> <li>d. A personal experience that validates or disagrees with statement posted.</li> <li>e. Submit a suggestion that assists a colleague.</li> <li>f. An expansion on the post with more details about the subject matter.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>			



Discussion Rubric for Graver Forums			
Initial Post (25 points)			
25-21 points	20- 18 points	17-14 points	14-0 points
Initial responses are posted no later than the fourth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the fifth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the sixth day of each week.	Initial responses are posted no later than the last day of each week.
<p>The following actions are considered substantive for <b>initial</b> posts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response was well researched and involved thoughtful, detailed analysis.</li> <li>While there may be some mechanical errors, the writing is professional.</li> <li>Definitions and terms from the reading assigned were applied in the post.</li> <li>The post should contain 200-300 words.</li> <li>Proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and standard English are used.</li> <li>Resources are provided to support your opinions and may be required by a facilitator.</li> </ol>			
Interaction Posts (25 points)			
25-21 points	12 points	10-5	0 points
There are at least two substantive interactions with other students posted on <u>separate</u> days.	There is at least <b>one</b> substantive interaction with other students.	There is <b>no substantive</b> interaction with other students.	There is no interaction with other students.
<p>The following actions are considered substantive for <b>interaction</b> posts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The post should contain 50-150 words.</li> <li>Proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and standard English are used.</li> <li>At least one of these options was clearly used in the interaction.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A question that is probing.</li> <li>An insight gained from reading a post.</li> <li>An opinion on the conversation that is substantiated with an outside resource.</li> <li>A personal experience that validates or disagrees with statement posted.</li> <li>Submit a suggestion that assists a colleague.</li> <li>An expansion on the post with more details about the subject matter.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>			

## Paper Writing Rubric

Writing is an essential part of the learning process and an academic paper is required almost every week. The Paper Writing rubric is a general rubric to follow for all papers required in this course. Resources counted towards your grade that support your writing should be scholarly. Dictionaries and non-peer reviewed sites such as Wikipedia are not considered scholarly.

General Paper Writing Rubric (75 points total)			
Content & Supporting Resources (35 points)			
35-31 points	30-27 points	26-23 points	22-0 points
Please select and utilize the appropriate checklist to assist with content quality. <i>Adapted from <a href="#">The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors</a></i>			
<a href="#">Research Paper</a> / <a href="#">Essay</a>			
Relevant content with analysis is developed.	Relevant content exists, but needs more analysis.	Content is somewhat relevant, but lacks analysis.	Information is provided.
Analysis is excellent.	Analysis is good.	Analysis is average.	Analysis is difficult to follow.
The required number of supporting resources is provided, if applicable.	Relevant Resources are provided, but not the number required for the paper, if applicable.	Resources are provided, but not relevant to the content and requirements of the paper, if applicable.	The required number of supporting resources is not provided, if applicable.
Presentation (20 points)			
20-18 points	17-15 points	14-12 points	11-0 points
Once the paper is written, please apply the checklist for presentation points. <i>Adapted from <a href="#">The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors</a></i>			
Writing follows the <a href="#">presentation checklist</a> .	Writing follows some of the <a href="#">presentation checklist</a> .	Writing does not follow most of the <a href="#">presentation checklist</a> .	Writing does not follow the <a href="#">presentation checklist</a> .
Presented in APA format very well.	Presented in APA format with minor errors.	Presented in APA format for the most part.	Not presented in APA format well or not at all.
Resources are correctly referenced to APA standard.	Resources are referenced to APA standard.	Resources incorrectly referenced to APA standard.	Resources not referenced to APA standard.
Mechanics (20 points)			
20 points	18-16 points	15-12 points	10-0 points
No grammatical errors.	Some grammatical errors (1-3).	Many grammatical errors (4-6).	Many grammatical errors (7+).

## Student Expectations

- Submit assignments on time. Discuss alternatives with your facilitator before the due date if it is known that the assignment cannot be submitted on time.
- Plagiarism is absolutely not permitted. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean/ Assistant Vice President of Academic Services.
  - For a student's first offense, he or she will receive a zero grade on the assignment that was plagiarized.
  - For the second offense, the student will fail the course.
  - For the third offense, the student will be dismissed from Ohio Christian University.

A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may petition for re-admission after six months. As a general guideline, plagiarism is defined by Lucas (2011) as "to present another person's language or ideas as your own." He describes three types of plagiarism: global plagiarism, stealing a speech [or a paper] entirely from a single source and passing it off as your own; patchwork plagiarism, stealing ideas or language from two or three sources and passing them off as your own; and incremental plagiarism, failing to give credit for particular parts of a speech [or a paper] that are borrowed from other people (Lucas 2011). All definitions of plagiarism are taken from *The Art of Public Speaking*, 2011, by Stephen E. Lucas, McGraw-Hill, p. 37-38.

- Read your posts aloud to ensure that your intended message is conveyed. If a posting upsets you, do not immediately respond. Always think through responses to ensure professional dialogue. Disrespect, sarcasm, and rudeness in discussion forums will not be tolerated. (Online Learning Only)
- Disagreement with a facilitator should be handled privately and respectfully. If it is felt that the facilitator is not being responsive or respectful, it is important to contact your academic advisor immediately.
- Participation is determined by activity in course discussions and submitted assignments according to the absence standards below. Please note that an absence is defined as a complete lack of involvement in discussions and submitted exercises.
  - No absences are permitted for a course running three weeks or less.
  - One absence is permitted for a course running four weeks or more, although two absences still results in a withdrawal.

## Facilitator Expectations

- Instructor will be available by phone and email to address any student inquiries. Responses to voicemail and email inquiries will occur within 24 hours unless otherwise notified via Announcements.
- Instructor will respond to forum postings daily. (Online Learning Only)
- Instructor will be engaged in the discussion forum throughout the week. (Online Learning Only)
- Instructor will provide meaningful feedback for all drop box submissions.
- Instructor will provide track changes and the rubric indicating what was earned for all papers.
- All instances of plagiarism must be reported to the Dean/ Assistant Vice President of Academic Services with the plagiarized piece and the artifact demonstrating that it is plagiarized.
- Weekly grades and feedback for assignments submitted on time will be returned within 5-7 days of the due date.
- The Final Grade for the course will be provided to the registrar within 14 days of the course's last day.

## Important Policies and Notices

OCU is fully ADA/504 & Title IX compliant. More information may be obtained from <http://www.ohiochristian.edu/about-ocu/general-institutional-information>

### ADA/504 Accommodations Policy

Ohio Christian University is committed to its entire student body, including those who need accommodation for disabilities. The 504 Compliance Officer is responsible for coordinating OCU's efforts in complying with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the University's duty to address any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or denial of equal access. Information and forms may be located via the following URL: <http://www.ohiochristian.edu/about-ocu/general-institutional-information/disability-services>

### Title IX Policy for Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Domestic/Dating Violence Complaints

Ohio Christian University admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school administered programs. In conformity with the pertinent requirements of Title IX of the Education

Amendment of 1972 enacted by the United States Congress, Ohio Christian University does not within the context of its religious principles, heritage, mission or goals discriminate on the basis of sex in the area of employment, admission, educational programs or other activities. Additional information and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator are available via the following URL:

<http://www.ohiochristian.edu/about-ocu/general-institutional-information/title-ix>