

GOVT 100

Media, Public Opinion, and the War in Iraq
Spring Semester 2008
Tuesday and Thursday 8:40 - 9:55am
Location MG 215

Instructor

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White Hall 205
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10:00–11:30am; and by appointment

Overview

This course will use the current conflict in Iraq to analyze whether (and how) media, public opinion, and government influence each other. We will also discuss whether understanding these relationships (or lack thereof) help to explain U.S. actions in Iraq. Readings will focus on the current situation in Iraq, previous U.S. foreign policy conflicts, and relevant public opinion research. We will also analyze recent public opinion polls and journalistic accounts that relate to Iraq. Students will write critical reaction papers, which respond to the readings, as well as argumentative papers, which articulate and support hypotheses about media, public opinion, and the conflict in Iraq.

I have assigned 6 papers during the semester (3 to 5 pages each). Papers 1, 2, and 3 are “Reaction Papers” based on the week’s readings. Papers 4, 5, and 6 are “Argumentative Papers” on the topic of your choice. Four of these papers will be formally revised multiple times. On the days when papers or drafts are due, students should arrive prepared to read their papers out loud. Students must also meet with me at least twice during the semester to discuss paper revisions. The first meeting must take place during the first five weeks of class (before Thurs. February 21). The second meeting must take place before the final class. We will also spend time during class practicing writing skills.

Objectives:

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

- write clear, concise, and analytical reaction papers.
- write active and persuasive argumentative papers.
- critique and discuss evidence about the relationship between the media, public opinion, and the conflict in Iraq.

Texts

All reading assignments for this class are available on blackboard, the internet, or will be distributed in class.

Evaluation

Your performance in this class will be assessed by your class participation and your writing. Each component of your grade will be weighted as follows:

Class Participation (including 2 conferences)	10%
Papers 1-3 (including drafts)	40%
Papers 4-6 (including drafts)	40%
Final Paper/Portfolio	10%

Attendance

I expect all students to be on time and to attend every class. After three unexcused absences you must meet with me or your class participation grade will equal an F.

Public Domain

Because we will be sharing writing with class members, all student writing for the course may be read and shared by all members of the class.

Readings and Assignments

I have listed the assigned readings below. All readings are available on blackboard unless otherwise noted. *If you have trouble with any of the links on Blackboard, please inform me as soon as possible.* Complete the day's reading before coming to class. I may change or assign additional readings throughout the course.

- Week 1

- Tu. 1/22: Class Introduction
- Th. 1/24: The Case for War: Media Watchdog or Lapdog
 - * **Paper 1 Draft Due**¹
 - * “How to Write a Response Paper.” University of South Dakota.
 - * “Response/Reaction Paper.” Duke University.
 - * *The Economist*. 2002. “The Case for War.” Aug. 3. Vol.364 No.8242.
 - * Kagan, Robert and William Kristol. 2003. “Why We Went to War.” *The Weekly Standard*. Oct. 20. Vol. 009 No. 06.
 - * Mooney, Chris. 2004. “The Editorial Pages and the Case for War.” *Columbia Journalism Review*. Issue 2.
 - * Pincus, Walter and Dana Milbank. 2003. “Bush Clings to Dubious Allegations About Iraq.” *The Washington Post*. Mar.18 p.A13
 - * Zinn, Howard. 2002. “The Case Against War on Iraq.” *The Boston Globe*. Aug.19.

- Week 2

- Tu. 1/29: Did Media Reports Influence Public Support for the War?
 - * Kull, Steven, Clay Ramsay, and Evan Lewis. 2003-4. “Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War.” *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol.118 No.4 p.569-597.
 - * Althaus, Scott L. and Devon M. Largio. 2004. “When Osama Became Saddam: Origins and Consequences of the Change in America’s Public Enemy #1.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*. p.795-799.

¹Note: The word “draft” does not refer to the quality of the paper. Draft simply indicates that the paper will be formally revised at least once more. I expect drafts to reflect your best work.

– Th. 1/31: Public Support for the War

* **Paper 1 Due**

- * Foyle, Douglas C. 2004. “Leading the Public To War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administration’s Decision to go to War in Iraq.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. Vol.16 No.3. p.269-294.

• Week 3

– Tu. 2/5: Media Influence in times of War

* **Paper 2 Draft Due**

- * Althaus, Scott L. and Kevin Coe. 2007. “Priming Patriots: How News Intensity and Evaluative Tone Affect Public Support for the War.” Unpublished Manuscript.
- * Iyengar, Shanto and Adam Simon. 1994. “News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing.” in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.167-185. (HANDOUT)
- * Zaller, John. 1994. “Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion: New Evidence from the Gulf War.” in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.186-209. (HANDOUT)

– Th. 2/7: Media Influence in times of War

- * Review Tuesday’s Readings and Discussion Questions

• Week 4

– Tu. 2/12: Positive & Negative Coverage of the War (Watch Dog or Attack Dog)

* **Paper 2 Due**

- * Kurtz, Howard. 2001. “CNN Chief Orders ‘Balance’ in War News.” *Washington Post*. Oct.31 p.C1.
- * “Press Coverage in Iraq.” March 22, 2006. *A News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. Transcript

– Th. 2/14: Positive & Negative Coverage of the War (Watch Dog or Attack Dog)

- * “Good News Bad News.” March 29, 2006. NPR Transcript.

- Week 5

- Tu. 2/19: Partisanship, Motivated Reasoning, and Opinions about Iraq
 - * **Paper 3-A Due**²
 - * Gaines et al. 2007. “Some Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq.” *Journal of Politics*. Vol.69 No.4 p.957-974.
 - * Bloch-Elkon, Yaeli and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2005. “Deep Suspicion: Iraq, Misperception, and Partisanship.” *Public Opinion Pros*.
 - * Jacobson, Gary. 2006. “Public Opinion and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.
 - * Dimock, Michael. 2006. “The Iraq-Vietnam Difference.” Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. May 16.
- Th. 2/21: Partisanship, Motivated Reasoning, and Opinions about Iraq
 - * Review Tuesday’s Readings and Discussion Questions

- Week 6

- Tu. 2/26: Threat, Anxiety, and Public Opinion
 - * **Paper 3-B Due**
 - * Brader, Ted. 2005. “Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade by Appealing to Emotions.” *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol.49 No.2 p.388-405.
 - * Huddy, et. al. 2005. “Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies.” *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol.49 No.3 p.593-608.
- Th. 2/28: Emotions and Opinion Formation
 - * Marcus, George E., W. Russell Neuman, and Michael MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch.4 & p.104-113. (HANDOUT)

- Week 7

- Tu. 3/4: Is Public Opinion Competent?
 - * Bennett, Stephen Earl. 1996. “‘Know-Nothings’ Revisited Again.” *Political Behavior*. Vol.18 No.3 p.219-233.
 - * Baum, Matthew A. 2002. “Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public.” *American Political Science Review*. Vol.96 No.1 p.91-109.

²Note: You may choose to turn in either Paper 3-A or Paper 3-B.

- Th. 3/6: Is Public Opinion Competent?
 - * **Paper 4 Draft Due**
 - * Berinsky, Adam J. 2007. “Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict.” *Journal of Politics*. Vol.69 No.4 p.975-997.
 - * Todorov, Alexander and Anesu N. Mandisodza. 2004. “Public Opinion on Foreign Policy.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol.68 No.2 p.323-348.

- Week 8

- Tu. 3/11: The President and Media in Times of War
 - * Lowi, Theodore J. 1985. *The Personal President*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. p.7-11 & 161-175.
 - * Mueller, John. 2005. “The Iraq Syndrome.” *Foreign Affairs*. Nov/Dec.
 - * Jacobson, Gary C. and Samuel Kernell. 2004. *The Logic of American Politics in Wartime*. Washington DC: CQ Press. p.3-9.
- Th. 3/13: The President and Media in Times of War
 - * **Paper 4 Due**
 - * Althaus, Scott. 2001. “Presidential Influence over Evening News Content: Assessing the Effects of Strategic Communication on News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis.” Unpublished Manuscript.
 - * Zaller, John. 1994. “Strategic Politicians, Public Opinion, and the Gulf Crisis. in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.250-276.

- Week 9

- Tu. 3/18: NO CLASS – Spring Break
- Th. 3/20: NO CLASS – Spring Break

- Week 10

- Tu. 3/25: The Bush Administration’s Iraq Reporting Policies
 - * The Brookings Institution. 2003. “Assessing Media Coverage of the War in Iraq: Press Reports, Pentagon Rules, and Lessons for the Future.

- Th. 3/27: The Bush Administration’s Iraq Reporting Policies
 - * Hayes, Andrew F. and Jason B. Reineke. Forthcoming. “The Effects of Government Censorship of War-Related News Coverage on Interest in the Censored Coverage.” *Mass Communication and Society*.
- Week 11
 - Tu. 4/1: Iraq and the 2004 and 2006 Elections
 - * **Paper 5 Draft Due**
 - * Gelpi, Christopher, Jason Reifler, and Peter Feaver. 2007. “Iraq the Vote: Retrospective and Prospective Foreign Policy Judgments on Candidate Choice and Casualty Tolerance.” *Political Behavior*. Vol.29 p.151-174.
 - * Lester, Will. 2006. “Voters with Clout: Swing Groups Swing the Midterm Elections.” *Public Opinion Pros.*
 - * Grose, Christian R. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 2007. “The Iraq War, Partisanship, and Candidate Attributes: Explaining Variation in Partisan Swing in the 2006 U.S. House Elections.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.
 - Th. 4/3: No Class: *Midwest Political Science Association Conference* in Chicago
 - * **Meet with Group to discuss revisions.**
- Week 12
 - Tu. 4/8: What is the Public’s Opinion about Iraq?
 - * **Paper 5 Due**
 - * Everts, Philip and Pierangelo Isernia. 2005. “The War in Iraq.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol.69 p.264-275.
 - * Berinsky, Adam J. and James N. Druckman. 2007. “Public Opinion Research and Support for the Iraq War.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol.71 No.1 p.126-141.
 - Th. 4/10: What is the Public’s Opinion about Iraq?
 - * Jacobson, Gary C. 2006. “Public Opinion and the War in Iraq.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Week 13
 - Tu. 4/15: Citizen Oversight
 - * Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. “Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?” *American Political Science Review*. Vol.99 No.1 p.107-123.

- Th. 4/17: Citizen Oversight
 - * Voeten, Erik and Paul R. Brewer. 2006. “Public Opinion, the War in Iraq, and Presidential Accountability. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol.50 No.5 p.809-830.

- Week 14

- Tu. 4/22: International Perspective
 - * Goot, Murray. 2004. “World Opinion Surveys and the War in Iraq.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. Vol.16 No.3.
 - * Telhami, Shibley. 2003. “Arab Public Opinion on the United States and Iraq: Postwar Prospects for changing prewar views.” *Brookings*.
- Th. 4/24: International Perspective
 - * **Paper 6-A Due³**
 - * Program on International Policy Attitudes. 2006. “World Public Says Iraq War has Increased Global Terrorist Threat.”
 - * Stephens, Angela. 2006. “Americans Favor More U.S. Action in Darfur. *World Public Opinion.Org*. Mar.23

- Week 15

- Tu. 4/29: Iraq and the 2008 Presidential Election
 - * Hugick, Larry. 2007. “The Political Fallout: Bush, Iraq, and the GOP.” *Public Opinion Pros*.
- Th. 5/1: Iraq and the 2008 Presidential Election
 - * **Paper 6-B Due**
 - * TBD

- **Tuesday, May 13, 9:00AM: Revised Paper (4, 5, or 6) and Portfolio Due**

University Policies and Regulations

I respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to my attention.

³Note: You may choose to turn in either Paper 6-A or Paper 6-B.

Students with Disabilities

I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity (<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.