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**
    - “How to Write a Response Paper.” University of South Dakota.

- **Week 2**
  - Tu. 1/29: Did Media Reports Influence Public Support for the War?

\[1\] Note: 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**

- Week 3
  - Tu. 2/5: Media Influence in times of War
    * **Paper 2 Draft Due**
  - 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**
  - Th. 2/14: Positive & Negative Coverage of the War (Watch Dog or Attack Dog)
• Week 5

  – Tu. 2/19: Partisanship, Motivated Reasoning, and Opinions about Iraq
    * Paper 3-A Due

  – 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

  – Th. 2/28: Emotions and Opinion Formation

• Week 7

  – Tu. 3/4: Is Public Opinion Competent?

  Note: 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**

• Week 8

  – Tu. 3/11: The President and Media in Times of War

  – Th. 3/13: The President and Media in Times of War
    * **Paper 4 Due**

• 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
– Th. 3/27: The Bush Administration’s Iraq Reporting Policies

• Week 11
  – Tu. 4/1: Iraq and the 2004 and 2006 Elections
    * Paper 5 Draft Due
  – 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
  – Th. 4/10: What is the Public’s Opinion about Iraq?

• Week 13
  – Tu. 4/15: Citizen Oversight
– Th. 4/17: Citizen Oversight

• Week 14
  – Tu. 4/22: International Perspective
  – Th. 4/24: International Perspective
    * **Paper 6-A Due**
    * Program on International Policy Attitudes. 2006. “World Public Says Iraq War has Increased Global Terrorist Threat.”

• Week 15
  – Tu. 4/29: Iraq and the 2008 Presidential Election
  – 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.

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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.