

Identification	Subject (code, title, credits)	PSIR 205 Political Communication, 6 ECTS
	Department	Department of Political Science and Philosophy
	Level	Undergraduate
	Term	Fall 2025
	Instructor	Kaklik Karimli
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	Classroom/hours	11 Mehseti str. (Neftchilar campus), Room YTO Thursday 08.30-10.00; 10.10-11.40
	Office hours	Saturdays 14:00 (by appointment)
Prerequisites	None	
Language	English	
Compulsory/Elective	Compulsory	
Required textbooks and course materials	<p>McNair, B. (2017). <i>An introduction to political communication</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Norris, P. (2000). <i>A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>All reading materials will be available at the shared Google Drive folder.</p>	
Course outline	<p>This course examines the relationship between the media, politics and the public. It is my goal to introduce you to the core concepts that will help you bridge your field of study from the perspective of communication and media in this interdisciplinary field. Topics to be covered include the history of the mass media, recent trends in the media, theories of media effects, the implications for politics of changes in media (e.g., the rise of the Internet and social media), the ways in which the news shapes the public's perceptions of the political world, campaign communication, the influence of the media on public policy, and the general role of the media in the political process.</p>	
Course objectives	<p>By the end of this course, it is my goal that you will accomplish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the theoretical and practical understanding of the relationships between media and politics. - Improve the media literacy skills and become more critical consumers of political contents and discourse. 	
Learning outcomes	<p>By the end of this course, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and explain key concepts in political communication and apply that knowledge to communicative situations occurring in the public sphere; - Recognize, define, and analyze how political content shape individual perception and public understanding; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare the persuasiveness of political actions, and evaluate and differentiate the bias in political consumerism. - Develop technical and soft skills by exercising group and individual projects. 		
Evaluation	Methods	Date/deadlines	Percentage (%)
	Midterm evaluation	To be determined by the Dean's Office	25%
	Attendance		5%
	Active participation in debate and group discussions		10%
	Two Assignments	Assignment 1. Fact-checking (10%) Assignment 2. Hate speech analysis (10%)	20%
	Quiz	-	-
	Final exam	To be determined by the Dean's Office	40%
	Total		100%
Policy	<p>Course requirements:</p> <p>Attendance at lectures and seminars, active and meaningful participation in conducted sessions, reading of assigned materials before class meetings are the main requirements for this class. The final grade will be based on attendance (5%), active participation in debate and group discussions (10%), two assignments (10% each), midterm exam (25%) and final exam (40%). Reading materials will be available in Google Drive.</p> <p>Assignment 1. Fact-checking – This assignment involves conducting thorough verification of information presented in various media outlets, including news articles, social media posts, blogs, and other online content. The objective is to assess the accuracy and reliability of facts, statistics, and statements shared with the public. As part of this task, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential misinformation, biased reporting, or manipulated data. • Cross-reference sources and validate claims by consulting credible and authoritative references. • Evaluate the context and presentation of the information to ensure it is not misleading or taken out of context. 		

- Compile a report that highlights discrepancies, corrections, and validated facts, providing evidence and source citations.

The guideline will be provided.

Assignment 2. Hate speech analysis – This assignment focuses on identifying, analyzing, and addressing instances of hate speech in various media outlets, social media platforms, and other public communication channels. The aim is to understand the forms, targets, and effects of hate speech while exploring strategies to mitigate its impact. You will be required to:

- Collect examples of hate speech from selected media or online platforms.
- Analyze the language, context, and intent behind the speech, identifying the key groups or individuals targeted.
- Evaluate the social, political, and cultural consequences of the speech, considering both the immediate and long-term impacts on the targeted community and the general public.

The guideline will be provided.

Attendance – Attendance is mandatory in this class. Excuse for absence should be informed a day before the class. Unexcused absences will result in deductions of participation points (2 absences equal to and lead to 1-point deduction out of 5 overall attendance points). Missing 30% (nine) or more class meetings without a valid excuse (health issue or family emergency) will automatically end up getting “F” for this course. More than mere attendance, students are expected to actively participate in the classes, ask and answer questions in the course of our discussions.

Office Hours - I will hold regular office hours (see above) during which I encourage you to contact me to discuss course-related matters. If your schedule does not permit contacting me during the formal office hours, please let me know and I will attempt to arrange an alternative time by appointment. Please do take advantage of this resource to ask questions or clarification, seek additional information, and so forth. It is my job to make sure that you have every opportunity to learn the course material, and I will make every effort to do so. However, it is also incumbent upon you to seek help when you think you need it. If you do not seek input when your grades indicate you need it, there is little I can do to help you.

Student Use of Technology in the Classroom - Although I believe the use of laptops or phones can be used for productive purposes in class, they primarily serve as distractions – both to those who use them, and those nearby. Usage of devices in a responsible manner is acceptable, however

		usage of the device in a manner that is distracting to others (using email or social media, watching movies, playing games) will not be acceptable.
Tentative Schedule		
Date/Day (subject to change if necessary, on holidays)	Topics	Readings
Week 1 18.09.2025	Introduction to the course	<p>McNair, “Introduction to Political Communication”, read pp. 3-15.</p> <p>Gisela Gonçalves, Political Communication, read pp 1-8.</p> <p><i>Recommended film:</i> All the President’s Men (1976). Through investigative journalism, two Washington Post reporters uncover the Watergate affair and bring down President Nixon’s men.</p>
Week 2 25.09.2025	Media effect: The influence of Media on Public opinion.	<p>Brian McNair, The media as political actors, read pp. 289-303.</p> <p>Graber and Dunaway, Chapter 11, “Media Influence on Attitudes and Behavior,” pp. 485-514.</p>
Week 3 02.10.2025	Media effect: Agenda-setting and Framing theories	<p>Chapter 8. Agenda Setting by Valenzuela McCombs</p> <p>Iyengar, S., & McGrady, J. (2007). <i>Media politics: A citizen's guide</i>. New York: ww Norton, read pp. 254-273.</p>
Week 4 09.10.2025	Political Communication in Digital Age	<p>Ralph Schroeder, Book Title: Social Theory after the Internet, Ch. <i>Media systems, digital media and politics</i>, 2.5 Digital media and politics in China and India, READ pp.51-59</p> <p>Gil de Zúñiga, H., & Chen, H. T. (2019). Digital media and politics: Effects of the great information and communication divides. <i>Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media</i>, 63(3), READ 365-368.</p> <p><i>Recommended, not mandatory:</i></p> <p>Tufecki, Z. & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 62(2), 363-379.</p>

Week 9 13.11.2025	Political Campaign: Advertising	<p>McNair, “Introduction to Political Communication”, READ pp. 85-99.</p> <p>Kaid, L. L., & Holtz-Bacha, C. (Eds.) (2006). <i>The SAGE Handbook of Political Advertising</i>. SAGE Publications.</p> <p>Paletz, D. L., Owen, D. M., & Cook, T. E. (2013). <i>American government and politics in the information age</i>. Flat World Knowledge. Ch. 11.2 Media and Election Campaigns. https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_american-government-and-politics-in-the-information-age/s15-02-media-and-election-campaigns.html)</p> <p>Political Advertising Archives: http://www.livingroomcandidate.org</p>
Week 10 20.11.2025	Political rhetoric and Populism	<p>Handbook of political communication research, Bruce E. Gronbeck, Ch. 6 Rhetoric and Politics, Read pp. 135-155.</p> <p>Political Rhetoric: 5. The Three Means of Persuasion: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/#DefiRhet</p> <p>Ch.2. A short history of different populisms, read pp.36-48. Ch.4. Populism and the Media, read pp.66-81.</p> <p>https://www.populismstudies.org/the-rise-of-authoritarian-civilizational-populism-in-turkey-india-russia-and-china/</p>
Week 11 27.11.2025	Hate speech	<p>How hateful rhetoric connects to real-world violence: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-hateful-rhetoric-connects-to-real-world-violence/</p> <p>Classifying and Identifying the Intensity of Hate Speech: https://items.ssrc.org/disinformation-democracy-and-conflict-prevention/classifying-and-identifying-the-intensity-of-hate-speech/</p> <p>Additional recommended reading:</p>

		<p>Chapter 1. What is Hate Speech?: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hate-speech/</p>
<p>Week 12 04.12.2025</p>	<p>The Impact of Regime Type on Media</p> <p>Assignment 1. Hate speech analysis</p>	<p>McNair, B. (2017). <i>An introduction to political communication</i>. POLITICS, DEMOCRACY AND THE MEDIA, Read pp. 15-27.</p> <p>Chalaby, Jean K.: Public Communication in Totalitarian, Authoritarian and Statist Regimes: A Comparative Glance. In: Kirill Postoutenko (Hg.): <i>Totalitarian Communication – Hierarchies, Codes and Messages</i>. Bielefeld: transcript 2010, S. 67–89. DOI: https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/12402.</p> <p>The misuse of social media platforms and other communication channels by authoritarian regimes: Lessons learned, 3.3 Russia's interventions in Georgia, pp.33-39. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDA/N/2021/653658/EXPO_IDA(2021)653658_EN.pdf</p>
<p>Week 13 11.12.2025</p>	<p>Ownership of Media Organizations</p>	<p>Handbook of political communication research, Ch.15. Mediating Democratic Engagement: The Impact of Communications on Citizens' Involvement in Political and Civic Life</p> <p>McCluskey & Swinnen, 'Media Economics and the Political Economy of Information', in <i>The Oxford Handbook of Business and Government</i> (2010), READ pp.643-653. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199214273.003.0029</p> <p>Freedom House (2015) "Freedom of the Press 2015"</p>
<p>Week 14 18.12.2025</p>	<p>Gender and Political Communication</p>	<p>Council of Europe study, Study on media coverage of elections with a specific focus on gender equality, READ pp.11-21.</p> <p>Gender, Media and Elections: https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me/default</p> <p>Additional:</p> <p>Gendered Bodies: Considering the Sexual in Political Communication, Jimmie Manning Cady Short-Thompson, READ, pp.251-267</p>

		Gender and media: https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-media/
Week 15 25.12.2025		Will be decided on group discussion
	Final exam	