



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

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COMM370: Contemporary Political Communication with Dr. Knopf

Contact - Morey248: Mondays & Wednesdays 9:15-10:30am, Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:00-9:15am

knopfcm@potdam.edu • [facebook.com/profknopf](https://www.facebook.com/profknopf) • 267-2883

Course Description: This course examines political communication theories and practices toward the ideal of deliberative democracy. Through a text that synthesizes a range of contemporary research on the challenges, promises, and skills of deliberation, lectures and discussions that highlight the functions of diverse political institutions from juries to elections to media, and activities designed to improve the skills needed for civic engagement in all walks of life – from Home Owners Associations, to Parent-Teacher Associations, to town councils, to corporate boards, and on up to Congress. The course is designated as Speaking Intensive and assumes that students have already completed a basic public speaking (FS) class.

Course Objectives: In taking this class, you will be able to:

- Better understand the nature and significance of verbal and nonverbal communication, including signs and symbols, in public contexts
- Construct and evaluate oral arguments with consideration to audience and deliberative progress
- Read & understand contemporary communication scholarship
- Understand the role of communication in civil society

Texts & Course Materials:

- *Political Communication and Deliberation*, by John Gastil
- Moodle access for additional readings
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet (on Moodle)

Grading:

3-article Review Paper: 10%	Participation: 40%
Midterm review questions 10%	Final review questions 10%
Student-Generated Midterm Exam: 15%	Student-Generated Final Exam: 15%

☆ *Full assignment descriptions & instructions are in the "Assignments Packet" Use it.* ☆

Final Grades are broken down **in this class** as follows:

- 4.0 = 95-100
- 3.7 = 90-94
- 3.3 = 86-89
- 3.0 = 82-85
- 2.7 = 78-81
- 2.3 = 72-77
- 2.0 = 67-71
- 1.7 = 61-66
- 1.3 = 56-60
- 1.0 = 51-55
- (0.0 = below 51)

☆ A 2.0 is a "satisfactory" grade that indicates the *minimum* has been achieved, or that the work is of an average acceptable quality. A 4.0 is attainable but will require much more than minimal effort. ☆

How to earn a minimum 2.3 in the course, guaranteed:

- Attend 27 class sessions (including the midterm & final)
 - Complete the paper on time
 - Arrive late or leave early no more than 4 times
 - Take both the midterm & final exam on time
- Note: You can still earn up to a 4.0 if you do these things, and if you don't or are unable to do these you can still earn a 2.3 or higher in the course. If, however, you are worried about passing, this is the basic route to success.

Challenging a Grade: If you identify an error in grading, I am always willing to admit to a mistake and correct it.

If you want me to *reconsider* a grade, follow these steps:

- Wait at least 24 hours before deciding to seek reconsideration, but no longer than one week.
- Write a 1-2 page explanation of why the grade should be reconsidered identifying what type of change you seek and providing a reasoned argument and evidence in support of that change. The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of your performance rests with you.
- Resubmit the original work (complete with grade & comments) along with the rationale.
- Allow two weeks for reconsideration. Accept the final decision. *I will reconsider each assignment only once.*

Extra Credit: A way to succeed throughout life, while managing stress, is to be mindful – to focus your attention and your energies and to be aware of the consequences of your actions. To help you to be present mentally and not just physically in class, you will receive ½ point of extra credit for every day that you turn off your cell phone, or MP3 player, or tablet, or laptop, and leave it on the front desk for the class session (that can add up to 15 points of extra credit for the semester!). You will not be penalized if you choose to keep and use your electronic device during class.

Extra credit will not be available as an end-of-semester option to make-up-for or replace work that you did not do throughout the semester. It will never be given on an individual basis.

Due Dates/Late Work: **LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.** *If you know in advance you will not be in class when an assignment is due, turn it in early. If you wake up sick when something is due, please email it by class time.* All due dates are on the course calendar.

Attendance: This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, communication course. Being present on time (and AWAKE) is necessary. **If you cannot consistently be present, on time, for class, you should withdraw.**

☆ You are solely responsible for catching up on work that you miss (always refer to the course calendar and to the potential kindness of classmates). Absences are not an excuse for late work or for being unaware of course expectations. Make-ups for assignments will only be granted in rare instances and usually only with documentation of an unavoidable emergency.

In the case of **college-sanctioned activities or religious observances**, arrangements should be made prior to the absence.

Absences of two or more straight weeks: If you miss, or will miss, two straight weeks of class (4 consecutive class meetings), you must contact me before or within those two weeks or risk failing the course.

Attendance for the Final Exam/Meeting: Finals week is part of the required number of class meeting hours set by the SUNY system. Final exam times are scheduled by the school to ensure that classes do not overlap. Final exams or activities scheduled during the final exam timeslot, will not be rescheduled unless you have 3 or more exams on a single day. (If that happens, please see the policy online at <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/registrar/exams.cfm>). **You must make travel/work/childcare arrangements around the final exam.**

Incompletes: Incompletes, or other arrangements for course completion, can be planned only in advance to the semester's end when there is an emergency that makes completing the course otherwise impossible.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: A pledge of academic honesty is made by all students at SUNY Potsdam, indicating that you understand & comply with the requirements set forth by instructors the Academic Honor Code. To plagiarize is to pass off ideas or words of someone else as your own without crediting the source, no matter what the source is or if you make some changes to the wording or add in some of your own words/ideas. ***In the event of plagiarism on an assignment in this course you will have 24 hours to correct or authenticate your work or receive a zero on the assignment. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on an exam, or attempting to cheat, will result in a 33% lower grade on the work.***

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Any communication or behavior that potentially interferes with the learning environment of other students will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior - even minor disruptions - may result in your being told to leave class. Repeated offenses may result in course failure.

	TUESDAYS	THURSDAYS
Wk1	1/20: Introduce class focus & expectations	1/22: how to find & read an article
Wk2	1/27: <u>Chapter 1 due.</u>	1/29: Deliberation framework activity
Wk3	2/3: <u>Chapter 2 due.</u> Conversation in-class activity.	2/5: Deliberative experience activities.
Wk4	2/10: <u>Chapter 3 due.</u> Media problems class debate.	2/12: " <u>Stewart on Trial</u> " Moodle articles due. Viewing <i>Daily Show</i> & others.
Wk5	2/17: <u>Public Opinion Moodle reading due.</u> <i>Public Opinion</i> video & in-class activity.	2/19: <u>Chapter 4 due.</u> Elections fixes class debate.
Wk6	2/24: <u>Debate Moodle article due.</u> Viewing <i>West Wing</i> , "Freedonia"	2/26: Viewing <i>The Living Room Campaign</i>
Wk7	3/3: No Class – Spring Recess	3/5: No Class – Spring Recess
Wk8	3/10: <u>Chapter 5 due.</u> Viewing <i>West Wing</i> , "The Crackpots and these Women"	3/12: <u>Midterm review questions due.</u> Viewing <i>West Wing</i> , "Stackhouse Filibuster" <i>Roberts Rules of Order</i> activities.
Wk9	3/17: Midterm review	3/19: Midterm → open book.
Wk10	3/24: <u>Chapter 6 due.</u> Viewing <i>The Simpsons</i> , "Jury of the Damned" or "The Boy Who Knew Too Much"	3/26: <u>Jury Moodle articles due.</u> Mock voir dire
Wk11	3/31: Viewing <i>12 Angry Men</i> .	4/2: Viewing <i>12 Angry Men</i> .
Wk12	4/7: No Class – April Recess	4/9: <u>Chapter 8 due.</u> "Ethics of talk" discussion
Wk13	4/14: <u>Higher ed Moodle reading due.</u> Higher Ed forum.	4/16: <u>Chapter 9 due.</u>
Wk14	4/21: <u>WTO Moodle article due.</u> Viewing <i>Battle in Seattle</i>	4/23: Viewing <i>Battle in Seattle</i>
Wk15	4/28: <u>Chapter 10 due.</u> Design a deliberative institution activity	4/30: Consensus activity
Wk16	5/5: <u>Final exam review questions due.</u>	5/7: <u>Paper due.</u> Final review.
Wk17	5/13, 2:45-4:45pm: Final exam – open book	

COMM370: Contemporary Political Communication, Spring 2015 Assignment Packet

Participation

Because this is a speaking-intensive course focused on public deliberation, there will be many opportunities to engage in discussions, debates, problem solving exercises, and other practice or simulation activities relevant to the political communication issues and practices we will be covering. Therefore, your presence and positive contributions are necessary for the course, for your success, and for the learning environment and opportunities of everyone. Thus, attendance and participation comprise the largest portion of your grade for this class. The grade for this will be determined as follows

Attendance (15%): How many classes you attended divided by the number of class meetings (partial attendance from late arrivals or early departures will be given half credit). Barring illness or bad weather, this should be $\{\# \text{ classes attended} \div 29 \text{ class meetings}\}$. In the case of sporting events, college-sanction events, or religious observances, the baseline of class meetings will be adjusted.

Presence (5%): Structured activities for which you were present divided by the number of structured activities conducted (these are tentatively scheduled in the course calendar). If all goes according to plan, this should be at least $\{\# \text{ activities present for} \div 8 \text{ structured activities}\}$.

Participation (10%): Different people have different ways of being involved. Participation can include active listening, contributing to discussions, detailed note-taking, doing research, being supportive, not being negative, thoughtfully completing assessment questionnaires after class activities... At the end of the semester you will be asked to judge your overall course participation on a scale of 1 (no participation...) to 10 (very involved!), with an explanation of the ways in which you participated and/or why you maybe didn't participate more.

Deliberation (30%): As part of the speaking-intensive component to this course, three of the structured deliberation activities for the semester will be class-wide debates/discussions:

- The media problems class-debate on February 10. (10%)
- The elections fixes class-debate on February 19. (10%)
- The higher education reform forum on April 14. (10%)

For each of these deliberative exercises it is expected that you will a) have done the assigned reading for the day (you may want to take notes to refer to in class), b) be in class to participate in the discussion, c) speak at least once, d) listen carefully, thoughtfully and civilly to each other, e) practice the kinds of quality deliberation and conversation presented in the text and in the course. At the end of the forum, you will be asked to evaluate your own engagement in the discussion and the group's deliberative quality. The grade for each of these activities will be an average of your personal evaluation and the class's overall evaluation. Failure to speak or to practice civil, active listening will result in a lowered grade.

Mini Literature-Review Paper

The textbook for this course introduces you to a broad array of research in political communication and public deliberation. Each chapter references multiple research articles and books by accomplished communication and political science scholars. In this way, it is different from many typical college textbooks that don't reveal where the information they present originated. This

assignment gives you the opportunity to become more familiar with scholarship in the field, scholastic writing, and the creation of communication knowledge, while getting to explore something you are particularly interested in from the course material.

As the semester progresses, at any time during the semester, you should:

- 1) Identify a topic or an area of research in political communication and deliberation in which you are particularly interested in.
- 2) Choose three cited articles related to that topic (these are found in in-text citations and the text's bibliography).
- 3) Locate and acquire these 3 articles, using the Library's resources – including interlibrary loan, if needed.
- 4) Read these 3 articles.
- 5) Write a short, 4-page (12-point, Times New Roman font; double-spaced, 1" margins), review or summary of these articles, considering how they each approached the topic, what they each teach us about the topic, and how they combine (or conflict) to create a lesson or offer guidelines about the topic.

This paper will be graded using the following rubric

Formatting (font, spacing, length)	1 pts
Spelling	2 pts
Grammar	2 pts
Citations & bibliography (APA style; if you need help/instruction, see me)	2 pts
Clarity & Completion	3 pts

You may submit the paper at any time during the semester, but the absolute last possible chance to submit it is on the last day of class. Because the end of the semester is usually very busy and stressful for people, you should seriously consider trying to finish it earlier.



Review Questions and Exams

Because this is a course about deliberation and civic engagement, you, the people, will generate your own exams for the class. These exams will be administered in an open-book format.

Prior to both the midterm and the final, each person will bring in two-copies of 2 review questions. These can be written in multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer format. They can be something you are sure of the answer to, or something you think is worth discussing. They should

always be something that you think is particularly important or interesting from the class, and not just something you think is easy to ask or answer.

One copy will be submitted, the other will be used in the class review session. Review sessions will combine small-group and class-wide study time in which you will pose your questions to others and will work collectively to find the answers. As a class we will discuss the questions and answers. The exams will be generated from a selection of the questions you yourselves have crafted.

Submitting the questions is worth 10% each time (because this will only work with your participation)

The exams are worth 15% each