

COMM417 – “INDEPENDENT STUDY”

Course Rationale, Description, & Goals:

The year 2008 put the Oval Office within conceivable reach of a woman, thanks to the countless public women who had gone before - negotiating their platforms, their identities, their femininity, their language use, their speaking styles, their wardrobes, and their hairstyles in order to gain entrance to the man's world of citizenship, business, politics, and equality.

Campaign rhetoric is infused with implicit messages about masculinity, as political leadership has long been predicated on masculinized ideals of speech, conduct, and character. Further complicating matters for the women that have been increasingly involved in the American political sphere for the last 100+ years is that the media coverage of women reveals that stories about women, female candidates or elected representatives, and so-called women's issues often fail to generate quality media coverage.

This course will examine the lives, communication styles, media coverage, and social expectations of the women of modern history who dared to stand up and speak out.

This class is designed to acquaint students with important issues dealing with women, politics, and public communication. The goal of this course is to engage students in a discussion of the variety of ways gender issues intersect with American politics, in terms of leaders, voters, and the symbolic roles of women. It will look in depth at the presidential bids by Margaret Chase Smith, Patricia Schroeder, Elizabeth Dole, Carol Moseley Braun, and Hillary Clinton. It will also discuss Shirley Chisholm, Barbara Jordan, Ann Richards, Helen Gurley Brown, Z. Budapest, and other prominent female politicians, leaders, and activists, with consideration given not just to women politicians, but also to second wave and third wave feminist activism.

By using a broad view of gender issues, this course will ask students to consider the tensions between masculine imperatives and possible “feminization” of politics that affect both men and women as leaders and voters. Topics may include:

- α Background in gender studies & the feminist public sphere: Why do gender studies? What's feminist research? And where's the public sphere?
- α A Brief History of American Women: Votes for Women, or the First Wave.
- α Women's Political Participation – Then & Now: From raising leaders to being leaders: leaving the quilting bee and entering the arena.
- α Men and Women as Political Participants: A Look at the Gender Gap: The Soccer Mom & the NASCAR Dad - “men's issues” and “women's issues”
- α Masculine Metaphors and the Heroic Monomyth: Politics is war, & women aren't allowed in combat.
- α Media Representations of Wo(men) & Symbolic Woman: Heroine or harpy? Savior or seductress?
- α Communicating Gender & The Feminine Style: Double-breasted suits to high-heeled boots – being a woman in a man's world means playing by their rules, or making your own.

Course Outcomes:

Through lecture, readings, examples, open dialogues, discussion of current events, reports of current research, and the examination of popular culture artifacts, students will learn to identify, discuss, and critique the following:

- **The historical aspects of women's participation in American politics.**

This will be emphasized through course readings & knowledge will be assessed through reading comment cards & discussion.

- **The implications of voter orientations and the “gender gap.”**

Comprehension & application will be assessed through the campaign project.

- **The relationship between gender ideals and political policy and style.**

This will be emphasized in class discussions. Comprehension & application will be assessed through blog posts and campaign projects.

- **The media’s role in enforcing cultural imperatives of gender expectations.**

This will be emphasized in readings & discussions. Comprehension and critical application of the knowledge will be assessed through blogs and the campaign project.

- **Differences in rhetorical behavior between male and female politicians.**

This will be emphasized, and comprehension will be assessed, through class discussions. Application of the knowledge will be assessed through the campaign project.

- **The symbolic roles of women in society.**

This will be emphasized in discussion. Comprehension and application of knowledge will be assessed through reading comment cards & discussion.

General Education Description & Goals:

This course is consistent with the goals of the American History (AH) Mode of Inquiry. Through its examination of women in the public sphere, this course emphasizes both unity and diversity: the diversity inherent in a minority/disadvantaged group (women generally, as well as women of color in some cases) challenging the status quo, and the unity of a movement (ie: activist groups, campaigns, ideologies). It is especially concerned with the effects of media institutions, governmental institutions, religious institutions and the legal systems on women in society. All of these common institutions have shaped and continue to influence the speaking styles and political strategies of women and other oppressed groups in American society, and must therefore be examined & discussed throughout the course. Discussion and examination of female leaders from around the world, representations of women in other countries, and the political place of women in other countries will be part of understanding the public woman. This may include emphasis on U.S./Middle-East relations in regards to “woman’s place” in politics and society, and the efforts of groups like Amnesty International to change to status and treatment of women around the world. As focused scholastic research books (rather than “catch-all” textbooks), the required texts exemplify the use of historical artifacts to analyze and discuss the presidential bids of several female candidates. Within the First Lady for President! Group Project students will gather both primary and secondary sources on a former First Lady in order to create a campaign plan for her modern-day presidential bid. Additionally, we will compare political strategies of women candidates of today versus their predecessors and discuss how changing social and political climates and historic events have advanced and challenged the women’s movement. A central component of this course will be looking at the speeches and statements of female candidates and activists themselves and analyzing these sources in class (rhetorical criticism).

Required Texts:

Falk, E. (2007). Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns. University of Chicago Press.

Gutgold, N.D. (2006). Paving the Way for Madam President. New York: Lexington Books.

Wk1		
Wk2		
WK3	Madam President Intro-ch. 2	Due no later than 2pm, 2/9
Wk4	Madam President ch. 3-4	Due no later than 4pm, 2/14
WK5	Madam President ch. 5-6	Due no later than 4pm, 2/21
Wk6	Women for President Intro-ch. 2 -watch The Contender, optional-	Due no later than 4pm, 2/28

Wk7	Women for President ch. 3-4	Due no later than 4pm, 3/7
Wk8	Women for President ch. 5-6	Due no later than 4pm, 3/14
Wk9	Women for President ch. 7-conclusion	Due no later than 4pm, 3/21
Wk10	Spring Break	
Wk11	Political Candidate Biography due	Due no later than 4pm, 4/4
Wk12	Campaign Speech	Due no later than 4pm, 4/11
Wk13	Campaign Advertisement	Due no later than 4pm, 4/18
Wk14	Campaign Plan	Due no later than 4pm, 4/23
Wk15		
Wk16		

Weekly Reading Reactions: 42 points (6 per week)

For each week's readings, you will email a reaction to the assigned chapters. This reaction should include: A brief (about 3-sentence) summary for each chapter, a comment on your reactions to the content of each chapter (what it argued, what you learned – NOT whether you found it interesting or liked it), and at least 1 question the reading provoked for you.

<u>FIRST LADY FOR PRESIDENT! PROJECT</u>	<u>58 POINTS</u>
<i>Political Biography</i>	<i>5 points</i>
<i>Campaign Speech (with presentation)</i>	<i>9 points</i>
<i>Campaign Advertisement (with presentation)</i>	<i>14 points</i>
<i>Campaign Plan</i>	<i>30 points</i>

Objective: To help you understand the complex image-construction process involved in American presidential campaigns, and how gender complicates that process. To allow you to act as communication professionals and strategize a media plan for a presidential candidate. To give you the opportunity to work in groups.

Overview: In this project, you will work in groups of 3 to devise a media/campaign plan for a presidential candidate, and her family (where appropriate) – but there's a catch: the candidate will be a former First Lady. The goal of the group is to devise a communication strategy for the candidate to run in 2012. You will need to know the history and background of the candidate and her family, but will also use some latitude and creativity to imagine how she would be today (for example, imagine Abigail Adams as a modern woman or consider how Edith Wilson's involvement would be scrutinized by modern media.)

The plan will detail the following:

- a political biography of the candidate, including relevant personal information (family, background, interests, scandals, etcetera – as appropriate) and political/public activities and involvement. Graded on completion, grammar, and accuracy.
- strengths and weaknesses: the candidate's strengths in dealing with the media & public, and any problems she will need to overcome
- media events: a schedule of rallies/stump speeches for the candidate & family for a 1 month period, including locations, target audiences, & expected media coverage.
- speeches: provide basic talking points that the candidate & her spouse would use at a typical rally. Students will develop one candidate speech fully, and present it, as part of the project.Δ
- media appearances: list talk shows, morning/late night shows, etc., that the candidate & her spouse should be on, & explain the benefit of these particular appearances
- interviews: list the media outlets that would be targeted for sit-down interviews with the family & why
- advertisements: a 2-3 page statement explaining how the candidate would be advertised, identifying the various media outlets and the core messages. Students will fully develop & present one ad for the project. ΔΔ

-guest appearances/endorsements: a list of names/organizations that would support the candidate and garner media attention for the campaign

-miscellaneous: anything else you think is essential to the successful campaign of the candidate. This will vary by candidate

~~Campaign speech genres include: Announcement speeches, Acceptance speeches, Apologias, News conferences, or “Why I Am Running” speeches tailored to particular audiences.

Graded on the following components:

Speech employs the basic skills of public speaking (intro, organization, evidence, delivery, conclusion)	No (0)	Somewhat (1)	Definitely (2)
Shows evidence of audience analysis, correctly identifying a worthwhile audience & message	No (0)	Somewhat (1)	Definitely (2)
Is sensitive to the image needs of the candidate (her weaknesses, strengths, obstacles) in the campaign	No (0)	Somewhat (1)	Definitely (2)
Describes a problem/issue & visualizes a solution/plan	No (0)	Somewhat (1)	Definitely (2)
All group members participate in a cohesive and well planned way	No (0)	Somewhat (1)	Definitely (2)

Speechwriters are often not experts in a particular policy area, but they are typically more alert to issues such as image construction, meaning, significance, audience analysis, and how certain issues are likely to “play in Peoria.” This is the kind of thing you should consider in writing your speech.

~~Campaign advertisement genres include: Ads extolling the candidate’s virtues, ads condemning/attacking/questioning the opponent, and ads responding to attacks/innuendos/accusations. These ads may be concept ads – relying on images to make an impression; personal witness or “man on the street” – using ordinary citizens to make claims; neutral reporter – relying on informational statements to lead the audience to a conclusion, comparative – contrasting the opponent’s record to the candidate’s; neutral authority – use of headlines and news quotes to make an argument; or, humorous – using jokes or novel approaches to get the audience’s attention or to make attacks more palatable.

Ad formats may be radio spots, TV commercials, Web pages, fliers, publications, etcetera.

Presentation may be in the form of a video, PowerPoint, display & explanation of a story board, skit, etcetera. Be creative.

Graded on the following components:

Visual materials and information are neat, free of errors, comprehensive, well planned, & presented clearly.	No (0)	Partially (1)	Mostly (2)	Completely (3)
Demonstrates relevant application of communication theory & research	No (0)	Partially (1)	Mostly (2)	Completely (3)
Is sensitive to the image needs of the candidate (her weaknesses, strengths, obstacles) in the campaign	No (0)	Partially (1)	Mostly (2)	Completely (3)
Shows evidence of audience analysis, correctly identifying a worthwhile audience & message	No (0)	Partially (1)	Mostly (2)	Completely (3)
All group members participate in a cohesive and well planned way	No (0)	Partially (1)	Mostly (2)	Completely (3)

Written Work: You will submit a binder or folder that includes all pertinent materials listed above*. Any additional visual aid materials should also be submitted for review. Materials must be properly cited, typed, clearly written, and closely proofread

Grading: Projects will be graded on the sophistication of the plan and how well the project reflects an understanding of the candidate, the target audiences, and the gender issues of each. The goal is to be original and creative, but also to demonstrate an understanding and application of the course material.

The final campaign plan will be graded as follows:

Criteria/Pts	10	8	6	4	2	Total
<i>Knowledge Application</i>	Solid evidence of relevant application of communication theory & research.	Occasional evidence of relevant application of communication theory & research.	Limited evidence of relevant application of communication theory & research.	Little evidence of relevant application of communication theory and research.	No evidence of relevant application of communication theory & research.	
<i>Written Work</i>	Written work is clear, comprehensive, free of errors, accurate & cohesive.	Written work is mostly comprehensive & contains only minor errors.	Written work is mostly comprehensive but is unclear &/or not cohesive & contains errors.	Written work is missing key elements, contains errors, & is somewhat confusing.	Written work is incomplete, contains numerous inaccuracies & errors, & is unorganized.	
<i>Completion & Timeliness</i>	All materials are complete, well organized, & turned in on time.	All materials are complete & turned in on time.	Some portions of the materials are either incomplete or late.	Much of the project is incomplete or turned in late.	No project materials are handed in complete & on time.	
<i>Total</i>						

FIRST LADY FOR PRESIDENT! CAMPAIGN PLAN

In this project, you will devise a media/campaign plan for a presidential candidate, and her family (where appropriate) – but there's a catch: the candidate will be a former First Lady. The goal of the group is to devise a communication strategy for the candidate to run in 2016. You will need to know the history and background of the candidate and her family, but will also use some latitude and creativity to imagine how she would be today (for example, imagine Abigail Adams as a modern woman or consider how Edith Wilson's involvement would be scrutinized by modern media.) The plan will detail the following things. **Treat each item as a separate mini-paper & label it with the appropriate heading. This way you, and I, can be sure that nothing was overlooked. Double space all pages; put them into a binder/cover/folder to submit. Be sure to base your decisions on what you know from the course; reference the texts when appropriate.**

Political Biography: includes relevant personal information (family, background, interests, scandals, etcetera – as appropriate) and political/public activities and involvement. You should clean-up the original biography, if there were any errors or problems. You may choose to add some additional information, though it's not required. (About 5 pages.)

Strengths & Weaknesses: List and explain the candidate's strengths in dealing with the media & public, as well as any problems she will need to overcome. (1-2 pages)

Media Events: Create a schedule of rallies, stump speeches, ribbon cutting ceremonies, dedications, award- presentations (whatever is appropriate) for the candidate & her family members (they may do some events separately) for one month. Include locations, target audiences, & expected media coverage (i.e., local or national, print or broadcast). You will need to decide at what point in the campaign this month would be – primaries, following the convention, right before the election...

Speeches: provide basic talking points (not full speeches) that the candidate & her spouse would use at a typical rally. This means you should make two lists, one for the candidate and one for the spouse (Jackie Kennedy people can choose either JFK or Aristotle Onassis), of what issues or ideas their speeches would contain. You are not writing full speeches.

Also include a copy of the candidate speech you wrote earlier. Check it for grammar and spelling.

Media Appearances & Interviews: List talk shows (TV or radio), morning/late night shows, podcasts, and news programs that the candidate & her spouse should be on. Briefly explain what the benefit of these particular appearances would be. As appropriate you may also decide to mention the risks involved (like not having the right sense of humor for Stephen Colbert or Oprah not being a party supporter.)

Advertisements: Write a statement explaining how the candidate would be advertised, identifying the various media outlets/markets (what timeframes, channels, states would be targeted), and the core messages (issues, tone, etc). (About 2-3 pages)

Include the full advertisement you developed for presentation. (PowerPoint presentations can be included in handout formats. Videos can be included as transcripts. Other materials – buttons, dolls, stickers – do not need to be included.)

Guest Appearances / Endorsements: A list of names and/or organizations that would support the candidate and garner media attention for the campaign. (Ex. NOW, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Rosie O'Donnell.) Include a 1-sentence statement with each for why you think this person/group would support the candidate, or why they would be beneficial to the campaign. (List at least 3 people or groups.)

Miscellaneous: If there is anything else you think is essential to the successful campaign of the candidate, by all means, include it.