Mass media play an increasingly important role in domestic and international politics, and are a central feature of modern representative democracy. This course provides an introduction to themes in the study of mass media and politics. Weekly topics include the role of mass media in a democracy, political economy approaches to media analysis, institutional studies of news-making, effects of mass media on the public and politics, the political significance of entertainment media, media and foreign policymaking, propaganda and campaign advertising, and the internet and politics.

The course is open to upper-year undergraduates with some past coursework in the Canadian or comparative developed field, typically including PoliSci 211. Many readings are quantitative, so having completed PoliSci 311 will be helpful. There are two 1.5-hour lectures per week. Group discussions will be a part of lectures. Lectures are mandatory.

The class grade is based on six assignments: four weekly assignments, one Prezi assignment, and one social media assignment. These are described in more detail below. There is no final exam, but weekly assignments will require a thorough understanding of readings on the syllabus. They will also require a knowledge of additional readings covered in lectures and discussions. Lecture slides will not be available on MyCourses.

All course readings will be available electronically through MyCourses, and are listed in the lecture schedule that follows. Twenty-two topics are scheduled in advance, but we will move through topics at our own pace, and may add topics along the way.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

**Assignments**

**Weekly assignments.** These are 3-page papers that must respond to questions posted on MyCourses on Thursdays after class. They are due the following Tuesday before class. Questions will ask you to read additional papers related to the current week's theme, and then discuss those alongside what you have read for class, and discussed in lectures.
You must complete three weekly assignments before the end of term, but you can choose which ones. No late papers will be accepted – you will simply have to write one of the next weeks' assignments instead. Each of your weekly assignments – whichever three you choose to submit – will be worth 20% of your final grade. In total, then, weekly assignments make up 60% of your grade.

Prezi assignment. This is simple: pick a weekly topic and create a multi-media Prezi for it. The Prezi must be self-standing – it must be readily interpretable (it must tell its own story), using a combination of class materials alongside online readings, videos, etc. Lectures will use Prezi, so you will get used to the format. You will need a public Prezi account, which is free (at prezi.com). You will need to produce the Prezi, and send me to it through MyCourses. This must be submitted online through MyCourses before March 20th, and it will be worth 15% of your final grade.

Social media assignment. This is an 8-page paper, the objective of which is to connect the academic work in class with current events. You must use course readings, but should incorporate other academic work as well. You will use those readings to interpret and discuss any of the links posted by the professor on Twitter (twitter.com/s_soroka) throughout the course. Again, no late papers will be accepted. This must be submitted online through MyCourses before April 15th, and it will be worth 25% of your final grade.

Submission and formatting guidelines. All papers must be single-spaced, with one-inch margins, using 12-pt Times New Roman font. They must use in-text citations, and must include a bibliography. The bibliography is not included in the page length, but any other text that goes over the limit will not be read. Do not create a separate title page, just put the title and your name at the top of the first page of text. Papers submitted in pdf format only (not Word!), online via MyCourses. There will be no exceptions to these rules, and grades will be reduced when these guidelines are not followed.

Additional information on assignments will be made available through MyCourses.

Lectures & Readings

Topic 1: Introduction to the course

Topic 2: The importance of media I


Topic 3: The importance of media II


**Topic 4:** Media, democracy and democratization


**Topic 5:** Public Journalism


**Topic 6:** Political economy perspectives on the mass media I


**Topic 7:** Political economy perspectives on the mass media II


**Topic 8:** Media effects?


**Topic 9:** Public Agenda-setting


**Topic 10:** Gatekeeping


**Topic 11:** Making news


**Topic 12:** Rhetoric and issue frames I


Topic 13: Rhetoric and issue frames II


Topic 14: Mass Media and Foreign Policy


Topic 15: Mass Media and Terrorism


Topic 16: Does entertainment matter? I


Topic 17: Does entertainment matter? II


**Topic 18: Celebrity Politics**


**Topic 19: Hard News, Soft News**


**Topic 20: Campaign Advertising**


**Topic 21: Advertising/ Public Diplomacy/ Propaganda**


Topic 22: Digital democracy?
