COMM 4390: 001 Syllabus

Term: Fall 2016 Aug. 24 to Dec. 6
Course meets: 7-9:40 pm Wed.
Office: Bay Hall 334
Office Hours: MTW 9-10:30 am or appt.
Office phone: 361.825.2678/Cell 361.563.5177
E-Mail: anantha.babbili@tamucc.edu

Instructor: Dr. Anantha S. Babbili

Media and Making of the President

Course Description:
This special course, offered during the time of the U.S. presidential election, examines the role traditional and digital media play in the election of the U.S. President. The course focuses on how the news media and communication strategies of candidates work for or against a candidate, and how the media has played a critical role historically in the formation of public opinion during the election of a candidate to the nation’s highest office. We will study the role and impact of televised presidential debates, eloquence and transformation of political speech-making, the manipulation of public opinion through print and digital media and other forms of media, packaging the presidency and the history and criticism of presidential campaign advertising. The course will help students to think critically, reflect and observe independently appropriate media theories through individual and collaborative projects on media and presidential elections.

Learning Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:
At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

--Demonstrate critical thinking regarding the role traditional and the new digital media play in the context of the American democracy and in the U.S. presidential election;

--Create individual and collaborative projects that demonstrate the understanding of media practices affecting audiences in the context of American cultural diversity;

--Understand the influence of media, packaging the presidential candidate, and eloquence on the formation of public opinion and on the election of the U.S. President.

Textbooks:


Major Course Requirements and Expectations:
Students will be required to attend every class period, write weekly abstracts, two think pieces/essays and present a team project during the term. The course will be composed of instructor’s lectures, class discussions relating to course materials and readings, individual written and oral presentations and guest speakers.

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Students will be evaluated and their performance will be assessed based on the following criteria and grading scale:

**In-class participation/Attendance:** 10% (Discussion on assigned readings, lectures and related media readings). Each student is required to engage in all aspects and phases of class work.

**6 Weekly one-page Abstracts:** 60% (10% each). Format for abstract will be given in class. They will reflect student’s critical thinking on readings and/or observations of media representations of presidential candidates, election platforms, media bias, campaign strategies and related media products.

**Term Project Paper/Oral Presentation:** 30% (Research paper on an approved topic relating to media and the presidential elections in the context of new and digital media and culture). Fully developed team project/term paper is expected at the end of the course that shows rigor in research and critical analysis relating to a specific topic or problem selected with approval of instructor. Oral report must be presented in class.

**Grading Scale:**
- 90-100 A (Excellent)
- 80-89 B (Very good)
- 70-79 C (Average)
- 60-69 D (Below average)
- 59-below F (Failure)

**Course Policies:**

*Attendance and Tardiness:* Attendance is required—both physically and mentally. You are expected to take an active role in classroom discussions. Absences, late arrivals, and chronic failure to engage in class discussion will all be reflected in your participation grade.

*Late work and make-up work*

- If there should be a legitimate reason for you missing class (illness, family emergencies, certain University-sponsored extracurricular activities), please provide the instructor with the notification prior to the event or as soon as you are able—before the missed class period. If appropriate, we can arrange alternate times for you to make up quizzes or exams, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from lecture from one of your classmates.
- Unexcused absences will be noted and reflected in your participation grade. Also, any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
- Late work for any reason considered unexcused will be penalized by at least one letter grade for each day it is late.

*Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage:* While in class, please make sure your phone is off or on silent (and in your backpack or out of sight), so it’s not heard in class. Also, limited laptop/tablet use is permitted—for note-taking only, but do not abuse this privilege.

- Please remember to check your email regularly for any course updates.
- If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during office hours or set up an appointment to see me at any other time.
- Please submit hard copies of your papers, prior to the class period on the due date. Marked copies will be returned to you.
- All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, and with the standard 1-inch margins.

*Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:* University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examination or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in the course grade of F.

*Dropping the Course:* I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation will not automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please check published dates for the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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Preferred methods of scholarly citations

For the purpose of citation, please follow the *APA Stylebook*.

Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Grade Appeals:

Students who feel they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Academic Advising*

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disabilities Accommodations*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Class Schedule and Assignments on following page
# Media and Making of the President

## Class Schedule *(Subject to change)*

*(Reading Assignments will be given in class)*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Towards Media Literacy: Understanding Media and Democracy</td>
<td>Readings and Abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Manipulating and Influencing Public Opinion</td>
<td>Readings and Abstract</td>
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<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>Traditional and New Digital Media, Cultural Diversity of the Electorate</td>
<td>Readings, Initial Research Proposal, Abstract</td>
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<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>New Media, Youth, Citizenship and Identity Politics</td>
<td>Readings and Abstract</td>
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<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>Packaging the Presidency</td>
<td><em>(Review of Research Approach/Analysis outline/Abstract)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>New Media, Politics and Governance</td>
<td>Readings and Abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Historical Perspectives on Media and Democracy</td>
<td><em>(Team Project topic chosen)</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Eloquence in the Electronic Age and Political Speeches</td>
<td><em>(Research Proposal submission)</em></td>
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<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Presidential Campaign Advertising</td>
<td><em>(Review of Literature, Research Analysis approach)</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Presidential Debates</td>
<td><em>(Team Presentations in Class)</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Polls, Public Opinion and Perceptions of Candidates</td>
<td><em>(Writing Final Term Project, Team Presentations in Class)</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Media during and after the Election Day</td>
<td><em>(Team Presentations)</em></td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Looking Ahead to Governance and Media's Continuing Influence</td>
<td><em>(Team Presentations)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Written Report due</td>
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ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Anantha S. Babbili (Ph.D., The University of Iowa) is Professor of Communication & Media Studies at Texas A&M - Corpus Christi. He was Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the university from 2007 to 2010. He is former Dean of the College of Mass Communication (2002-2007) at Middle Tennessee State University. Babbili taught and directed the Journalism and Media Studies department at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, for more than two decades. He was the visiting Rogers Chair in Journalism and New Information Technologies at the University of Western Ontario, Canada and lectured in Mexico, India, Slovakia, UK and Asia. Babbili is the co-author of the book, An Ethics Trajectory, published by the University of Illinois Press and has published his research in several books including Communication Ethics and University Values, Critical Issues in Media, Bosnia by Television (British Film Institute), Mass Media in the Middle East, and The Press and the State.

A former journalist, Babbili has published scholarly articles that have appeared in journals such as Media, Culture and Society, Journal of Communication Inquiry, Newspaper Research Journal and the International Third World Studies Journal. Babbili was the Editor (2000-2008) of the national Journalism & Communication Monographs and served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Mass Media Ethics and Journalism Studies. He is on the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences advisory board at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He received the Barry Bingham Award from the National Conference of Editorial Writers and was the consultant to the United Nations and the UNESCO on human rights and communication. The Carnegie Foundation and the Council on the Advancement and Support of Teaching named Babbili the Texas Professor of the Year. He is the recipient of the National Teaching Award from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, St. Petersburg, Florida. His columns and opinions as a news source on breaking events and U.S. foreign policy appeared on CNN, ABC News, CBS, and NBC and in Chicago Tribune, New York Times, Fort Worth Star-Telegram and many other media outlets. Before earning his doctorate, Babbili earned two undergraduate degrees in biological sciences and journalism from his native India and M.A. in journalism from the University of Oklahoma.

Since 2006, Babbili has been a member of the governing board of a communication institute operated by a reputed media-related reputed foundation in India. As the Provost of Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Babbili served as the chief institutional liaison to the successful SACS accreditation Process and was responsible for overall quality of academic affairs of the University. He is the graduate of the Management and Leadership program of Harvard University.

What do we do in the Department of Communication & Media? Here’s our mission:

Develop students who are effective and ethical communicators with the creative, critical, and collaborative skills necessary to succeed in a diverse global environment.

What are the Department’s Objectives? After graduation, our graduates are able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively;
- Practice the ability to work with others to create a product; and
- Recognize ethical issues in communication