



## **PS 315 – Syllabus**

**Credits:** 4

**Instructor Name:** Philipp Kneis

**Instructor Email:** philipp.kneis@oregonstate.edu

### **Course Description**

Examination of the methods of operation, content and effects of the media in relation to politics and government. Includes analysis of newspaper, radio and television, political advertising, and other forms of political communication.

### **Prerequisites or Corequisites**

None

### **Instructor Communication**

Please post all course-related questions in the Q&A Discussion Forum so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please contact me privately via OSU Email or Canvas inbox for matters of a personal nature. You can expect a reply to your questions within 24-48 hours on business days (Monday-Friday). Grading and providing feedback on your assignments and activities may take up to five days. If I need more time, I will let you know when to expect a response.

### **Expectations for Time and Participation**

This course combines approximately 120 hours for total hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 4 credits.

This course is asynchronous and somewhat flexible, but not self-paced. Our schedule of Course Content and the due dates that appear in Canvas provide guidelines for how you'll interact and with what frequency. I recommend that you create your own workload schedule and set reminders for assignment due dates.

### **Learning Resources**

This course provides all required materials at no cost to you. All materials are available within Canvas.

### **Technical Assistance**

If you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact 24/7 Canvas Support through the Help link within Canvas. If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, or need assistance logging into a course, contact the OSU Service Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-8787 or visit the [Service Desk](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu) online.

## **Ecampus Reach Out for Success**

University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about [resources that assist with wellness and academic success](#); you can also access the **Resources** tab in Canvas' global navigation menu for additional information.

Ecampus students are always encouraged to discuss issues that impact your academic success with the [Ecampus Success Team](#). Email [ecampus.success@oregonstate.edu](mailto:ecampus.success@oregonstate.edu) to identify strategies and resources that can support you in your educational goals.

- **For mental health:**  
Learn about [counseling and psychological resources for Ecampus students](#). If you are in immediate crisis, please call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or Crisis Text Line by texting 741-741.
- **For financial hardship:**  
Any student whose academic performance is impacted due to financial stress or the inability to afford groceries, housing, and other necessities for any reason is urged to contact the Director of Care for support (541-737-8748).

## **Political Science Learning Outcomes**

1. Comprehend the basic structures and processes of government systems and/or theoretical underpinnings.
2. Analyze political problems, arguments, information, and/or theories.
3. Apply methods appropriate for accumulating and interpreting data applicable to the discipline of political science.

## **Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify and evaluate some important concepts in political and cultural theory, specifically as they pertain to the central issues relevant to political and social dimensions of various forms of media. (PS LO # 1, 2; Bacc # 1)
2. Analyze current social issues and place them in historical context(s). (Bacc #2)
3. Critically interpret some of the major issues in political theory as well as critical domain knowledge with an interdisciplinary outlook by utilizing methods and approaches applicable to the disciplines of political science and cultural studies. (PS LO # 1, 3; Bacc # 1, 3)
4. Theorize culture and politics and apply theoretical models to different circumstances. (PS LO # 2, 3; Bacc # 3)
5. Synthesize the politics and basic arguments of scholarly texts. (PS LO # 3; Bacc # 1, 3)
6. Engage in a learning community by respectfully critiquing one another's viewpoints to model an academic public sphere. (PS LO # 3; Bacc # 3)

## **Bacc Core**

This course fulfills the Baccalaureate Core requirement for the Social Processes and Institutions category

Social Processes & Institutions Outcomes	How this outcome will be addressed in the course	How this outcome will be assessed in the course
1. Use theoretical frameworks to interpret the role of the individual within social process and institutions.	Students will be introduced to key concepts and frameworks in theories of media, society and politics. There are several weekly readings assigned from major theorists and scholars, weekly lectures that explain connections among the concepts, and student assignments to apply these theories.	Students will demonstrate their abilities to summarize a theoretical text (Text Presentation), to critically reflect on their own learning in the class (Response Paper), and to develop their own research ideas with regards to the topic of the course (Research Presentation and Paper).
2. Analyze current social issues and place them in historical context(s).	Students will apply the theoretical frameworks within their historical context and develop their own research ideas which address key issues of media, politics and society throughout history.	In their own research, students will analyze how media and politics are interrelated, how this affects issues critical to society and themselves (Research Presentation and Paper).
3. Critique the nature, value, and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences.	By introducing the students to a variety of theoretical frameworks which may be contradictory, students gain valuable insight how theory can function as a toolbox, and how not every theory is applicable for every problem. This increases their critical awareness of the limits – and possibilities – of social science research.	Students have to choose theoretical frameworks relevant to their own chosen research case studies. They will have to identify research articles themselves, and evaluate how the theoretical frameworks used by them pertain to the social issues under analysis (Text Presentation, Research Presentation and Paper). In their class discussions, they will engage with each other's divergent perspectives critically and respectfully (Discussion Board).

## Evaluation of Student Performance

- Discussions – 10 points
- Text Presentation – 5 points
- Midterm Response Essay – 10 points
- Research Presentation – 10 Points
- Final Research Paper – 15 points
- Total – 50 points

## Letter Grade

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percent Range	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59

## Course Policies

### Discussion Participation

Students are expected to participate in all graded discussions. While there is great flexibility in online courses, this is not principally a self-paced course. You are supposed to participate in discussions on at least two different days each week, with your first post due no later than Wednesday evening, and your second and third posts due by the end of each week. Should you not be able to maintain this timeline, please contact your instructor, and we will work something out.

### Late Work Policy

Most assignments in this course will be open for several days to account for the varying schedules of our diverse student body. If for some reason you find yourself unable to complete work by the due date, please contact me. You may have the opportunity to submit late work for partial credit.

### Proctored Exams

This course does not have any exams and will not require proctoring.

### Incompletes

When a requirement of a course has not been completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor and the rest of the academic work is passing, a report of "I" (incomplete) may be made and additional time granted, according to Academic Regulation 17 of [OSU Academic Regulations](#).

If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don't wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

### Statement Regarding Religious Accommodation

Oregon State University is required to provide reasonable accommodations for employee and student sincerely held religious beliefs. It is incumbent on the student making the request to make the faculty member aware of the request as soon as possible prior to the need for the accommodation. See the [Religious Accommodation Process for Students](#).

### Class Participation and Building Community

Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to everyone's success in this online course. I encourage you to please practice the following:

- Value the diversity of the class. Recognize and respect the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to our learning environment.

- Challenge others' ideas with the intent of facilitating growth. Acknowledge your peers' contributions and highlight areas of further inquiry.
- Be open to being challenged on your ideas or prejudices.
- Practice self-awareness in your communication with peers and consider that your comments may hurt others unintentionally.
- Assume the best of your classmates and instructor and expect the best from them.

### **Expectations for Student Conduct**

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the Student Conduct Code (<https://beav.es/codeofconduct>). Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility.

### **Academic Integrity**

It is important that you understand what student actions are defined as academic misconduct at Oregon State University. The OSU Libraries offer a [tutorial on academic misconduct](#), and you can also refer to the [OSU Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) for more information. More importantly, if you are unsure if something will violate our academic integrity policy, ask your professors, GTAs, academic advisors, or academic integrity officers.

Academic misconduct, or violations of academic integrity, can fall into seven broad areas, including but not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; falsification; assisting; tampering; multiple submissions of work; and unauthorized recording and use.

In this course, use of generative AI is restricted to brainstorming, inquiry, and revision in keeping with [library guidance](#) on research ethics, privacy, and citation. AI tools (e.g., Copilot or ChatGPT) can help generate ideas, provide explanations, and offer feedback. Ensure that all work submitted is your own by using AI as a supplementary tool rather than the main content source. For example, you can use AI to explore ideas, outline your thoughts, or clarify complex concepts. But again, all written and other submissions should be your original work. Cite any AI-generated content to maintain transparency and academic integrity. Responsible use of AI tools enhances your learning experience while ensuring that you develop and demonstrate your understanding and skills. I encourage you to contact me if you have questions about the use of AI so that, together, we can ensure that we are using these tools in productive and ethical ways.

### **Turnitin**

Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin, and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make

adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited. Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information, visit [Academic Integrity for Students: Turnitin – What is it?](#)

## **Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval, please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

## **Accessibility of Course Materials**

All materials used in this course are accessible. If you require accommodations please contact [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#).

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a [vendor statement](#) certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

## **Tutoring and Writing Assistance**

You can connect live with experienced online tutors by accessing Online Tutoring in the side navigation bar of your Canvas course. You are eligible for up to 5 hours of tutoring each week. To learn more, go to [Online Tutoring - Overview](#).

To get help with any form of writing, you can contact [Oregon State Online Writing Support](#) for feedback via email or live Zoom appointment.

## **Academic Calendar**

All students are subject to the registration and refund deadlines as stated in the Academic Calendar: <https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/osu-academic-calendar>.

## **Student Bill of Rights**

OSU has twelve established student rights. They include due process in all university disciplinary processes, an equal opportunity to learn, and grading in accordance with the course syllabus: <https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/advocacy/rights>.

## **Student Learning Experience Survey**

During Fall, Winter, and Spring term the online Student Learning Experience surveys open to students the Wednesday of week 9 and close the Sunday before Finals Week. Students will receive notification, instructions, and the link through their ONID email. They may also log into the survey via MyOregonState or directly

at <https://beav.es/Student-Learning-Survey>. Survey results are extremely important and are used to help improve courses and the learning experience of future students. Responses are anonymous (unless a student chooses to “sign” their comments, agreeing to relinquish anonymity of written comments) and are not available to instructors until after grades have been posted. The results of scaled questions and signed comments go to both the instructor and their unit head/supervisor. Anonymous (unsigned) comments go to the instructor only.

## Course Content

Include a concise outline of topics and activities; omit specific dates to aid in ongoing maintenance of the syllabus document.

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
1	Unit 1 - The Political Imaginary - Week 1 - Culture & Politics	<p>Review: Start Here – Discussion &amp; Text Presentation Guide; Research Presentation Guide; Paper Assignments Guide</p> <p>1.01 - Bennett, Tony. "Theories of the media, theories of society." 1.02 - Assmann, Jan. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." 1.03 - Nye, Joseph. "Soft Power."</p> <p>Lectures: Introduction: Major Themes of the Class; Culture and Representations</p>	Week 1 – Discussion – Culture & Politics
2	Unit 1 - The Political Imaginary - Week 2 – Power & Ideology	<p>2.01 - Excerpts from Plato's <i>Republic</i> and <i>Phaedrus</i>. 2.02 Anderson, Benedict. Excerpt from <i>Imagined Communities</i>. 2.03 - Hobbs, Renee, and Sandra McGee. "Teaching about Propaganda: An Examination of the Historical Roots of Media Literacy."</p>	Week 2 – Discussion – Power & Ideology

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
		<p>2.04 - Adorno, Theodor W. "Culture Industry Reconsidered."</p> <p>2.05 - Herbst, Susan. "Political Authority in a Mediated Age."</p> <p>Optional: 2.06 - White, Hayden. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality."</p> <p>Lectures: Representations as Ideology</p>	
3	Unit 1 - The Political Imaginary - Week 3 - The Public Sphere & Cultural Capital	<p>3.01 - Habermas, Jürgen. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article."</p> <p>3.02 - Papacharissi, Zizi. "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere."</p> <p>3.03 - Putnam, Robert D. "Tuning in, Tuning out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America."</p> <p>3.04 - Siisiainen, Martti. "One Concept, Two Approaches: Bourdieu and Putnam on Social Capital."</p> <p>3.05 - Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America."</p> <p>Lectures: Media and Political Rule</p>	Week 3 - Discussion - The Public Sphere & Cultural Capital
4	Unit 2 - Technologies of Culture - Week 4 - Media & Technology	<p>4.01 - Kellner, Douglas M., and Meenakshi Gigi Durham. "Adventures in Media and Cultural Studies: Introducing the KeyWorks."</p> <p>4.02 - "The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan." <i>Playboy</i></p>	Week 4 - Discussion - Media & Technology



Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
		<p><i>Magazine.</i></p> <p>4.03 - Sontag, Susan. "In Plato's Cave."</p> <p>4.04 - Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility."</p> <p>4.05a - Postman, Neil. "Amusing Ourselves to Death."</p> <p>4.05b - Postman, Neil. "The Information Age: A Blessing or a Curse?"</p> <p>4.05c - Postman, Neil. "Five Things We Need to Know About Technological Change."</p> <p>Lectures: Media and Technology</p>	
5	Unit 2 - Technologies of Culture - Week 5 - Cultural Criticism	<p>5.01 - Smith, Johanna M. "What Is Cultural Criticism?"</p> <p>5.02 - Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author."</p> <p>5.03 - Poster, Mark. "Global Media and Culture."</p> <p>5.04 - Koskela, Hille. "'Cam Era'—the Contemporary Urban Panopticon."</p> <p>5.05 - Colletta, Lisa. "Political Satire and Postmodern Irony in the Age of Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart."</p> <p>Lectures: Culture as Political, Politics as Cultural</p>	<p>Midterm Response Essay - Reading Culture as Politics</p> <p>Week 5 - Discussion - Cultural Criticism</p>
6	Unit 3 - Information & Interpretation - Week 6 - News Media	<p>6.01 - Baum, Matthew A., and Yuri M. Zhukov. "Filtering Revolution: Reporting Bias in</p>	Week 6 - Discussion - News Media

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
		<p>International Newspaper Coverage of the Libyan Civil War.”</p> <p>6.02 - McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media.”</p> <p>6.03 - Bennett, W. Lance. “The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation.”</p> <p>6.04 - Scheufele, Dietram A., and David Tewksbury. “Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models.”</p> <p>6.05 - Geer, John G. “The News Media and the Rise of Negativity in Presidential Campaigns.”</p> <p>Lectures: News Media</p>	
7	Unit 3 - Information & Interpretation - Week 7 - Electronic Media	<p>7.01 - Shonkoff, Sam Berrin. “Internet Searchers, God Seekers, and Longing for the Unmediated.”</p> <p>7.02 - Carr, Nicholas. “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”</p> <p>7.03 - Baumgartner, Jody C., and Jonathan S. Morris. “MyFaceTube Politics: Social Networking Web Sites and Political Engagement of Young Adults.”</p> <p>7.04 - Piwek, Lukasz, and Adam Joinson. “What Do They Snapchat About? Patterns of Use in Time-Limited Instant Messaging Service.”</p>	Week 7 - Discussion - Electronic Media

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
		<p>7.05 - Pittman, Matthew, and Brandon Reich. "Social Media and Loneliness: Why an Instagram Picture May Be Worth More Than a Thousand Twitter Words."</p> <p>Lectures: New Media</p>	
8	Unit 3 - Information & Interpretation - Week 8 - Case Studies	<p>This week, choose at least four of the following:</p> <p>8.01 - Hatfield, Elizabeth Fish. "What It Means to Be a Man': Examining Hegemonic Masculinity in Two and a Half Men."</p> <p>8.02 - Beyer, Sandra. "A Utopia for Conservatives and Real Men: Sexual Politics and Gendered Relations in Star Trek."</p> <p>8.03 - Mizejewski, Linda. "Feminism, Postfeminism, Liz Lemonism: Comedy and Gender Politics on 30 Rock."</p> <p>8.04 - Eco, Umberto. "The Myth of Superman: The Amazing Adventures of Superman."</p> <p>8.05 - Kneis, Philipp. "Finding Atlantis Instead of Utopia: From Plato to Starfleet and Stargate Command."</p> <p>8.06 - Kneis, Philipp. "Barbarians at the Gate: (Ig)Noble Savages and Manifest Destiny at the Final Frontier."</p> <p>8.07 - Kneis, Philipp. "Communicating Democracy: Entering the</p>	Week 8 - Discussion - Case Studies

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
		<p>American Republic through The West Wing or Commander in Chief.”</p> <p>8.08 - Vogler, Christopher. "A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces."</p> <p>8.09 - Chaddha, Anmol, and William Julius Wilson. “‘Way Down in the Hole’: Systemic Urban Inequality and The Wire.”</p> <p>8.10 - Žižek, Slavoj. “Jack Bauer and the Ethics of Urgency.”</p> <p>8.11 - Dittmer, Jason. “Captain America’s Empire: Reflections on Identity, Popular Culture, and Post-9/11 Geopolitics.”</p> <p>8.12 - Bechky, Perry S. “The International Law of Game of Thrones.”</p> <p>Lectures: A Recap of Major Themes</p>	
9	Unit 4 - Student Research - Week 9 - Research Presentations	Review: Start Here - Research Presentation Guide	<p>Week 9 - Discussion - Research Presentations</p> <p>Research Presentation</p>
10	Unit 4 - Student Research - Week 10 - Writing Your Research Paper Unit 4 - Student Research - Week 10 - Writing Your Research Paper	Review: Start Here - Paper Assignments Guide	<p>Consider seeking support from the OSU Writing Center</p> <p>Consider bringing questions about your research paper to Start Here - Q&amp;A Discussion</p>

Week/ Module	Topic	Learning Materials	Assignments
11	Finals Week - Week 11 - Research Paper Submission		Final Research Paper - Topic of Your Choice