



Classroom Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is founded on the twin pillars of diversity and skills-based learning. I believe that a diverse classroom is a strong one, and that a post-secondary education is not complete unless it places students in a community of peers who differ from them in terms of race, religion, class origin, gender expression, or neurodiversity. At the same time, I believe it is my duty as an educator to provide a flexible, friendly, and open-minded classroom in which students can learn from each other, get support from me when they need it, and feel valued no matter who they are. Our job as an educational institution is to prepare students for success in an increasingly diverse society characterized by deep ideological divisions and economic inequality.

As a scholar of race, ethnicity, and politics (REP), as well as media and politics, I am fortunate to teach classes that naturally grapple with issues of difference and prejudice. Students can sometimes struggle to approach these topics with thoughtfulness and open-mindedness. This is why I believe it is even more important to do the following: 1) design course materials that foster a welcoming space for students of every background and origin story; 2) maintain a degree of flexibility in lesson plans to accommodate diversity in student learning style and perspective; and 3) value each student's unique contribution to the class.

Mentorship Philosophy

One of the core tenets of my teaching philosophy is that students should come away from my courses with a new skill. I make a point of speaking to each student I work with about what they want to learn about, and whether they need to learn new skills in order to do this. Often I find that students, particularly female students, have never been told to try learning skills such as programming, and thus believe they are not capable of mastering these skills. As a woman in the sciences who got a bachelor's degree in music, I believe it is extremely important to teach students that statistics, programming, and research design are within *anyone's* reach (even mine), given enough determination and practice. I practice this attitude within my Media and Politics courses by asking students to master the basics of research design as well as some quantitative mode of analysis. At the end of the course, students create group research projects. Many choose to test theories about racial narratives in newspapers and digital media by employing content analysis techniques learned in the course.

I have developed mentorship relationships with students that have lasted for years. When teaching my Race and Media courses at Indiana University and Texas Tech University, I have had the opportunity to engage students with a wide range of media and public opinion topics. I work with students to apply classic public opinion concepts to controversies that feel relevant to their lived experiences. My expertise with new media allows my students and I to establish an environment that is welcoming to a diverse set of political experiences. As a result, students that would normally fall silent, particularly those with stigmatized or marginalized perspectives, shared with me that they became comfortable speaking up.



Some Student Feedback

- “I can't even describe in words how much I loved this professor. It makes me sad that I've finished taking her class, because I've enjoyed it so much. She requires that you do readings every week and then come to class to discuss the topics within the readings further. As long as you do the readings and show up to class, you'll pass. She's the best!”
- “Upon the first day of class I was extremely intimidated after hearing about how much reading would be required each week and to some extent, I had placed much self-doubt in myself after the first day of class as to whether I was going to be able to succeed or not. After receiving a much better grade than expected I began to gain some confidence in the class, and it quickly became my favorite class of the semester and one that I have taken throughout college. I thoroughly enjoyed each and every lecture as I never found one day to be a boring one or one that I could not see it to be applicable in my everyday life. Friday discussions were always fun as well, being able to hear many different points of views on the subject of the week from everyone was always something that I looked forward to. I just wanted to let you know that I think that you are a fantastic professor, and I am sad that this semester is over. I do not think that I will ever look at the media in same way as I did before, every time that I have gone home and seen the news while my parents have been watching it, I have been able to clearly see topics discussed in class within each segment.”
- “I really liked Prof. Ferrillo’s enthusiasm toward the course and its material – she was ready to engage in class discussion and was always prepared to talk about the day's material in the most interesting way she could. When she was able, she showed interesting video clips and incorporated current media topics which I really appreciated.”
- “I really enjoyed the lectures and the readings were always interesting. The lectures were engaging and I always felt like I understood the material more deeply after them.”
- “She was encouraging and very into the topic. She enjoys teaching this course and is very well-versed in knowledge about it.”
- “I liked her knowledge and passion of subject matter. I like the way the course educated me on materials.”
- “Vivian is very cool and laid back. She tries to make everyone feel comfortable and not be too pushy on her students while at the same time challenging her students.”



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Courses I Can Teach

I have taught both methodological and substantive courses as lead and assistant instructor. While I am prepared to teach introductory 100-level American politics courses such as Introduction to American Politics or Public Opinion, I have developed a few methodological and topics courses that lie closer to my personal research area. In my current function as a postdoctoral instructor in REP at Texas Tech University, I teach courses in race, ethnicity, and politics with a special focus on media in the American context.

The Politics of Race and the Media: 300 level

This course divides the subject of race and the media into three units. In the first unit, students learn about the history of newsmaking in the American context, and how it interacted with politicians and presidents at key points in history. In the second unit, students learn about the history of racial attitudes in America, and how media framing effects spread racial animus when employed in popular media. In the third unit, students learn about digital racial movements such as the alt-right and apply concepts from the previous units to determine what about our current media environment made this phenomenon possible. Students

Introduction to Quantitative Political Analysis: 200 level

- Applied statistics, R, and LaTeX programming.

Introduction to Social Media Analysis: 300 level

- Intro to Python
- Intro to web scraping with Python
- Text analysis in Python and R
- Philosophy and good practices of social media analysis.

Introduction to American Politics: 100 level

American Public Opinion: 200 level



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POLS 3300: Special Topics—The Politics of Race and the Media
Texas Tech University, Spring 2022
MWR 2:00–2:50 pm, Holden Hall 119A

Instructor: Dr. Vivian Ferrillo

Email: vivian.ferrillo@ttu.edu

Office: Holden Hall 016

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00 or by appointment. Drop-ins welcome when my door is open.

TA: Juliana Popoola

Email: jpopoola@ttu.edu

Office: Email to set up a virtual appointment.

Office hours: Monday 10-12 noon

Course Overview

Don't trust the media? Ever felt manipulated by a campaign or politician? Want to know why? POLS-3300 The Politics of Race and the Media is a fast-paced course designed to hone your critical thinking, writing, research, and communication skills while teaching you about race and political media in America. Completing the weekly readings, attending lecture and discussion sessions, and participating in respectful peer discussion will be critical to passing the course.

Course Goals

Students should leave this course with an improved understanding of the history of American political media as well as the interactions between mass media, racial attitudes and tropes, and public opinion. Most importantly, however, this course will help you become a more critical consumer of media.

Difficulty

Like most 300 level courses, POLS 3300 will ask you for 50–100 pages of fairly dense reading every week. Some of those readings will consist of academic journal articles; some will be chapters from books. The selection of readings assumes some comfort with academic articles, graphs and data visualizations, and accounts of American racial and electoral politics. If you feel out of your depth at any point, check out the “How to Read Academic Articles” guide on Blackboard or come talk to me.

I do not teach to the test, and I do not post my slides. My exams will ask you to synthesize what you read on your own with what we talk about in lecture and class discussion. In other words, I expect you to take exercise some independence and take ownership of the materials.

Textbook/Required Texts

There is no textbook for this course. We will be reading academic articles and book chapters. All readings are listed in the schedule starting on page 6 of this syllabus, and all can be accessed in

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PDF form on Blackboard under “Course Readings > Week #”. Students are encouraged to print out the weekly readings so they can mark these up and bring them to class for easy reference.

Topics we will cover:

- history and context of mass media in America
- changing role of media in society
- origins and conceptualizations of racial attitudes and their portrayal in mass media
- setting the narrative (filtering, framing, agenda-setting, etc.)
- motivated reasoning
- racialized policies and political movements
- racial messaging in campaign advertisements
- anxious politics and the politics of group psychology
- how the internet changed everything (and nothing)
- social media, digital movements, and the changing media landscape

Modality

This is an in-person course without hybrid or asynchronous elements. Make sure your personal and work schedule will allow you to attend every class.

How to Enjoy This Class: A Step-by-Step Guide

Anyone can pass a class. But if you want to get real value and enjoyment out of this particular one, here is what you should do.

1. Read all assigned readings for the week *before* class on Monday. Take good notes.
2. Show up to class. Take good notes.
3. Attend Thursday discussion. First of all, it’s worth participation credit. Second of all, it’s tons of fun.
4. Check out bonus media, ask questions, and engage with your classmates on the Discord forum.
5. Choose your discussion weeks strategically. Look for topics or readings you are excited about.
6. Come talk to me in office hours.

Grading Breakdown

- 10%—Participation (in class, Discord, and during group discussion)
- 15%—Reading quizzes
- 25%—Exams
- 25%—Discussion leader performance, questions, and memo
- 25%—Research paper (topic pitch, outline, rough draft, and final draft)

Participation

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Students who are comfortable participating in group discussion will succeed most easily in this class. Those of you who struggle with public speaking must find other ways to interact with me and your classmates. You can come talk to me after class, visit my office in Holden Hall 016, or post comments in the class Discord (see below).

I expect students to approach each other with respect. Constructive discussion addresses ideas, not people. While the class covers the politics of the real world, it does not take a partisan stance on politicians or events. Our baseline assumption is that politicians and media figures are rational actors who have discernible reasons for making the choices they do.

Reading Quizzes

Every Monday, you will complete a brief quiz on the readings for that week.

Discussion Leaders

Discussion leaders will be graded on the following:

- 1) Attendance. You can't lead if you're not there!
- 2) Familiarity with the readings. Expect to be called on frequently that week.
- 3) Summarizing and synthesizing the week's readings in a **short essay** (500–1000 words or 2–4 pages double spaced) to be submitted on Blackboard by Sunday @ 11:59 pm (that's the Sunday *before* the week starts).
- 4) Submitting **three or more discussion questions to Blackboard** and the class Discord "Discussion" channel by Wednesday 9 pm for class discussion Thursday (note: consider Monday and Wednesday's lecture content as you write questions); this includes responding to my feedback and editing unusable questions if necessary.
- 5) Leading group discussion of your questions on Thursday (and coordinating with the other discussion leader as necessary). Consider using slides, incorporating media examples such as short videos or songs, and generally using the time creatively.

For more details on the discussion leader duties and assignments, see the "Discussion Leader Guidelines" document on Blackboard.

Class Discord Server

To join the class Discord before January 6, 2022, click the link [here](#). If you need to join after that date, email me for a new link.

Late Policy

I generally don't accept late work. If you are in extraordinary circumstances, email me.

Class Notes

Students are responsible for taking their own notes during class. My slides are not meant to be used as study materials, and I do not post my slides on Blackboard. If you must miss class,



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contact a classmate to obtain notes. Experimental evidence¹ strongly suggests that students who take handwritten notes learn and retain course material more successfully. If at all possible, **I strongly recommend hand writing your notes in a designated notebook instead of typing on a laptop.**

Exams

There will be an exam at the end of each course unit. These four unit exams will be take-home open-note essay exams.

Final Research Paper

Your final research paper will be worth a good chunk of your grade. However, to make sure you get the feedback and help you need, I break the project down into multiple graded submissions:

Topic Pitch (due Thursday Mar 10)

Outline (due Monday Mar 28) + one-on-one project meetings with Prof. Ferrillo

Rough Draft (due Monday Apr 18)

Final Paper (due May 5, first day of finals week)

COVID Guidelines

As of May 19, 2021, face coverings are optional in TTU facilities and classrooms but, based on CDC guidelines, are recommended and welcome, especially for those who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19 or who may have susceptibilities to the virus.

I will be wearing a mask when not lecturing in the front of the room. Students are encouraged to consider the safety and preferences of their peers by wearing masks during small-group discussion or whenever spaced seating is not possible.

In-Person Office Hours

Students who wish to meet inside my office will need a mask. Students who do not bring a mask can meet with me outside the building.

ADA Statement

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

¹ Mueller, Pam A., and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25, no. 6 (June 2014): 1159–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>.



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Academic Integrity Statement

In order to avoid plagiarism, you must properly cite your sources in your written work. I use the *Chicago Manual of Style* author-date citation style most of the time. You can access the Chicago Citation Quick Guide for free here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. [Texas Tech University ("University") Quality Enhancement Plan, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010]

Religious Holy Day Statement

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Other Helpful Resources

Undergraduate Writing Center (<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/uwc/undergraduate/>)

Student Counseling Center

- Walk-in and appointment options: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/treatment-services/getting-started/>

- Phone: 806-742-3674

24-hour Crisis Helpline (for students experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis)

- Phone: 806-742-5555

Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center

- voiceofhopelubbock.org

- Phone: 806-763-7273

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Office of LGBTQIA, Student Union Building Room 201

- www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu
- Phone: 806-742-5433

Title IX Office

- File a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students
- Call Office for Student Rights & Resolution: (806)-742-SAFE (7233)

Note: Some readings may change as the semester continues. I will never assign you a full book: always check the page ranges for each assignment.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 12): Introduction; big-picture media theory

- Lippmann, Walter. 1922. *Public Opinion*. Ch. 1. (pp. 1–13)

Wednesday: Course overview

Thursday: Lecture on Lippmann. Sign up for discussion leader responsibilities for weeks 3–16. Note: it is the student’s responsibility to sign up for discussion leader responsibilities.

Week 2 (Jan 17): Media reporting routines and democratic concerns

No class Monday the 17th for MLK Day.

- Patterson, Thomas. 1997. “The News Media: An Effective Political Actor?” *Political Communication*. 14(4): 445–455.
- Kuklinski, James H., and Lee Sigelman. 1992. “When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of US Senators and the ‘Paradox of Objectivity.’” *The Journal of Politics*, 54(3): 810–833.

Week 3 (Jan 24): Political reality and distrust.

- Zaller, John. 2003. “A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen.” *Political Communication*, 20(2): 109–130.
- Ladd, Jonathan. 2013. “The Era of Media Distrust and Its Consequences for Perceptions of Political Reality.” *New Directions in Media and Politics*. Taylor & Francis (pp. 24–44).

Week 4 (Jan 31): Ownership; Unit 1 Exam due Saturday Feb 5

- Wagner, Michael, and Timothy Collins. 2014. “Does Ownership Matter? The Case of Rupert Murdoch's Purchase of the Wall Street Journal.” *Journalism Practice*, 8(6), 758–771.
- Zaller, John. “The Myth of a Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited Idea,” in Mutz, Sniderman and Brody, eds., *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change* (Ann Arbor: UM Press, 1996), pp. 17-60.

Unit 1 Exam due Saturday Feb 5 @ midnight.

Week 5 (Feb 7): Racial formation, group conflict, and racial taxonomy



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- Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery, American Freedom*. Chapter 16: “Toward Racism.”
- W.E.B. Du Bois. *Black Reconstruction in America*. Chapter 1: “The Black Worker.”

Week 6 (Feb 14): Racial reorganization. Group identities and attitudes.

- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. 1998. *Whiteness of a Different Color*. Chapter TBD.
- Dunaway, Johanna, Regina P. Branton, and Marisa A. Abrajano. 2010. “Agenda Setting, Public Opinion, and the Issue of Immigration Reform.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 91(2), 359–378.

Week 7 (Feb 21): Racial priming.

- Gilliam, Frank, and Shanto Iyengar. 2000. “Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(3): 560-573.
- Valentino, Nicholas, Vincent Hutchings, and Ismail White. 2002. “Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes.” *American Political Science Review*, 96(1): 75–90.

Week 8 (Feb 28): Overlapping identities and group activation. Unit 2 Exam due Saturday.

- Hutchings, Vincent L. 2001. “Political Context, Issue Salience, and Selective Attentiveness: Constituent Knowledge of the Clarence Thomas Confirmation Vote.” *The Journal of Politics* 63, no. 3 (2001): 846–68.
- Cassese, Erin, and Mirya Holman. 2018. “Playing the Woman Card: Ambivalent Sexism in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Race.” *Political Psychology*, 1-20.

Unit 2 Exam due Saturday Mar 5 @ midnight.

Week 9 (Mar 7): Racialization. Paper topic due Thursday.

- Tesler, Mark. 2012. “The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 56 (3): 690–704.
- Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Research paper topic due Thursday Mar 10 @ midnight.

Week 10 (Mar 14): Spring Break

Week 11 (Mar 21): Anxious politics.

- Brader, Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. “What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 52 (4), 959–978.
- Albertson, Bethany, and Shana K. Gadarian. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. Cambridge Press. Ch. 4.



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Week 12 (Mar 28): Campaign advertising. Paper outline due Monday. Unit 3 Exam due Saturday.

- Brader, Ted. 2006. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds*. Ch. 5, “Emotion and the Persuasive Power of Campaign Ads.”
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam F. Simon, and Nicholas A. Valentino. 1994. “Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?” *American Political Science Review*, 88(4): 829–838.

Research paper outline due Monday Mar 28 @ midnight. Start scheduling meetings with Prof. Ferrillo.

Unit 3 Exam due Saturday Apr 2 @ midnight.

Week 13 (Apr 4): Partisan antipathy and polarization.

Levendusky. 2013. “Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?”

Prior. 2005. “New vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge.”

Week 14 (Apr 11): How the internet changed democracy: techno-optimists and pessimists

Barlow, John Perry. “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace.” February 8, 1996. <https://www.eff.org/cyberspace-independence>.

Kelly, Kevin. 2016. *The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces that Will Shape Our Future*: Chapter 4, “Screening.” Viking Press: New York.

Week 15 (Apr 18) Trolls and online identity. Rough draft due Monday.

No class Monday.

- Marantz, Andrew. *Antisocial*. Chs. 12–14 (pp. 121–149).
- Sunstein, Cass. 2017. *#Republic*. Ch. 1 pp. 1–11 and ch. 3.

Research paper rough draft due Monday Apr 18 @ midnight.

Week 16 (Apr 25): Truth.

- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Part III Sec. 3, “Panopticism.”
- Arendt, Hannah. “Truth and Politics,” pp. 1–10 of posted PDF.

Week 17 (May 2): Unit 4 exam due Monday.

- Exam review and paper help.

Unit 4 exam due Monday May 2 @ midnight.

Last day of classes Tuesday May 3.

May 5–10: Finals week. Final research paper due.

Final draft of research paper due May 5 @ midnight.



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May 11: Final grades due for degree candidates

May 18: Final grades due.