

**Austin Peay State University Department of Communication & Theatre
Communication and Public Opinion (online)
Comm 5060 (3 credit hours) –Fall 2009**

Professor: Dr. Jeongsub Lim

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. or by appointment

Description and Purposes of the Course

1. To provide an overview of the concept of “public opinion” and to explore the crucial relationships between communication and public opinion.
2. To explore ways to allow media messages to contribute to a healthy civic life.
3. To acquaint yourselves with the wide-ranging literature in public opinion and be sufficiently familiar with the field to propose original studies on topics of your choice.
4. To link theory and research in the field of public opinion, and examine the crucial role of communication in such linkages.

Textbook:

Donsbach, W., & Traugott, M. W. (2008). *The SAGE handbook of public opinion research*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Price, V. (1992). *Public opinion*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Recommended readings:

Berger, A. A. (2000). *Media and communication research methods: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bickel, R. (2007). *Multilevel analysis for applied research: It's just regression*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Defleur, M. L., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1989). *Theories of mass communication (5th ed)*. New York, NY: Longman.

Fink, A. (2009). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Graber, D. A. (2007). *Media power in politics (5th ed)*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Harris, R. J. (2009). *A cognitive psychology of mass communication (5th ed.)*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (2nd ed)*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Severin, W. J., & Tankard, J. W. Jr. (2001). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media (5th ed)*. New York, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Shoemaker, P. J., Tankard, J. W., & Lasorsa, D. L. (2004). *How to build social science theories*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

Course Requirements

Because this is a graduate-level class, I have a high level of expectations regarding your commitment to course assignments. Please read specific expectations posted on D2L Web site.

Weekly Discussion Leaders

Each week, two or three discussion leaders are required to post a summary of reading assignments and two discussion questions. So, there will be four discussion questions for two leaders or six discussion questions for three leaders.

The summary and discussion questions will be used as main materials for this class. The summary should be substantially sufficient so that it stimulates a good level of discussion.

The summary and questions should be submitted to each week's folder on Dropbox by **noon, Central Standard Time, on Monday**. For example, each folder has its unique name, such as week 1, week 2, and so on.

Penalties for failure to meet the deadline refer to "Late assignments" section. If you fail to post weekly summary and discussions, you will receive a **ZERO** point on these assignments.

Weekly Responses

Except for discussion leaders, you are required to make your written response (**150-200 words; shorter or longer responses will receive a 1-point deduction**) to each discussion question. Your written response should be submitted to each week's folder on Dropbox by **11:59 p.m., Central Standard Time on Thursday**.

***Your written response should have **your name on the top** of the paper and be save as **"Your first name, your last name"** in a **Microsoft Word format**. No other formats (pdf, odt) will be accepted. So, your file on Dropbox looks like "Jeongsub Lim.doc" ***

After Thursday, post your comments or thoughts about the discussion questions or reading materials **on each week's discussion section by 11: 59 p.m., Central Standard Time on Friday. NO LATE SUBMISSION will be accepted.**

Responding to assignments in a timely way is the most crucial essence of success in this course. You should refer regularly to the Course Schedule, which provides a framework for the course, so we can progress at the same pace and discuss together. If something prevents your participation, let me know it. When students post questions or ask for clarification, other students and I can answer them.

Research Proposal

You are required to submit a research proposal that addresses (a) theoretical issues or (b) empirical research based on data. So, a theoretical paper should develop a theoretical framework that explains some elements of the relationship between **communication and**

public opinion. An empirical research paper should propose an empirical study that applies an existing theory or a model to research questions or hypotheses with regard to the relationship between **communication and public opinion.**

Both types of proposal should have literature review (critical review of prior research).

The page length of the proposal is 13 to 18 pages, excluding a title and references. So, 5 to 7 pages will be for literature review and the remaining pages will cover introduction, method, and conclusion. Proposal will be due on **11: 59 p.m., Central Standard Time, December 14 (Monday).** Proposal should be submitted to a “Research Proposal” folder in Dropbox on the D2L Website.

Literature review

To submit a good piece of a proposal, you need to turn in a well-written literature review on your topical area. Literature review will be due on **11: 59 p.m., Central Standard Time, on November 13 (Friday).** The page length of literature review is 5 to 7 pages, excluding references. You need to provide references. Proposal should be submitted to a “Literature Review” folder in Dropbox on the D2L Website.

Your literature review should include critical evaluation of relevant prior studies and justification of your study:

- (1) Relevancy of studies to your study
- (2) Theoretical position of the author(s)
- (3) Evidence used by the author(s) in reaching conclusions or in deriving hypotheses.
- (4) Missing parts in the author(s)’s work: This leads you to justify why your study is meaningful.

Style issues

Research proposal and literature review assignments should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style. The assignments should be based on a **double-line spacing** format and **Times New Roman** with a **12-point font**. Only a **Microsoft Word format (compatible version) will be accepted. No other formats will be permitted.**

An example paper and manuscript guidelines that meet the style is available on the Austin Peay State’s library (http://library.apsu.edu/guides/1_3_14.htm)

For detailed information, refer to a file posted on the D2L Web site.

***All written work (summary and discussion questions, weekly responses, literature review and research proposal) is expected to be of professional quality. Thus, I will take a deduction of the total points on each assignment if your writing has the lack of accuracy in fact, style, grammar and spelling. ***

Grades: The following is a percentage breakdown of your grade for the course:

Research Paper	30%
Literature Review	20%
Weekly Summary and Discussion Questions	20%
Weekly Responses	20%
Discussion participation	10%
Total	100

For whatever reasons, disregarding guidelines for each assignment will result in a deduction of your grade. I do not plan to grade on a curve. Thus, a grade will be based on the following manner.

A	90-100 points
B	80-89 points
C	70-79 points
D	60-69 points
F	below 60 points

Communication with the Instructor: Some of you may not be comfortable with online learning environment. However, it is your responsibility for asking questions whenever you need guidelines or clarifications about an assignment or other issues. You can e-mail or fax your concerns to me. **All e-mails should include “Comm 5060” in the subject line.**

If you are having problems logging into your course, timing out of your course, using your course web site tools, or other technical problems, please contact the APSU Help Desk by calling 931-221-4357 or go to the APSU Help Desk website (<http://www.apsu.edu/helpdesk/>)

Course Evaluation: You will receive a course evaluation form to complete. It will be returned to the department evaluation coordinator, not to your instructor. Evaluations are anonymous and will not be reviewed until grades have been assigned.

Important Course Rules and Policies

Syllabus Changes: The course outline, reading assignments and requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Attendance: Because this is an online class, you should check lecture notes on a daily basis. My lectures will not be the same as textbook materials and will not be posted permanently on the course sites. If you miss online sessions, they will directly affect your final grade. Keep in mind that I do not curve your grade.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty may be defined as any act of dishonesty in academic work. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Plagiarism, the changing or falsifying of any academic documents or materials,
2. Cheating and giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations or other assigned work.
3. You are not allowed to submit papers or assignments used in other courses to this class.

Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. Penalties for academic misconduct will vary with the seriousness of the offense and include, but **are not limited to, a grade of “F” on the work in question, a grade of “F” in the course, reprimand, probation, suspension and expulsion.**

If your literature review and research paper were substantially similar to other scholars’ works, such as scholarly articles, conference papers, masters’ thesis or Ph.D. dissertations, your assignment will receive a zero and you will face the aforementioned penalties.

If your weekly responses are similar to your classmate(s)’s works, both your classmate(s) and you will receive a zero point on the assignment.

If the student believes that he or she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct, and if his or her final grade has been lowered as a result, the student may appeal the case through the Academic Grievance Procedures. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult with your instructor.

Disabilities Accommodations

If you have a disability that may affect your academic performance is strongly encouraged to make an appointment with me immediately to discuss this matter. You may also contact the director of disability services, Beulah Oldham (telephone: (931) 221-6230; tty: (931) 221-6278; fax: (931) 221-7102. The office of Disability Services is located in the Clement Building, Suite 140.

The school will make reasonable efforts to accommodate your special needs. Students are excused for recognized religious holidays. Please let me know in advance if you have a conflict.

Late assignments: If you do not meet the deadlines for whatever reasons, regarding

weekly summary and discussion questions, weekly responses, literature review, and research paper, you will receive a **ZERO point** on the assignments.

Save of your Assignment: You need to save everything you turn in, at least two different places, such as your home computer, CDs or USB memory sticks. When you doubt whether I have received your assignments on a due date, you should be able to provide information that clearly indicates that you have submitted the assignment into Digital drop box and to turn in your assignments within 30 minutes when you raise the doubt. If you are unable to provide these two things, I consider that you have not turned in your assignment on a due date.

Topic and Reading Schedule

	Topic	Reading schedule
		(Completed by the date)
Week One	The public and public opinion in political theories	Donsbach & Traugott, pp. 11-24.
	Origins of the idea	Price, pp. 5-7
Week Two	Nature of public opinion	D & T pp. 25-63
	Two discussion leaders	Price, pp. 22-44.
Week Three	Development of public opinion research	Price, pp. 8-21
	Literature review due on midnight, Central Standard Time, November 13 (Friday)	D & T, pp. 83-122
	Two discussion leaders	
Week Four	Formation of opinion	D & T, pp. 127-172
	Two discussion leaders	Price, pp. 45-58
Week Five	Dynamics of public opinion	D & T, pp. 175-217
	Two discussion leaders	

Week Six	Observing public opinion and its uses	D & T, pp. 479-513
	Three discussion leaders	Price, pp. 59-70
		D & T, pp. 232-239
Week Seven	Uses of public opinion, Internet and secondary data	D & T, pp. 64-80
	Three discussion leaders	Price, pp.71-90
		D & T, pp. 271-283, pp. 468-476
Week Eight	Status of public opinion research	D & T, pp. 431-467
	Research proposal due on midnight, Central Standard Time, December 14 (Monday)	
	Two discussion leaders	