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COMPARATIVE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION COMM 281 - Fall 2004

Course Description:

This course is aimed at analyzing the links between media and political systems, based on a comparative approach. The purpose is to provide conceptual tools that will enable students to critically evaluate the role of the mass media in contemporary democracies. By identifying different forms of media and politics interaction, the course stresses how such interaction is shaped by broader social, economic, and cultural factors.

The emphasis of the course will be on the postindustrial societies of Europe and North America. This narrow focus is a result, in part, of the fact that comparative research has focused on these areas. Besides the existence of a more consolidated research tradition, the focus on a smaller number of countries is also related to the goal of providing a more detailed comparison of political communication processes.

After introducing the features of the comparative method, the course presents a description of political and media systems of postindustrial countries. By identifying basic models of media and politics interaction, we will discuss how the social and economic contexts of different regions of Europe and North America are central to understanding the role of the media in political processes. The course concludes by discussing whether the mass media promote or impede democratic consolidation and by considering whether globalization and related processes of commercialization and conglomeration are changing the role of communication technologies.

Course Texts:

Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Evaluation:

Besides a mid-term and a final exam, students will be evaluated on the basis of participation in class discussions and performance on the reading assignments. You should make sure that you read the assigned texts in advance. Pop quizzes will be given to students as short tests on the

assigned reading for class. You should also bring your notes and questions to enhance your participation in class discussion. Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm Exam 30 %
 Final Exam 40 %
 Participation 15 %
 Pop Quizzes 15 %

Course Schedule:

PART I MEDIA AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

Aug 25 - Introduction to the procedures and contents of the course.

(No readings)

Aug 30 - The comparative method.

* Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler, "Comparative research: the extending frontier", in D. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (eds.), *New Directions in Political Communication*. London: Sage, 1990, pp. 305-325.

* Hallin and Mancini, "Introduction", pp. 1-17.

Sep 1, 8 - Media, public sphere and democracy: liberal and radical approaches.

(Sep 6 - No class. Labor day holiday)

* Jurgen Habermas, "The public sphere: an encyclopedia article (1964)", *New German Critique*, 1/3, 1974, pp.49-55.

* Norris, chapter 2, pp. 22-35.

* James Curran, "Mass media and democracy revisited", in James Curran & Michael Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*. London: Arnold, 1996, pp. 81-119.

Sep 13, 15 - Models of democracy compared: understanding the political system.

* Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999 (chapters1-3, pp. 1-61).

Sep 20, 22 - Communication systems compared: understanding media industries.

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 2, pp. 21-45.

* Norris, chapters 4 and 5, pp. 63-119.

Sep. 27, 29 - Interactions between media and political systems

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 3, pp. 46-65.

* Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, "Speaking of the president: political structure and representational form in U.S. and Italian TV News", *Theory and Society*, 13, 1984, pp. 829-850.

* Colin Seymour-Ure, "Prime ministers` and presidents` news operations: What effects on the job?", in Howard Tumber (ed.), *Media Power, Professionals and Policies*. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 151-166.

October 4, Monday - MIDTERM EXAM.

PART II
THREE MODELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Oct 6 - Different models of political communication: an introduction

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 4, pp. 66-86.

Oct 11, 13 - The Polarized Pluralist Model (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain)

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 5, pp. 89-142.

* Jean Chalaby, "Journalism as an Anglo-American invention: a comparison of the development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s", *European Journal of Communication*, 11/3, 1996, pp. 303-326.

Oct 18, 20 - The Democratic Corporatist Model (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland)

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 6, pp. 143-197.

* Lennart Weibull, "The press subsidy system in Sweden: a critical approach". In N. Couldry & J. Curran (eds.), *Contesting Media Power*. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, pp. 89-107.

Oct 25, 27 - The Liberal Model (Britain, United States, Canada, Ireland)

* Hallin and Mancini, chapter 7, pp. 198-248.

* Wolfgang Donsbach, "Lapdogs, watchdogs and junkyard dogs", *Media Studies Journal*, 9/4, 1995.

PART III
MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY:
ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Nov 1, 3 - The political malaise debate: Do the media impede or promote participation?

* Robert Putnam, "Turing in, turning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28, 1995, pp. 664-683.

* Norris, chapters 12 and 13, pp. 255-306.

Nov 8, 10 - Electoral processes compared

* Paolo Mancini and David Swanson, "Politics, media, and modern democracy: an introduction" in D. Swanson and P. Mancini (Eds.), *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy*. London: Praeger, 1996, pp. 1-26.

* Norris, chapters 7 and 8, pp. 137-179.

Nov 15 - Political advertisement compared

* Christina Holtz-Bacha and Lynda Lee Kaid, "A comparative perspective on political advertising: media and political system characteristics" (pp. 8-18) and "Political advertising across cultures: comparing content, styles, and effects" (pp. 206-227), in Lynda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha (eds.), *Political Advertising in Western Democracies*. London: Sage, 1995.

PART IV
IS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION CHANGING?

Nov 17, 22 - Contemporary processes of convergence: commercialization, tabloidization, conglomeration

- * Hallin and Mancini, chapter 8, pp. 251-295.
- * Sandra Moog and Jeffrey Sluyter-Beltrao, "The transformation of political communication?", in Barrie Axford and Richard Huggins (eds), *New Media and Politics*. London: Sage, 2001, pp. 30-63.

Nov 24 - No class. Thanksgiving recess.

Nov 29 - Political communication in the Internet era

- * Norris, chapter 6, pp. 120-136.
- * Peter Dahlgren, "The public sphere and the net: structure, space, and communication", pp. 33-55;
- * Colin Sparks, "The Internet and the global public sphere"; both in W. Lance Bennett and Robert Entman (eds), *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 75-95.

Dec 1 - Conclusions: Last day balance.

- * Hallin and Mancini, chapter 10, pp. 296-306.
- * Norris, chapter 14, pp. 309-319.

FINAL EXAM:

COMM 281-02 (3:00-4:15 p.m.): December 8, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. – noon
COMM 281-03 (4:30-5:45 p.m.): December 16, Thursday, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.