

**CM 385: Politics & Entertainment
Fall 2019
T/Th 10:50am – 12:05pm
Donnelly Science Center 175**

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday
12:15- 1:30pm and by appointment

Course Description

We live in a global media society in which the line between what is news and entertainment is forever blurred. We elect celebrities to public office and increasingly treat our politicians like celebrities. Against this backdrop, Entertainment, Politics, and Media explores how a range of entertainment media (comedy, melodrama, the sitcom, film, etc.) teaches us about the intersection of politics and culture. We will explore political themes in entertainment content and the rise of politics as spectacle and entertainment. We will focus on the upcoming presidential election and pressing issues of the day. While the course has a contemporary focus we will also work to understand the history behind the curious mixing of entertainment and politics.

Specific Educational Objectives of the Course:

In this course, students will:

1. Be more critical and sophisticated consumers of politically-relevant entertainment media, including infotainment, political comedy, fictional portrayals of electoral politics, and dystopian fiction.
2. Understand the incentives, ideas, and technological developments that shape recent developments in news and entertainment media and democratic politics.
3. Grasp the normative implications of trends in entertainment media for elections, democratic participation, public opinion, and governing.

Required Texts and Materials

Baumgartner, J. C., & Becker, A. B. (Eds.). (2018). *Political humor in a changing media landscape: A new generation of research*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Tryon, C. (2016). *Political TV*. New York: Routledge.

To watch several TV episodes, you will need access to Netflix either through a subscription or a login you are allowed to use.

Course Moodle site (all other readings beside Political TV and Political Humor are posted there)

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Expectations

Students who wish to be successful in this course will come to class prepared by having done the readings and assignments ahead of time and be able to discuss with the larger group. Part of being an active contributor in class is offering your own commentary on the material. It will also be important to respect the comments and questions of your fellow students as we work to answer some tough questions. It is your job as students to keep up-to-date with the course schedule. It is my job as the professor to keep you informed of any changes in schedule.

Contacting Me

[Email](mailto:abbecker@loyola.edu) is the best way to reach me (abbecker@loyola.edu) with any course related questions. If your email arrives during normal business hours (M-F, 9am – 5pm), I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. I do not check my email regularly during the evenings and weekends. Please remember to put CM 203 in your email subject line and remember that while email is electronic, it is still a form of professional communication.

Contacting You

I plan to contact you via email at your Loyola.edu account. It is your responsibility to regularly check this account for announcements and notes about the course. If there is a change in schedule, I will send out important information via email so please check your messages daily.

Office Hours

My office hours are posted on the syllabus. Please feel to drop in during my open office hour times on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since I can sometimes get called into meetings though, it's a good idea to email me ahead of time if you'd like to stop by. I am also available to meet with you at other times; simply email me to set up an appointment. If you make an appointment with me, I expect you to keep it. If you need to cancel, please email me 24 hours ahead of time.

Technology Policy

While laptops, cell phones, and tablets are useful for multi-tasking, they can sometimes pose a distraction. I'm going to trust you to use technology appropriately while in the classroom. I understand that sometimes emergencies arise and you may need to step out and answer a phone call. Please let me know ahead of time if something is going on and just step out quietly and discreetly. I expect students to be active participants in the

classroom –we only meet for a little over 3 hours each week. I'll give you my full attention; I expect you to do the same.

Attendance

Attendance at class (and on-time arrival) is expected. I understand that sometimes things happen or that you might get sick during the course of the semester. Please take care of yourselves and don't bring your germs to class.

Officially, I allow **two** unexcused absences during the course of the semester. If you miss more than **two** classes, this will impact your class participation grade (see below). Please keep track of your absences yourself; I will not email you with updates of the number of classes you have missed. If you missed class, it is your responsibility to find out what material we covered and get the notes and announcements from another student; please don't email me asking for notes for missed classes. It is your responsibility to catch up – it is not my job to catch you up.

Student Athletes

If you are a student athlete, please provide me with your travel and game schedule indicating when you will need to miss class to participate in athletic events. While travel for athletics is an excused absence, you will need to make up any missed work.

Late Work/Missed Exams

****Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the following instances:**

1. hospitalization or illness, with a documented doctor's note; or
2. a death or serious illness in the family, with documentation from an immediate family member.

In all cases, the decision to allow a student to make up an exam/extend the deadline for an assignment, as well as the time period for completion, is up to the discretion of the professor.

In general, assignment due dates are published well in advance. If you know you are going to be out or away from your computer when an assignment is due online, please upload ahead of time.

If you are unable to take an exam given the reasons listed above, please try to contact me at least 24 hours ahead of time (if possible). Barring extenuating circumstances, students who miss an exam and do not make alternate arrangements ahead of time will receive a zero.

Students with Disabilities

If you are registered with DSS and a faculty notification email has been sent to me on your behalf, please schedule a brief meeting during my office hours to discuss accommodations. If you need academic accommodations due to a disability you must register with Disability Support Services. For more information please contact DSS at DSS@loyola.edu or (410) 617-2750.

The Counseling Center

Stress is a normal part of being a student. However, if personal or emotional concerns are interfering with your ability to live and learn at Loyola, please stop by the Counseling Center in Humanities 150 or call 410-617-CARE (2273). More information about the [Counseling Center](http://www.loyola.edu/counselingcenter) is available at: <http://www.loyola.edu/counselingcenter>.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to understand the meaning of the [Honor Code](https://www.loyola.edu/academics/honor-code) (see: <https://www.loyola.edu/academics/honor-code>). **Ignorance of the Honor Code is not a valid reason for committing an act of academic dishonesty.** The following constitute violations of the Code and are defined in the **Community Standards Handbook**: cheating, stealing, lying, forgery, plagiarism, and the failure to report a violation. Please refer to the College Catalogue and Student Handbook for further explanation of the Code. Violations of the Honor Code may result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course.

Department of Communication policy reiterates that the university honor code applies to all CM courses, including this one. I will follow the Department of Communication's policy guidelines for honor code violations if any infraction of the code occurs. The department's policy is available upon request.

Student Support Services

Loyola offers services to support students' academic and emotional development:

1. [The Study Center](https://www.loyola.edu/thestudy) (link: <https://www.loyola.edu/thestudy>) located on the third floor of Jenkins Hall, offers tutoring, writing coaching, and study skills guidance.
2. [The Writing Center](https://www.loyola.edu/departments/writing-center) (link: <https://www.loyola.edu/departments/writing-center>) offers consultations on writing technique and is located in Jenkins Hall 011. Make an appointment by calling ext. 5415 or emailing lwc@loyola.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Strategy Memo	15%
Watching Memo	15%
Research Paper	20%
Research Paper Presentation	5%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Attendance & Class Participation	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading

A	93-100	Grading Policy: Students earn the grades they deserve based on the quality of the work completed; students are not given grades. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their grades on Moodle and monitor their progress/status in the course. I do not change grades unless there is an administrative or calculation error. I do not discuss grades over email. Students can come to office hours to discuss grades 24 hours after the grade is posted.
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	
F	Below 60	

Assignments

All written work should be submitted through link on Moodle. See Moodle for rubrics and assignment descriptions.

Strategy Memo (15%) due by 9AM on Tuesday, October 1

Watching Memo (15%) due by 9AM on Tuesday, November 5

Research Paper (20%) due by 9am on Tuesday, December 17th (Final Exam Slot)

Research Paper Presentation (5%) due by 9am on Tuesday, November 19th

Exam #1 (15%) on Thursday, October 10th (1st half of class material)

Exam #2 (15%) on Thursday, November 14th (2nd half of class material)

Participation: (15%) Participation is an integral part of this course. Your level of participation includes attendance and your contributions and preparedness for class.

FINAL EXAM SLOT: No Final Exam, but Research Papers are due on Moodle at this time: Tuesday, December 17th @ 9:00am

Fall 2019 Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1	T 9/3	Introduction to Course	
	Th 9/5	Unit 1: Introduction to Political Comedy Watch CNN Special Report	Political TV: Introduction Political Humor: Introduction
Weekend watching: Track all your media time for the weekend: note which shows you watch, whether news or entertainment, and any other time you spend with media.			
Week 2	T 9/10	The Blurring of News and Entertainment	Political TV: Ch 2
	Th 9/12	Satire	Political TV: Ch 3 (Young, 2013)
Weekend watching: Watch 1 episode of <i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i> and 1 episode of <i>Full Frontal with Samantha Bee</i> ;			
Week 3	T 9/17	Comedy as Activism: Oliver	Political Humor Ch 2 (Becker & Bode, 2018)
	Th 9/19	Comedy as Social Justice: Samantha Bee	Political Humor Ch 1 (Feldman & Chattoo, 2018)
Weekend watching: Watch 1 episode of <i>The Daily Show</i> with Jon Stewart & 1 with Trevor Noah;			
Week 4	T 9/24	The Daily Show	(Becker & Goldberg, 2017) (Becker, 2016 WP) (Noah, 2016)
	Th 9/26	Colbert Super PAC and Campaign Finance; Colbert Late Show	(Hardy, Gottfried, Winneg, & Jamieson, 2014) (Lindbergh, 2016a, 2016b) (Koblin, 2017)
Weekend watching: Check out Jimmy Fallon, Seth Meyers, Jimmy Kimmel, and Stephen Colbert (at least opening monologues); also <i>SNL</i>			
Week 5	T 10/1	Network Late Night Comedy	Strategy Memo Due 9AM Political Humor Ch 15 (Garber, 2017; Itzkoff, 2017a, 2017b)
	Th 10/3	<i>SNL</i> and Campaigns	Political TV CH 4 (p. 107-117) (Becker, 2018) (Carvey, 2018)
Weekend watching: REVIEW FOR EXAM			
Week 6	T 10/8	Presidential Candidates & 2020 Election	Political Humor Ch 3 & Ch 14
	Th 10/10	EXAM 1	

Weekend watching: <i>The West Wing, Scandal, Parks & Recreation, Veep</i>			
Week 7	T 10/15	Melodrama and the Presidency	Political TV Ch 5 pp. 137-152; Primetime Podcast: West Wing
	Th 10/17	Sitcoms	Political TV Ch 4 (p. 120-end) WBUR Podcast
Watching: Music Assignment, <i>24, Homeland, The Americans</i>			
Week 8	T 10/22	Music	NPR: American Anthem Articles from VF & Paste (2)
	Th 10/24	Melodramas of National Security	Political TV Ch 6
Weekend watching: Watch <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> , Season 15, Ep 19 <i>House of Cards</i> & <i>Madam Secretary</i>			
Week 9	T 10/29	Gender, Entertainment, & Politics	Political TV CH 5 (p. 152-end) Grey's Anatomy article Good Fight article NYT article
	Th 10/31	NO CLASS	
Weekend watching: <i>Hunger Games, Harry Potter</i>			
Week 10	T 11/5	Film & Dystopia	Watching Memo Due by 9AM (Zauzmer, 2019) (Jones & Paris, 2018) (WaPo, 2019)
	Th 11/7	Harry Potter	(Kligler-Vilenchik, 2015; Mutz, 2016)
Weekend watching: REVIEW FOR EXAM			
Week 11	T 11/12	Youth and the Future	Political Humor Ch 13 & Conclusion Political TV Conclusion
	Th 11/14	EXAM 2	
Week 12	T 11/19	Research Paper Presentations	Research Presentations due on Moodle by 9am
	Th 11/21	Research Paper Presentations	
Week 13	T 11/26	NO Class	
	Th 11/28	No Class - Thanksgiving	
Week 14	T 12/3	Research Paper Presentations	
	Th 12/5	Research Paper Presentations	

Research Papers Due at Start of Exam Slot on Moodle:

Tuesday, December 17th at 9:00 AM