

San José State University
School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Mass Comm 139, Media and Presidential Campaigns
Section 1, Fall 2016

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Richard Craig
Office Location:	DBH107
Telephone:	408-924-3287
Email:	profcraig@profcraig.com
Office Hours:	Tuesday 3:00-6:00 p.m. (DBH209H); Thursday 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. (DBH108), and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Monday-Wednesday 10:30 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.
Classroom:	DBH202
Prerequisites:	JOUR 61, upper division standing or instructor consent.

Faculty Web Page

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on my faculty web page at <http://www.profcraig.com>. You may follow me on Twitter at [@SJSUProfCraig](#) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Profcraig>. You should regularly check your e-mail or my Facebook or Twitter to learn of any updates.

Syllabus Supplement

You are required to read all information on this syllabus and on the syllabus supplement, which lists policies that apply to all my classes. It is available on the class home page and on the Web at <http://www.profcraig.com/syllsup.html>.

Course Description

Catalog Description:

Writing for mass communication with focus on specific topic during the semester. Topics may include specialized writing in public relations, advertising, broadcast and print media.

Topic Description:

Course will examine the role of mass media in U.S. presidential election campaigns, comparing and contrasting media use in previous campaigns with that in the ongoing 2016 campaign.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CLO1.** Demonstrate understanding of different kinds of candidate appeals to voters.
- CLO2.** Show knowledge of how candidates use different types of media to effectively spread their campaign messages.
- CLO3.** Demonstrate grasp of the role of polling in operating campaigns and covering them in news media.
- CLO4.** Show understanding of techniques used in campaign advertising.

These Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) support the Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, which may be found [here](#).

Required Texts/Readings

Keeping up with readings is a **vital requirement** for this class, as the 2016 campaign will evolve throughout the semester. Book readings will be heavily supplemented with online articles, with links posted on the class home page. Students will be emailed with updates as new readings are posted.

Textbooks

Richard Craig, *Polls, Expectations and Elections: TV News Making in U.S. Presidential Campaigns*. ISBN-10: 0739191497 | ISBN-13: 978-0739191491

Judith S. Trent, Robert V. Friedenberg and Robert E. Denton Jr., *Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices* (8th Edition). ISBN-10: 1442243341 | ISBN-13: 978-1442243347

Joseph Cummins, *Anything for a Vote: Dirty Tricks, Cheap Shots, and October Surprises in U.S. Presidential Campaigns*. ISBN-10: 1594741565 | ISBN-13: 978-1594741562

Other Readings

As noted above, I will post links to articles about the 2016 campaign as it develops. **It is your job to check your email and the class home page regularly to keep up on these readings.** I will do everything I can to notify students about new readings as they are posted.

Other technology requirements

Since we will regularly go over online readings and conduct group assignments in class, please bring a laptop or tablet computer to class whenever possible. If this is a problem, let me know and I'll help you find a solution.

Course Requirements and Assignments

MC139 is an upper-division specialized writing seminar. In a seminar the instructor tries to minimize lecturing and maximize the contribution of students. Students are expected to complete their assignments and readings before the date listed, and to be prepared to contribute to an informed discussion.

Given the nature of the course subject matter, students should ask questions about the readings and what they are hearing from the instructor, and challenge that material when appropriate. Guest speakers will sometimes conduct course meetings, and any material they share is considered a class text for learning and discussion.

You will be responsible for following the news daily to keep up on current events in the campaign and in local and national affairs in general. At the very least, you must follow presidential campaign coverage in multiple outlets, preferably on different sides of the political spectrum. We will discuss campaign events as they develop, so please come to class prepared to participate in such discussions and related projects.

Any class built around a continuing political campaign will inherently be somewhat fluid in nature. I will try to keep last-minute changes to a minimum, but please understand that any such changes will be made in the long-term interest of enhancing class content and keeping our material as up-to-date as possible.

Grading Information

In terms of grading, this course requires **regular class participation**, several **in-class assignments**, a **midterm exam**, a **semester project** and a **final exam**.

Class Participation

As noted above, a seminar requires extensive student participation and discussion of readings and course concepts. As such, it counts for a higher percentage of your grade than in some other classes. The instructor will keep notes on student participation throughout the semester.

In-Class Assignments

These will range from individual writing assignments and critiques to small group projects and presentations. As noted above, the fluid nature of following a campaign means that these will frequently be assigned in class and worked on throughout class sessions

Semester Project

For the semester project in this class, students may choose to (1) write a 10-12 page research paper on a topic related to the course discussions and readings, (2) write an in-depth news story (1500-2000 words, with a minimum of five in-person interviews) on a topic relevant to this class that you believe merits closer scrutiny, or (3) complete a new media technology project – a Web site, a detailed multimedia presentation, in-depth interactive infographics or something similar, and present it to the class. For either of the latter two types of project, you will be expected to do an amount of work comparable to a term paper and provide documentation along with the project. I will provide a detailed handout on this assignment within the first few class meetings.

You will be expected to have settled on at least a **general topic for the project** and **be able to discuss it in class** by **September 19**. The semester project is **due Monday, November 21** (the last class meeting before the Thanksgiving break). These will be turned in at the beginning of class, and I will ask each student to discuss his/her project for 3-5 minutes in class that day.

Midterm and Final Exams

These will be completed in the normal class assigned time (75 minutes) and will involve synthesizing material you've learned from readings and lectures with commentary and other material you will read and research online. **Be sure to bring your laptop or tablet to class for each exam.** I will provide more detailed information on these exams in the time leading up to them.

Writing

This is an upper-division writing class, and your writing will be graded accordingly. You will be expected to keep minor style errors and typos to a minimum. Mechanical errors – style, spelling, punctuation, minor grammar errors, copy preparation – will hurt your grade on writing assignments. This includes the same error made more than once.

Misspelling the name of a person, an institution or position in your projects is a **major error** and **will result in a failing grade on the assignment**. This is not meant to scare you, just to make sure you get your information in order before you write. Assignments with any other factual errors will also receive a failing grade.

Please note that I'm not in the business of giving failing grades – as long as you understand and adhere to these rules, I won't have any problem with you. Above all, if you have questions about any of these rules and how they might apply to a given assignment, please contact me before the due date.

See syllabus supplement for information on attendance, deadlines, academic honesty, classroom protocols and other issues not covered here.

Assignments are weighted as follows:

- Class participation: 15 percent
- In-class assignments: 15 percent
- Midterm exam: 15 percent
- Semester project: 35 percent
- Final exam: 20 percent

There *may* be opportunities for extra credit during the semester as events unfold. These will be announced and discussed in class as warranted. As noted in the syllabus supplement, any assignment turned in late without prior approval from me will receive a failing grade.

Diversity and Controversial Issues

Throughout the semester, we will discuss matters relating to political and ideological stances and numerous controversial issues, candidates and concepts. We will also likely analyze differences in race, culture, social class, sexuality and many other issues. In the beginning, this may seem uncomfortable, but my goal is to create an environment where we can talk about such matters thoughtfully, frankly and with respect and empathy.

The objective is to enlighten, not offend, but we will talk about why certain types of content might upset certain audiences and not others. The aim is to create an atmosphere of respectful discussion, where all can express their opinions. The class works best when we all feel free to contribute.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Mass Comm 139, Media and Presidential Campaigns Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change; any changes in required readings will be announced in advance, with students notified via e-mail and social media. *Readings are in bold italics.*

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	August 24	Introduction: This bizarre campaign (and other ones)
2	Aug. 29-31	The 2016 campaign: How we got here Campaign structures and commonalities; Populism and other social appeals <i>Craig, pp. 1-10</i> <i>Trent, Chapter 2</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i>
3	Sept. 5-7	MONDAY, SEPT. 5: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY Negative campaigning; Forms of campaign media over the years <i>Trent, Chapter 3</i> <i>Cummins, pp. 24-32; 47-54; 292-293</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i>
4	Sept. 12-14	Evolution of campaign media use; Image making <i>Craig, Chapter 2</i> <i>Trent, Chapter 4</i> <i>Cummins, pp. 67-72; 92-105</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i>
5	Sept. 19-21	Media and the winnowing process; polling <i>Trent, Chapters 6-7</i> <i>Craig, Chapter 3</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i> WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19: SEMESTER PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE
6	Sept. 26-28	Debates <i>Trent, Chapter 8</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i> MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26: FIRST DEBATE SCHEDULED
7	Oct. 3-5	FIRST DEBATE EXERCISE DUE MONDAY, OCT. 3 Polling and expectation setting; evolution of public opinion polls <i>Craig, Chapter 4-5-6</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i> TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4: VP DEBATE SCHEDULED
8	Oct. 10-12	SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9: SECOND DEBATE SCHEDULED Campaigning in the information age <i>Trent, Chapter 11</i> <i>Cummins, pp. 274-291</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i> SECOND DEBATE EXERCISE DUE WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12

9	Oct. 17-19	Campaign advertising <i>Craig, pp. 10-15</i> <i>Trent, Chapters 5, 10</i> <i>Online readings and links TBA</i> WEDNESDAY, OCT. 19: MIDTERM EXAM
10	Oct. 24-26	Campaign advertising, continued <i>Craig, pp. 10-15</i> <i>Trent, Chapters 5, 10</i> <i>Online readings and links TBA</i>
11	Oct. 31- Nov. 2	The current campaign winds down <i>Online readings TBA</i>
12	Nov. 7-9	The final media blitz TUESDAY, NOV. 8: ELECTION DAY Election postmortem and discussion <i>Online readings</i>
13	Nov. 14-16	Work on semester project
14	Nov. 21-23	MONDAY, NOV. 21: SEMESTER PROJECT DUE Discussion of semester projects WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING
15	Nov. 28-30	Post-election: What's best for democracy? <i>Craig, Chapter 7</i> <i>Online readings TBA</i>
16	Dec. 5-7	Social media and future campaigns <i>Online readings TBA</i>
Final Exam	Dec. 12	Monday, December 12 from 10:30-11:45 in regular classroom.