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PSC 395.03: Media and the Conduct of International Relations

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MEDIA
AND THE CONDUCT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE 395-3
MWF 3:10-4:00
LA 337

FALL 1994

Professor: Charles E. Courtney, Room 202, University Hall; tel: 243 5364.
Office Hours: 4:00-5:00 MWF or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The effect of media on the course of events in international relations is mysterious and unpredictable. Much has been written about the subject, and very little has been decided. Many students of foreign affairs believe that journalists and their output are key players in the international arena, that what gets covered and how it gets covered have a compelling influence on policy decisions in the major capitals of the world. Events are seen to be driven by the information people receive through the media, as in the widespread assumption that the collapse of the Soviet Union was at least partly a consequence of expectations and aspirations instilled in the people of the region by western media. On the other side of the argument are a few analysts who contend that the influence of the press, television and radio on global events is negligible. Meanwhile the institution of international journalism has come under increasing scrutiny by some who question its credibility as an agenda setter and source of information. This course will examine all sides of the debate. Students will be encouraged to draw their own conclusions and will be evaluated on the basis of their analytical insights. The mid-term and final exams will be in essay form and will count, respectively, 25% and 35% toward the course grade. Attendance and participation in classroom discussion will count 25%. Each student will be involved in a group presentation (a role-playing confrontation between journalists and government officials) worth 15%.

TEXTS: Who stole the News?, Mort Rosenblum
         Media and Public Policy, edited by Robert J. Spitzer
         Siege Mentality: ABC, the White House and the Iran Hostage Crisis,
         Kennedy School of Government Case Study
         Copies of additional materials will be distributed in class.
READING ASSIGNMENTS: Students will be expected to complete the following reading assignments before class on the dates listed. From time to time additional readings will be provided in class.

August 31 - "Behind the CNN Factor" and "The Video Vise" (will be provided)

September 7 - Rosenblum, Preface through page 38
September 12 - Rosenblum, pages 39-61
September 14 - Rosenblum, pages 61-94 (Sept. 15, last day to add classes)
September 19 - Rosenblum, pages 94-116
September 23 - Rosenblum, pages 116-142
September 28 - Rosenblum, pages 142-162 (Sept. 29, last day to drop classes)
October 3 - Rosenblum, pages 162-194
October 7 - Rosenblum, pages 194-223
October 12 - Rosenblum, pages 223-259
October 17 - Rosenblum, pages 259-291
October 21 - Siege Mentality: ABC, the White House and the Iran Hostage Crisis
October 28 - Mid-Term Exam

November 2 - Spitzer, pages 1-15
November 7 - Spitzer, pages 19-29
November 14 - Spitzer, pages 31-40
November 18 - Spitzer, pages 61-79
November 28 - Spitzer, pages 153-169
December 2 - Spitzer, 171-186
December 16 - Final Exam (1:10-3:10 PM)
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following titles offer a broad view of the relationship between media and foreign affairs. Students who wish to expand their grasp of the subject beyond the minimum requirements of PS 393-3 will find them invaluable.


