



DEGREE CURRICULUM  
**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND  
PUBLIC OPINION**

Coordination: SUAU GOMILA, GUILLEM

Academic year 2022-23

Subject's general information

<b>Subject name</b>	POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC OPINION			
<b>Code</b>	101972			
<b>Semester</b>	1st Q(SEMESTER) CONTINUED EVALUATION			
<b>Typology</b>	Degree	Course	Character	Modality
	Bachelor's Degree in Audiovisual Communication and Journalism	3	COMPULSORY	Attendance-based
<b>Course number of credits (ECTS)</b>	6			
<b>Type of activity, credits, and groups</b>	<b>Activity type</b>	<b>PRAULA</b>	<b>TEORIA</b>	
	<b>Number of credits</b>	3	3	
	<b>Number of groups</b>	1	1	
<b>Coordination</b>	SUAU GOMILA, GUILLEM			
<b>Department</b>	CATALAN STUDIES AND COMMUNICATION			
<b>Teaching load distribution between lectures and independent student work</b>	During the course the so-called "master classes" will be combined with individualized tutorials, debates and individual and group work. Each student will do a series of obligatory readings, will carry out the indicated works, will deliver the practices and will carry out the final evaluation test. Only students who have attended at least 80% of the sessions and who have delivered all the previous works will be able to take the final test.			
<b>Important information on data processing</b>	Consult <a href="#">this link</a> for more information.			
<b>Language</b>	Catalan and Spanish.			
<b>Distribution of credits</b>	HP 60 TA 90			

Teaching staff	E-mail addresses	Credits taught by teacher	Office and hour of attention
SUAU GOMILA, GUILLEM	guillem.suau@udl.cat	6	

## Subject's extra information

Attendance is mandatory

All class attendees must comply with the UdL Code of Ethics

The subject is based on two interrelated concepts, political communication, on the one hand, and public opinion, on the other hand. The climates of opinion condition political activity, so much so that politics has become denatured, because, at present, it is more concerned with the communication of politics than with the management of the public (Yanes-Mesa, 2010). In this sense, Machiavelli (1513) defined public opinion as: "the image that subjects have of the prince" and Hume (1777) as "a political force that supports or overthrows governments." From these definitions we confirm the relevance of reflecting on What is public opinion? How is built? What spheres of society have the greatest influence and, therefore, the greatest responsibility in their formation? Contemporary societies are complex and hypermediated societies, in which all activity, including politics, constitutes a communicative process, following the metaphor of the media life of Mark Deuze (2009), we do not live with the media, but in the media. In this hypermedia society, all systems: political system, media system and citizens, interact and dialogue, generating an accelerated process of changes and the adoption of new technologies. The difficulties of the political and media system to adapt to these changes, together with its lack of transparency and its inability to generate real dialogues with citizens that encourage collective intelligence and user generated content are some of the causes that have caused the current discredit and lack of legitimacy, from the perspective of citizens, of these institutions and companies.

In this contextual framework, societies need qualified professionals and new tools to move effectively in different areas of great relevance: global political communication, communication of political agents, communication of public institutions and communication of civil organizations.

This subject will provide students with a space for analysis and reflection on the construction of climates of opinion, on the challenges, weaknesses, threats and strengths that political communication faces today and, finally, on the adaptation of political and institutional communication to the new media scene.

## Learning objectives

Analyze the main theories of political communication and public opinion and reflect on their validity in contemporary societies.

Understand what public opinion is and how it is formed and delve into the main authors who have dealt with this phenomenon.

Explore the interactions that occur between the political system, the media system, and the citizenry, observing the communication channels used and reflecting on the complex balance of powers in the construction of mental frameworks.

Identify the influence that public opinion exerts on political communication and the interinfluences that the different systems exert on the others.

Know the main methodologies used to study public opinion and the techniques used by social researchers to analyze the communicative processes of political communication.

Develop adequate knowledge of the fundamental concepts and basic dynamics of any political communication process.

Investigate the role and discourses issued by the actors of political and institutional communication.

Understand the main theories of communication and their influence on the development of political communication as a field of study.

## Competences

### Generals

CG3. Applying theoretical knowledge in practical activities.

CG7. Developing a critical thinking and reasoning and knowing how to communicate them effectively.

CG8. Showing respect for the plurality of ideas.

## Especifics

CE4. Describing the main theories on the social means of communication sphere and their conceptual derivatives.

CE7. Identifying and applying the ethical basis and professional deontology when engaging in tasks related to the media.

CE8. Applying the scientific method appropriately to the research in the communication field, as well as how to present the results of the research process.

## Subject contents

**Conceptualization of public opinion and political communication.** Tour of the main definitions, authors and theories that have addressed these concepts.

**Theoretical approach to the studies of the effects of the media, political communication and public opinion.** We will review the main theories of social communication (hypodermic needle, two steps flow of communication, selective exposure theory, agenda setting and frame) and we will critically relate them to the main conceptualizations of public opinion and political communication.

**Political communication: actors and roles.** We will address the differences between political marketing and political communication, the political actors involved in the creation of public opinion, and the composition of the communication cabinet in political parties and public institutions will be exposed.

**Political communication and new media.** It will be explained how the political system has adopted the new communication channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch, etc.), what strengths and weaknesses they have, in general, in the use of these platforms and what advantages and disadvantages it can have your exposure on these channels.

**Institutional communication in the framework of complex society.** We will reflect on the transformations of society, from the information society to complex society and we will evaluate the challenges, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that public institutions must communicate in this society.

**Political and institutional communication in crisis and emergency situations.** We will discuss the communicative complexity of crisis and emergency situations and we will evaluate the main communication strategies of the political system in these contexts. The concept of the risk society of the sociologist Ulrich Beck will be presented.

**Hate speech and polarization in the political and institutional sphere.** We will deal with what are the main causes of the current polarization of society and we will see what the different types of polarization are. We will examine whether polarization encourages the generation of hate speech and we will reflect on how it can be combated from the media and institutional sphere.

## Methodology

**Master classes.** Presentation of the contents of the subject orally by the teacher.

**Colloquia.** Opinion exchange activities among students under the direction of the teacher.

**Directed debate.** Promote oral expression and comprehension in a collective conversation in which the topic can be prepared, but not the development of interventions.

**Seminar.** Work sessions of a rather small group that investigates a topic through dialogue and discussion, under the direction of the teacher to deepen on some specific topics.

**Teamwork.** Learning activity that must be done through collaboration between the members of a group.

**Written work.** Activity consisting of the presentation of a written document.

The non-face-to-face sessions will be divided into three parts: 1.- presentation by the teacher of the corresponding topic, 2.- analysis in groups of a current topic (assigned by the teacher) linked to the previous presentation and 3- putting into common of the results obtained by the different groups and final debate.

## Development plan

### Readings

Students will have to read three texts on a compulsory basis. Once read, you will have to deliver through the global campus a reflective document of one or two pages of each reading and individually, where the students demonstrate their critical understanding of reading and its fundamental concepts, their ability to make them dialogue with others authors and a reflection on the validity or not

of the hypothesis raised in the text. And finally, we will have a class debate to share our reflection on the text. Both the quality of the text and the participation in the debate in the classroom will be valued.

## **All texts will be available on the global campus.**

The three readings are as follows:

Pierre Bourdieu (1972). Public Opinion does not exist. It must be read and delivered before **October 3**, the day we will do the class debate.

Walter Lippman (1922). The world around us and the images in our mind. It must be read and delivered before **October 24**, the day we will do the class debate.

Pippa Norris (2001). A virtuous circle? The impact of political communications in post-industrial democracies. It must be read and delivered before **November 14**, the day we will discuss the class.

## **Documentary film**

We will use the same brief work model that garbage with the readings with the viewing of the documentary 'Brave Class' (2016). It must be viewed and delivered before **December 5**, the day when we will do the debate in the classroom.

## **Final work of the subject**

It will be done in groups of between 6 and 8 people. The work can be delivered until **January 9**, but the session of **December 19** will be used for the groups to present the progress of their work, to receive feedback from their classmates and the teacher before the final delivery. Consequently, it is a work that must be done throughout the semester.

The length of the work will be between 13 and 16 pages and will consist of (at least) of the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical framework
3. Objectives and hypotheses
4. Methodology
5. Analysis or results
6. Conclusions
7. Bibliography

The work will be evaluated as follows:

Theoretical and methodological depth: 40%

Ability to extract relevant results and conclusions: 25%

Critical review of the theories and content discussed in class: 20%

Neatness in the writing and presentation of the work: 15%

Students can choose between three different work modalities:

### **Mode 1: Content analysis**

Analyze a political issue based on the opinion published in various media (newspapers, TV, radio, digital ...) and explain what influence the analyzed media have in shaping public opinion.

#### Work characteristics

Theme chosen in agreement with the teacher.

Analysis of a minimum of three media.

It is necessary to explain what type of message the media constructs on this issue.

It must be related to the theories about political communication and public opinion that we have seen in class.

### **Mode 2: Content analysis and survey**

The climate of majority opinion of a current public issue must be detected from: the analysis of media content and the conduct of a survey.

## Work characteristics

Theme chosen in agreement with the teacher.

About content analysis: the same as in the previous point.

About the survey: carry it out with 60-90 people (approx.) From the same group from which results can be extrapolated and generalized and, therefore, detect the climate of majority opinion within this sector of the population.

### **Mode 3: Analysis of social networks**

Analyze the communication made by a set (between 3 and 6) of political and / or institutional profiles or, analyze what political profiles express in their social networks on a specific issue. It is enough to analyze one social platform, but it can justifiably be expanded to two.

## Work characteristics

Thematic and profiles to analyze will be chosen in agreement with the teacher.

You do not have to analyze a large amount of data, between 80 and 120 publications on social networks are enough, but you must do a rigorous analysis.

**Before doing the work, the professor will do a seminar on research methods and, also, on tools to extract data from social networks, if necessary, the groups that choose mode 3 may request tutorials to receive help with this question.**

## Evaluation

Students who combine their degree with a full time job or a part-time job with schedules coinciding with classes have the right to ask for alternative assessment within 5 days after the beginning of the semester. For information, please send an e-mail to [academic@lletres.udl.cat](mailto:academic@lletres.udl.cat) or ask for information at the Faculty's office (Secretaria de la Facultat de Lletres).

**Only students who have attended at least 80% of the sessions and who have delivered all the previous works will be able to take the final test.**

**If plagiarised material is detected, we will apply what is established in the 'Regulations for the Assessment and Grading of Student Learning in UdL Bachelor's and Master's Degrees'.**

<b>Individual work 40%</b>	<b>Reflective text reading Bordieu 10%</b>
	<b>Reflective text reading Lippman 10%</b>
	<b>Reflective text reading Norris 10%</b>
	<b>Reflective documentary text 'Brave Class' 10%</b>
<b>Teamwork 30%</b>	Any of the three modalities
<b>Final exam (January 13, 9 to 11 a.m., in classroom: 2.13) 20%</b>	
<b>Class attendance and participation 10%</b>	

Students who have attended at least 80% of the classes and have done all the assignments and the exam and have an average grade lower than 5 will be able to attend the make-up exam. The recovery will be made on February 1, 12 to 2 p.m. in the classroom 1.03. Students who have passed the subject will not be able to make the recovery.

## Bibliography

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