019:169:001 (WINTERIM 2011-2012)

SJMC Introductory Topics:
Blogging the Caucus & Elections: Social Media and the Political Communication Revolution

Time & Location: 1:00–4:10 pm MTWThF, E232 AJB
 Begins: 12/28/2011
 Ends: 01/13/2012

Instructor: David Perlmutter
Office Hrs: 4:10-4:40 pm MTWThF and by appt.
Office: E343B AJB
319.384.3383
david-perlmutter@uiowa.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course traces the rise to power, prominence, and popularity of online social-interactive media like blogs and Facebook in modern political campaigns and elections. We survey the history of technological innovations and social revolutions in politics from the earliest days of the Internet to just up to the 2012 Iowa caucus. We identify the key players, events, controversies, and decisions that now affect every election referendum, from the 21-only ordinance to choosing the next president. Students will gain an understanding of how social media influence not only our votes but also our political ideas, culture, and actions.

READINGS

All readings will be from websites in class or on your own research for assignments; there are no required purchases.

Here are some useful sites devoted to the 2012 Iowa caucus:

http://iowacaucus.com/
http://www.iowacaucus.biz/IA_Caucus_Howitworks.html
http://caucuses.desmoinesregister.com/
http://www.iowademocrats.org/
http://iowagop.org/

GRADING & CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Five (5) points for every class session that you attend/participate in its entirety—for a maximum of 50 total points. Note Jan 1, 3rd (the Caucus) and Jan. 13 (paper writing) count as auto-attend days.
**Blog posts:** Ten (10) points for a blog comment on a class visitor or a lecture—for a maximum of 20 total points. Post as comment on: [http://policybyblog.squarespace.com/teaching-blog/?SSScrollPosition=301](http://policybyblog.squarespace.com/teaching-blog/?SSScrollPosition=301)

Take one major point made by a visitor or in a lecture and respond with your opinion.

**Grading criteria:**
1. Minimum length of 200 words (2 points)
2. Identifies major point (3 points)
3. Thorough (3 points)
4. Grammar, punctuation & spelling (2 points)

**Final assignment:** Social Media and the Caucus—30 points. Two parts: (1) a 5-minute presentation during class; (2) a paper (minimum 2,000 words).

Examine the social media production from one of the Republican campaigns.

**Questions to answer:**
- What social media did they use?
- How?
- What were main messages/images/ideas?
- Who was the targeted audience? Not targeted? Why?
- How did they try to build community/interaction?
- What can we say about the effects?

Due by MS Word (2007 ed. or earlier); attachment to my e-mail by midnight Friday, Jan. 13.

**General hints for grammar/style.**

- The plural of "medium" is media, not "mediums."
- Subject/verb construction should be consistent—e.g., "bloggers give their opinions," not "a blogger gives their opinion."
- Comments should refer to article or guest speaker by name, not just "the article we read today" or "yesterday's guest speaker."
- I like details that show a student dug deep; I dislike abstractions unless they are backed up by facts; I like it when the facts are correct.

**FINAL GRADE FOR CLASS**

Final letter grade will then be converted from your total points by the standard method: 90 or more points equals A-, A, or A+, etc.
CLASS SCHEDULE

*Note: Because our class is tied to unpredictable current events, the schedule is subject to change especially as visitors become available at the last minute. If so, the latest copy of the syllabus is the definitive one.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/28</td>
<td>Intro &amp; Overview</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/29</td>
<td>The Iowa Caucus: Background</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Political Campaigns before the</td>
<td>Screening: The Candidate</td>
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<td>Internet and social media</td>
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<td>12/30</td>
<td>Prehistory of Polblogs</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>Guest: John Deeth</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
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<td>No class — UI Holiday</td>
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<td>1/3</td>
<td>The Iowa Caucus: Action!</td>
<td>Field Trip (Out-of-class)</td>
<td>No class — Attend</td>
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<td>Post Caucus Action</td>
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<td>1/5</td>
<td>Post Caucus Action Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>1/6</td>
<td>Cases Studies in Polblogging</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>Guest: Nick</td>
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<td>Westerlake</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
<td>Cases Studies in Polblogging (cont.)</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>1/10</td>
<td>Campaigns Old &amp; New</td>
<td>Viewing, Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>1/11</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>1/12</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>1/13</td>
<td><strong>Final Assignment Due at Midnight</strong></td>
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<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
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Name ______________________

Year ______________________

Hometown ____________________

Political Party Affiliation

Democrat  
Republican  
Other ________

How closely have you been following the Iowa Caucus race?
(Not at all) 1...2...3...4...5 (Very Closely)

Describe what regular media (newspapers, TV) you use to keep track of Iowa Caucus events and why you find them useful.

Describe what social media (blogs, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) you use to keep track of Iowa Caucus events and why you find them useful.
GUEST SPEAKERS
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND NOTIFICATIONS

DISABILITY: Please notify me if you require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

EMAIL: Make sure your UI email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory save for VERY good excuses.

PARTICIPATION: You will be expected to complete all reading assignments and participate fully in class discussions and other activities.

CHANGES: It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus.

COMPLAINTS: Student complaints concerning faculty/TA actions: First attempt to resolve the matter with the TA; if not possible, contact the professor. If you are still not able to settle the issue, you may submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Office of Academic Programs, 116 Schaeffer Hall. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

SEVERE WEATHER: The University Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses <http://www.uiowa.edu/7Four/opmanual/v/16.htm#1614d> to a tornado or similar crisis. If there is a crisis as indicated by the UI Outdoor Warning System, members of the class should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building at the lowest level and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE HOME: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Student Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether in writing or speaking. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions: The professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. If found guilty your grade can be reduced, you may receive an F in the course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: The University has a policy on sexual harassment and consensual relationships in the instructional environment. You may obtain the full text of this policy in the Office of Affirmative Action, 202 Jessup Hall.
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably. You further have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class and the professor/TA, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return.