ABOUT THIS COURSE: Every four years, Americans have the opportunity to exercise a function central to democracy: Change our government in a peaceful, orderly manner. But not, of course, without a considerable amount of shouting, spending and slinging of mud, all gleefully reported and dissected by “the fourth estate” in all its diverse forms.

In this class, we will monitor, analyze and discuss how the media cover this year’s campaign, the November 6 election and its aftermath. We will focus on the U.S. presidential campaign, incorporating coverage of other races as appropriate. Our book provides context for this assessment and a way to compare current decisions with long-term issues, trends and concerns, but we will rely heavily on online coverage and other materials to connect the present with the past. Throughout the semester, we will talk together about our observations and insights. Think of this class as a large focus group charged with a 16-week task: to explore the quality, utility, effectiveness and diversity of media coverage of the 2012 election. Course goals include:

* Understanding the nature of political campaigns as mediated events.
* Critically monitoring and analyzing media coverage of the 2012 campaign.
* Exploring the role of newer media formats, including social media and watchdog websites.

Welcome to Campaign 2012!

REQUIRED BOOK:  
Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age, 2nd edition (2009)  
Thomas A. Hollihan

READINGS:  
There will be supplemental online readings each week. Many of them will be from The New York Times, so you will want to subscribe to the digital version.

WEBSITE:  
An updated version of this syllabus, including assignments and other class info, can be found on our WordPress site: UIElection2012.wordpress.com

INSTRUCTOR  
Dr. Jane B. Singer  
W341 Adler Journalism Building  
jane-singer@uiowa.edu; 335-3431  
Office hours: 1:30 to 3 pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays, or by appointment

About your instructor: Jane has 15 years experience as a print and online journalist, and another 19 as a teacher and researcher. She worked as a reporter and editor at three East Coast newspapers before joining CBS in the early 1980s as an editor of its fledgling online service. That project evolved into the Prodigy Services Company, and she was Prodigy’s first news manager, staffing and overseeing the first national online newsroom. Jane holds a Ph.D. in journalism from the University of Missouri, an M.A. in liberal studies from New York University and a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Georgia. From January 2007 to January 2010, she was the Johnston Press Chair in Digital Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire in England.
SCHOOL INFO: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Main office: E305 Adler Journalism Building
Office phone: 335-3401 (Michele Ketchum or Rosemary Zimmerman)
Director: David Perlmutter, E305B Adler Journalism Building
david-perlmutter@uiowa.edu; 335-3383

The School is part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (clas.uiowa.edu), which is our administrative home. The College oversees such matters as add/drop deadlines, second-grade-only options and the like. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

LEARNING ENABLEMENT: Accommodations can be made for anyone with a disability that may require modification of seating, grading or other class requirements. Please register with Student Disability Services (www.uiowa.edu/~sds), then meet privately with Jane to make specific arrangements.

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

Academic integrity: Please refer to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Academic Handbook (available online) for information about academic honesty. University penalties for plagiarism -- defined in Webster's New World Dictionary as taking ideas, writings and so on from another and passing them off as one's own -- range from grade reduction to dismissal from the University. It is also dishonest to turn in the same (or a substantively similar) paper or other work for multiple classes. The same rules apply online as elsewhere: If someone else created it, that person or organization owns it. For journalists, plagiarism or other dishonesty is a sin deadly to any career. Don't do it.

Attendance: Active and ongoing class participation is an important component of this class. In case of a dire emergency that prevents your being with us, please let Jane know why you were absent within 24 hours of the missed class period. (E-mail is fine.) Unexcused absences will affect your grade.

"Attendance" involves attending mentally as well as physically. During class, cell phones must be turned off and stored, and laptops or tablets may be used only for taking notes unless instructed otherwise. Please, no email, FB, texting, etc., etc. Their use in the classroom is rude, annoying and distracting … and it turns out the human brain really doesn't do multi-tasking very well at all.

Email: University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondence, including class info, sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (NAME@uiowa.edu).

Severe weather: Not uncommon in Iowa! If threatening weather occurs during class, seek appropriate shelter immediately. Class will continue if possible when the event is over. The Hawk Alert site (hawkalert.uiowa.edu) has details about notification of weather and other emergencies.

Student rights and responsibilities: You have the right to expect an environment that enables you to learn. You have a responsibility to colleagues and the instructor to help create an environment in which others may learn. If you have a complaint against any member of the teaching staff, you are responsible for following procedures outlined in the CLAS Student Academic Handbook. However, please try to work out a solution with those involved first, starting with Jane.

The University also has an explicit policy related to sexual harassment, which subverts the mission of the institution and threatens the well-being of its members. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of harassment should be reported at once.

GRADUATE CREDIT: Students enrolled in the Graduate College must successfully complete substantive additional work to receive credit for this class. Please talk with Jane about details.

HONORS CREDIT: Any student who is a member of the University Honors Program based on overall UI GPA is eligible to take this course for honors credit. Please talk with Jane about possibilities.

TIME ALLOCATION: College policy states that for each semester hour of credit in a course, students should expect to spend two hours per week in out-of-class work or preparation. This class is worth three semester hours, which means an average of six hours a week of outside-of-class work.
GRADING

Your grade in Elections and the Media will come from individual and collaborative work, contributions to in-class and online discussion, and a set of quizzes. You must complete all written work on time to receive full credit. Details about each assignment will be provided in class.

Media Monitor 400 points total
You will keep up with campaign and election coverage in various kinds of media outlets, write about what you read on our class website (UIElection2012.wordpress.com) and write three summary evaluations based on your own observations and those of others in the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing:</th>
<th>150 points total</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 27:</td>
<td>Reading and writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1:</td>
<td>First summary evaluation</td>
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<td>December 6:</td>
<td>Second summary evaluation</td>
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<td>Third summary evaluation</td>
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<td>75 points</td>
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Ad Watchers and Fact Checkers 100 points total
For this team project, you will examine how candidate messages – from their own speeches or statements, as well as from advertising either by them or on their behalf – are deconstructed in the media. How well are the providers of these messages being held accountable for what they say?
Due date: October 25

Swimming Against the Mainstream 100 points total
If you're like me, you probably get at least some of your political information from comedy shows, YouTube, social media and other sources that are part of “the media” but well outside the mainstream. What are you learning from them that the traditional media are not providing? Have fun with this one!
Due date: November 15

Twitter Feeds 100 points total
We will set up a class Twitter account, and you will contribute to it as you read or watch media coverage of key events: the GOP convention (late August), the Democratic convention (early September), any two of the four presidential/vice presidential debates (October) and Election Day/Night (November 6).

News Briefing and Discussion 100 points total
Twice during the semester, you will share something you’ve read, prepare several questions to generate discussion about it, and engage the rest of us in that discussion. The items you share will relate to the syllabus topic for your designated weeks.
You can earn up to 25 points for each of the two articles and related questions.
You can earn up to 50 points total for participation in online/in-class discussion of others’ articles.

Readings / Lecture Quizzes 200 points total
Because if we don’t, you won’t. Each quiz will be worth 40 points, and we’ll have five in all:
September 6, September 27, October 18, November 8 and November 29.

PLUS-MINUS:
We will use plus-minus indications for final grades.

GRADE CHANGES:
If you believe a grade is wrong, you must see Jane within one week after the graded item has been returned to you. After that, the grade stands.
PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS

After the first week, readings should be completed before class on Tuesday. Online readings are subject to addition, subtraction and/or substitution throughout the fall. Please use the online syllabus (UIElection2012.wordpress.com/syllabus) for reference; it will always be current.

PART ONE: THE KICKOFF

WEEK ONE: Introductions
August 21 Introductions to the course, the campaign, the coverage
August 23 Political nuts and bolts, plus a "political media" overview

READ:
- Hollihan, Preface and Chapter 1, “Politics Is Communication” (v-ix; 1-27)

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE: Columbia Journalism Review’s Campaign Desk www.cjr.org/campaign_desk/

WEEK TWO: Political Conventions
August 28 The convention process
August 30 The Grand Old Party's party, 2012 edition

READ:
- Hollihan, Chapter 2, "The Long Campaign" (28-53)
- Jackson, Gateway Journalism Review, Summer 2012 “Covering Political Conventions” (.pdf available on our class website)

TO DO: Tweet your reax to Republican convention coverage

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE: www.gopconvention2012.com/

WEEK THREE: Framing the 2012 Campaign
September 4 Defining issues
September 6 The Democrats’ turn to kick (donkey), 2012 edition

READ:
- Hollihan, Chapter 3, “Political Socialization” (54-74)
- Hollihan, Chapter 5, “How the News Media Shape Political Campaigns” (102-135)
- Journalism.org, “How the Presidential Candidates Use the Web and Social Media” www.journalism.org/analysis_report/how_presidential_candidates_use_web_and_social_media

TO DO: Tweet your reax to Democratic convention coverage

QUIZ: September 6, material from weeks one, two and three (40 points)
(Reminder: Check the website – uiielection2012.wordpress.com/syllabus – for updates!)

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE: www.demconvention.com
PART TWO:  
TOOLS and TACTICS

WEEK FOUR:  
Follow the Money Part I: Campaign Finance

September 11  PACs, SuperPACs and Citizens United
September 13  Who's giving what to whom (and how do we know)?

READ:  
Hollihan, Chapter 10, “Financing Campaigns” (240-273)
Murse, about.com, “What Is a Super PAC?”
uspolitics.about.com/od/firstamendment/a/What-Is-A-Super-Pac.htm

Pew Research Center, “Little Public Awareness of Outside Campaign Spending Boom”


THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
www.opensecrets.org
…And its children:  

WEEK FIVE:  
Follow the Money Part II: Campaign Advertising

September 18  Negative advertising and why we see so much of it
September 20  Ad watchers and flack checkers

READ:  
Hollihan, Chapter 6, “Political Advertising” (136-166)

Peters, The New York Times, “Negative Ads Hit at Identity to Shape Race for Presidency”


THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
www.flackcheck.org/
Also good:  
And for historical context:  
www.livingroomcandidate.org

WEEK SIX:  
Game On

September 25  Political polls
September 27  Covering the horse race

READ:  
Hollihan, Chapter 7, “Telling the People What They Want to Hear” (167-197)

Marx, CJR, “In Defense of (the Right Kind of) Horse Race Journalism”
www.cjr.org/campaign_desk/in_defense_of_the_right_kind_o.php

Gawlser and Witt, NCPP, “20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results”
www.ncpp.org/?q=node/4

QUIZ:  
September 27, material from weeks four, five and six (40 points)

DUE:  
September 27, first summary evaluation of media coverage

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
polltracker.talkingpointsmemo.com/
PART THREE: THE FRANTIC FINAL MONTH
There will be three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate during October. Please select media coverage of any two of those four debates to tweet about.

WEEK SEVEN: Candidate Debates
October 2 Media questions
October 4 ... And commentary

READ: Hollihan, Chapter 9, “Televised Campaign Debates” (222-239)

Stone, *Nieman Reports*, “Spin Alley: A Microcosm of Journalism’s Struggles”

TO DO: Tweet your reax to October 3 (Wednesday night) presidential debate

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE: www.debates.org/

WEEK EIGHT: Crafting an Image
October 9 Issues, ideas and images
October 11 Goofs, gaffes and gaps

READ: Hollihan, Chapter 4, “Crafting Political Images” (75-103)

Shapiro, *CJR*, “Why Is ‘Issue Coverage’ So Boring – and Often Wrong?”
www.cjr.org/swing_states_project/why_issue_coverage_boring_wrong.php?page=all

Calderone and Stein, Huffington Post:
“2012 Election Gaffes Fuel Media Obsession, Leading to Scripted Campaigns”
www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/01/2012-election-gaffes-romney-obama_n_1726115.html

TO DO: Tweet your reax to October 11 (Thursday night) vice presidential debate

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE: theagenda.nytimes.com/

WEEK NINE: Issues, Domestic ...
October 16 The rise and role of the fact checker
October 18 Stewart and Colbert, Facebook and Twitter

READ: Hollihan, Chapter 8, “The Impact of New Communication Technologies” (198-221)

campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/fact-checking-is-not-enough/

TO DO: Tweet your reax to October 16 (Tuesday night) presidential debate

QUIZ: October 18, material from weeks seven, eight and nine (40 points)

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE(s): factcheck.org
politifact.org
www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker
WEEK TEN:  
... And Foreign

October 23  How the world sees us
October 25  How we see the world

READ:  
Walt, Foreign Policy, “What the Election Means for American Foreign Policy”
and “How Our Election Cycle Screws up Our Foreign Policy”
walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/08/09/what_the_election_means_for_american_foreign_policy
walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/22/the_long_march_to_the_white_house_yawn

Bremmer, Daily Beast, “… Can Foreign Policy Reflect America’s Waning Power?”
www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/04/22/for-candidates-can-foreign-policy-reflect-america-s-waning-power.html

Gwertzman, interviewing Jia Qingguo, Council on Foreign Relations
“China’s View of U.S. Presidential Politics”
www.cfr.org/china/chinas-view-us-presidential-politics/p28068

TO DO:  
Tweet your reax to October 22 (Monday night) presidential debate

DUE:  
October 25, Ad Watchers and Fact Checkers assignment

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
2012election.foreignpolicy.com

WEEK ELEVEN:  
The End Is Nigh

October 30  The final week
November 1  The story line of campaign 2012

READ:  
Democracy in Action, “Transition”

DUE:  
November 1, second summary evaluation of media coverage

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
www.people-press.org/campaign2012

PART FOUR:  THE 2012 U.S. ELECTION

WEEK TWELVE:  
The 2012 Election

November 6  Election Day (finally!): No morning class. Class Election Night watch details to come.
November 8  Red and blue: the morning(s) after

READ:  
Readings to come

TO DO:  
Tweet your reax to Election Day / Night coverage

QUIZ:  
November 8, material from weeks ten, eleven and twelve (40 points)

THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  
Whatever Election Night source(s) you want to follow!

About the Electoral College:  
www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/faq.html
PART FIVE: FROM CAMPAIGNING TO GOVERNING

WEEK THIRTEEN:  What Happens Next?
November 13  The Congress, the Cabinet, the Country
November 15  Debriefing: What did we see, what have we learned?

READ:  Readings to come
DUE:  November 15, Swimming Against the Mainstream assignment
THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_transition

WEEK FOURTEEN:  Thanksgiving Week!

WEEK FIFTEEN:  From Campaigning to Governing
November 27  After the campaign adrenaline rush
November 29  ... Journalists get back to covering government, maybe

READ:  Hollihan, Chapter 11, “Campaigning and Governing” (274-305)
       Hollihan, Chapter 12, “The Crisis in American Democracy” (306-331)
       Raz, NPR, “Could ‘Taxmageddon’ Crisis Create Compromise”?
       www.npr.org/2012/06/09/154659120/could-taxmageddon-crisis-create-compromise

QUIZ:  November 29, the last quiz (40 points)
THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  www.washingtonpost.com/politics

WEEK SIXTEEN:  Are We Being Served?
December 4  Politics, media and democracy
December 6  Wind up and unwind

DUE:  December 6, third summary evaluation of media coverage
THE WEEKLY RESOURCE:  www.prwatch.org/

FINALS WEEK:
The final exam time, to be set by the university sometime in the fall, will be the last opportunity to turn in any late work (with a penalty). After that time, the class is over and no other materials will be accepted.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, EVERYONE!
ONLINE RESOURCES about ELECTIONS and the MEDIA
This is just a tiny sample of what’s out there, so look for other stuff that appeals to you!

AGGREGATORS, FACT CHECKERS and OTHER GOODIES

* 4thEstate.net: Election 2012 4thEstate.net, click on ‘Election 2012’ tab
  Articles assessing the influence of media coverage of the election

* Center for Media and Democracy prwatch.org

* Columbia Journalism Review cjr.org/campaign_desk
  Focus on media coverage of politics; note that paywall eventually kicks in

* FactCheck.org factcheck.org
  Fact checker for Annenberg Public Policy Center at U of Pennsylvania

* FlackCheck.org flackcheck.org
  Annenberg’s ad watch, along with other fun and/or useful stuff

* OpenSecrets.org opensecrets.org
  Follow the money: Campaign finance information superstore

* Pew Research Center pewresearch.org (Topic Index/Election ’12)
  www.people-press.org/campaign-2012 journalism.org
  Survey results and other info related to politics, media coverage, public opinion …

* Politifact politifact.com
  Widely followed/cited fact checker, from the Tampa Bay Times and partners

* Real Clear Politics realclearpolitics.com/elections
  Aggregates everything politics, plus extensive poll coverage

* Washington Post fact checker washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker
  Home of the Pinocchios

A FEW NEWS MEDIA SOURCES for EXTENSIVE ELECTION COVERAGE

* ABC News: abcnews.go.com/Politics
* CBS News: cbsnews.com/politics
* CNN: cnn.com/ELECTION/2012
* The Daily Show thedailyshow.com/videos/tag/Indecision 2012
* Fox News: foxnews.com/politics/elections
* The Guardian (UK): guardian.co.uk/world/us-elections-2012
* Huffington Post: huffingtonpost.com/politics
* NBC/MSNBC News: msnbc.msn.com/id/3032553
* The New Yorker: newyorker.com/politics
* NPR: npr.org/sections/elections
* PBS: pbs.org/special/election-2012
* Politico: politico.com/2012-election
* ProPublica: propublica.org/series/campaign-2012
* Reuters: reuters.com/politics/elections-2012
* The Washington Post: washingtonpost.com/politics/campaigns
THE IOWA DOZEN

The mission of our School is to educate journalism and mass communication professionals, scholars and faculty. Through professional and creative research activities, we enhance a continually growing and evolving understanding of the social and cultural roles, responsibilities, and contexts for communicators in a democratic society, as well as in diverse global contexts.

To accomplish that mission:

We learn to …
1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value …
6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore …
10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.