Conservative Media and Contemporary Journalism: 
Examining Framing Practices and Norms
2:00P - 3:15P TTh E138 AJB

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Students in this class will learn to identify norms and practices of contemporary journalism by studying the history of the conservative movement and its use of media to advance its ideas. Based on a thorough historical analysis of the conservative movement from 1920 forward, our study of the subject will support our comparative understanding of contemporary network models, including Fox News, the three broadcast networks and major print news outlets. By understanding the historical roots of the conflict between conservative and liberal worldviews, we will be able to further understand differences between their respective uses of media. Assignments will include a mid-term exam, two written exercises, an in-class presentation, and a final exam.

Required texts

Available at Iowa Book on Clinton Street at Iowa Avenue:


Grade scale

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Written exercise 1</td>
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<td>Group presentations</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation¹</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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¹ Your **participation grade** will depend on your submitting a brief set of word-processed reading notes containing key terms, page numbers, and at least two questions you would like to ask in discussion. I suggest keeping these notes in one file for exam review. I will collect the notes at the end of each class. Not turning in your notes will result in a one-point penalty. No make-up work will be allowed, because this is about in-class participation.
Schedule of class meetings and reading assignments

Jan. 20—First class meeting

Part One: Historical Roots of the Modern Conservative Movement


Jan. 27—“Modernizing the Commercial Press: Walter Lippmann, Objectivity and Professionalism,” Part Two (beginning with the Steel Strike of 1919) (pdf on ICON)


Feb. 3—Lichtman (Part Two.)


And discussion of paper assignment 1: You will select one of the conservative publications that Lichtman describes in his chapter and that are listed in the timeline (below) to research and report on in a three-to-four page report. The assignment sheet is in this syllabus (below). The paper will be due in two weeks on Feb. 19.


Feb. 17—In-class discussion of your papers and of the film.

Feb. 19—Exam review; written exercise 1 due.

**Feb. 24—Mid-term exam**


Written exercise 2 due in two weeks

March 3—Chapter Three, “The Fading of Reform Journalism”

March 5—Chapter Four, “Reagan’s Cultural Revolution”


Exercise 2 due.

March 12—Chapters Seven, “Economic and Regulatory Considerations,” Eight, “Redefining the Mainstream,” and Nine, “Problems and Possibilities.”

**Part Three: Today’s Polarized Media Environment**
March 17-19—Spring Break

March 24—“Outfoxed” (77 mins., dvd)


March 31—*Echo Chamber*, Chapters 4-6.

April 2—*Echo Chamber*, Chapters 7-9.

April 7—*Echo Chamber*, Chapters 10-12.

April 9—*Echo Chamber*, Chapters 13-14.


April 16—*The Fox Effect*. Part Two.

April 21—*The Fox Effect*. Part Three.

April 23—*The Fox Effect*. Part Four.

April 28—Comparing the conservative media to the MSM: Group presentations 1 & 2.

April 30—Group presentations 3 & 4.

May 5—Discussion points:

A. “Is NPR biased?” — presented in class.

   We will listen to (some of) this hour of “On the Media:”
1) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/brief-history-bias-accusations-against-npr/ (intro. — 6 minutes)

2) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/brief-history-bias-accusations-against-npr/ (16 minutes)

3) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/conclusions-nprs-liberal-bias/?utm_source=/2012/sep/14/does-npr-have-liberal-bias/&utm_medium=treatment&utm_campaign=morelikethis (18 minutes)

4) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/ira-glasss-challenge

B. The Christian Broadcast Network (http://christiannews.net)

C. Conservapedia

May 7 — Exam review. Exam date TBA.
Timeline of major events and conservative publications: ²

1910-15—*The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Wm. Bell Riley)
1916—*The Passing of the Great Race* (Madison Grant, eugencis)
1918, Nov. 11—World War I ends, Armistice Day
1919—18th Amendment passes enacting Prohibition
1919-20—Red Scare
1919-1921—Henry Ford published *The Dearborn Independent* to reprint the
  *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (anti-Semitism); between 1920-22
  Ford also published a set of four books, *The International Jew: The
  World’s Foremost Problem* based on articles previously published
  in *The Dearborn Independent*.
1920—Harding-Cox election; *Watchman-Examiner*
1921—*Woman Patriot* magazine
1922—*Eugenical Sterilization in the United States* (Laughlin)
1923—*The Fiery Cross*, the Ku Klux Klan
1924—Coolidge elected president; *Youth’s Home Companion* (magazine)
1925—Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows* (book)
1927—*Daily Data Sheet; Outlook* magazine covers Sacco-Vanzetti trial
1928—Hoover elected president
1930—*I’ll Take My Stand* (Book of essays); *The Southwest Review* (magazine)
1935—*The Money Creators* (Book, anti-Semitic, Gertrude Coogan)
1933-38—New Deal era (FDR)

(McPherson refs:)
1945—*Commentary* (Norman Podhoretz)
1957—Russell Kirk starts *Modern Age* (magazine)
1960—R. Kirk founds the *Bookman*

² Aggregated from Lichtman’s introduction and chapter one up until 1945, and
McPherson’s chapter six, “The Rise of the Right-Wing Media”. The dates refer to
specific points in these texts.
1962—The Conservative movement’s “birthdate”: A Young Americans for Freedom rally in NYC w/18K in attendance.

1964 — Goldwater-Johnson election

1964-66 — Great Society era

1965—*Intercollegiate Review; Public Interest* (I. Kristol)


1967—*American Spectator*

1969-74—Richard Nixon’s presidency

1975—*Conservative Digest* (Viguerie)

1977—*Policy Review* (Heritage Foundation)

1979—Morton Blackwell forms the Leadership Institute

1980—*Continuity*; CNN debuts

1981 — Iran Contra

1982—*The Washington Times*

1983 — Grenada invasion

1987 — Bork nomination; Reagan admin. Repealed Fairness Doctrine

1988 — Limbaugh goes on air

1989 — Berlin wall down—1989

1991 — USSR falls

1992 — Clinton elected

Neonconservative agenda supercedes traditional conservative agenda

*McPh., pp. 6-7*.

1994—Republicans take both houses of Congress

1995—*Weekly Standard* (W. Kristol)

1996—Clinton re-elected; Fox News Network goes on air

1998—Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment

• Matt Drudge breaks story on the Internet (first big news event broken there) in Jan. that *Newsweek* had withheld the story (p. 120).

• impeachment investigation looms.

2004—Air America (Al Franken, liberal talk radio)

Bush-Kerry election
Library research exercise (use for both exercises)

Using the reference sources that we have identified to locate one of the publications listed above. After completing the following points, write a 2-3 pp. summary of the mission of the publication and the major theme(s) or “frames” that it represented. Then in your analysis, discuss how the publication was used to represent a particular cultural idea. Explain what made the publication “conservative” or “fundamentalist,” according to definitions of those terms in Lichtman’s or McPherson’s discussions. (Lichtman’s definitions apply to McPherson’s later period.) Find and quote the appropriate definitions or points to support your claims:

Publication name:
Organizational affiliation:
Dates of publication (inclusive):
Format (book, magazine, newspaper, other):
Database used:
COURSE RULES AND GUIDELINES

- **Homework assignments** — You will need to keep up with the daily reading assignments, which average a chapter a day. Your participation, exercise, and exam grades will depend on it.

- **Attendance**—Except in the case of your verified illness or a family emergency, missing class will reduce your course grade by one point per absence.

- **Computer responsibility** — You are responsible for knowing how to use a PC. In all cases, you are expected to maintain back-up files of your work. Excuses relating to disk and drive failures will not be accepted. If you lose an assignment due to failure to back up a file, you will be given a “zero.”

- **E-mail** — You must be able to receive e-mail via your “@uiowa.edu” account. Please set other e-mail accounts up to forward messages we send to any other e-mail accounts you use. You will be responsible for any messages you miss, if you do not use this university-assigned address. Class announcements may also be posted on ICON. Check for them regularly.

- **Studying** — Put sufficient time and attention in preparing your writing assignments. The UI Center for Teaching estimates a 2:1 ratio of time spent studying per hour in class. Take notes in lecture. If you miss a class, get the notes from a classmate, preferably someone in your discussion section. I also recommend taking concise reading notes of the assigned readings before class.

- **Unethical conduct.** We use Turnitin.com to find out whether your papers are original. Webster’s New World Dictionary defines “plagiarize” as “to take ideas, writings, etc., from another and pass them off as one’s own.” The University provides penalties for plagiarism ranging from grade reduction to dismissal from the University. We will learn how to research and write papers and tests correctly to avoid even accidental plagiarism. If you are in doubt as to whether you may be plagiarizing, ask for help from your teaching assistant. For more details of definitions of cheating, procedures and penalties, see the University’s detailed definitions of academic misconduct may be found in the Student Academic Handbook of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, at www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml.

- **Meet your deadlines.** Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day, after they have been graded. Thus, a “C” paper that is two days late will receive an “F.” NO paper will be accepted late unless you have notified your discussion section leader in advance with an explanation. No paper will be accepted more than three weekdays after it's due.

- **Office hours.** Office hours are for you. The University requires us to hold them, but they are for your benefit. And I am in favor of that. If you come by during our office hours, you can learn about the course, its content and study strategies. Make it a project to visit office hours once before mid-term.

- **Make-up work.** Except in exceptional and documented situations, all make-up work (arranged prior to your absence) must be completed within two (2) calendar weeks of the set due date or the grade reverts to a zero. See your section leader to authorize such work.
• **Arriving to class late/leaving class early.** This is disruptive and inappropriate behavior. If other classes or obligations overlap with the times scheduled for this course, rearrange the other matters or drop this course. The same holds for discussion sections.

• **Using social media during class** is disruptive to your classmates. If I notice you texting or using your laptops for anything other than taking notes, I will ask you to stop.

• **Reacting safely to severe weather.** If severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor warning system, class members will seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and of free-standing expanses which might prove unstable. The class will resume after the severe weather has ended.

• **Special accommodations.** I need to hear from anyone who has a disability, which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me during my office hours, by e-mail or after class. Special academic arrangements for students with disabilities are handled with the cooperation of Student Disability Services, 133 Burge Hall, ph. 335-1462. Students who feel they need special accommodations for any aspect of the course are encouraged to contact SDS and to speak with the instructor and/or TAs early in the semester.

• **Conflict resolution.** The instructor and section leaders are open to hearing student concerns related to the course. We are eager to work with you to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings. In fact, even though this may be difficult for you, we encourage you to resolve conflicts with us directly. If you feel uncomfortable bringing a concern to your section leader, you may consult the following university authorities in the following order: Dr. Frank Durham, associate professor and associate director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. David Ryfe, Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. Helena Dettmer, Interim Assoc. Dean for Academic Programs in CLAS; the University Ombudspersons. For more information, see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook at: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

• **Sexual harassment policy** — Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. 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 sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy. Report any concerns to Prof. Durham or Director David Ryfe (AJB 305).