

Media Politics and Structures in Germany and Europe

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FU-BEST Course Number:	FU-BEST Online 4
Live Sessions:	Wednesday, 8 – 9:30 p.m. CET (Berlin time)
Duration:	Feb. 10 – May 12, 2021
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	30
ECTS Credits:	4

Course Description

This course introduces its participants to mass media systems and structures in Germany and Europe and provides them with the analytical tools and background knowledge to assess the ways in which the mass media and politics interact and thus shape each other.

We will start with an overview of the different structures of mass media (public/ private) in Germany, including how they have historically developed and particularly which political ideas have shaped the frameworks in which media institutions and individuals operate. At the same time, we will take a critical look at how the media in turn have shaped and are still shaping the ways in which the political process works and presents itself to the public. Historical and current examples will help us to analyze the manifold points of interaction between media and politics. At the end of the course, students will also have the opportunity to compare European and American media politics and to ask whether there may be trends and influences across the Atlantic (one or both ways) that are shaping today's politics and mass media on both sides.

Learning Objectives

Within this course, students will be introduced to the historical, political, economic and legal structures of the German mass media system with a special focus on public service broadcasting. By looking at examples from other European countries, they will learn how to compare specific media systems by using theoretical approaches and empirical data. Furthermore, they will acquire knowledge of some theoretical concepts as well as recent debates prevalent in the social sciences and media studies with regard to the role of mass media within modern societies. With that knowledge, they will be able to assess and critically judge the formal aspects and practical interactions between mass media and politics.

Student Prerequisites

Students should have completed at least three semesters of higher education when the course starts and need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2, preferably above).

General Requirements

Attendance of the weekly live sessions is mandatory (for the specific time slot, see above). These live sessions will be combined with recorded video lessons and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various formats and weight of the course assignments as well as forms of assessment.

This course features a certain amount of independent coursework and thus expects you to be able to set up a self-disciplined study routine. We recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our [Code of Online Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings.

Course Requirements

Term Paper: 250 Points (25%)

Final Exam: 200 Points (20%)

Midterm ID Definition: 100 Points (10%)

Midterm Essay: 100 Points (10%)

Live Online Attendance (min. 75% required) & Participation: 200 Points (20%)

Case Study Presentation (pre-recorded): 150 Points (15%)

Grading

FU Grade	Points of 500	Points of 1,000
1.0	490-500	980-1,000
1.3	475-489	950-979
1.7	450-474	900-949
2.0	425-449	850-899
2.3	400-424	800-849
2.7	375-399	750-799
3.0	350-374	700-749
3.3	325-349	650-699
3.7	300-324	600-649
4.0	250-299	500-599
5.0	< 250	< 500

Literature

Provided online.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Reading, etc.
Week 1	<p>Introduction: Media Politics – Media and Politics; Key Players and Keywords; Course Schedule and Expectations</p> <p>In this introductory session, we will familiarize ourselves with concepts and keywords that will play a dominant role in the weeks to come. What is meant by “media” in the context of this course? What kinds of “media politics” are there – is it the sum of policies that determine how media can work, or the state of politics (i.e., media-driven) nowadays? Who is “the media”? And what is expected of you as participant throughout the course?</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street, John (2011): Mass media, politics and democracy. 2nd ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1- 17.
Week 2	<p>From a totalitarian state to democracy: restructuring the media-system after Nazism</p> <p>To understand media structures and politics in Germany today, we will have to know about the historical development of media politics. This is why in this session we will first look at media and politics in Nazi Germany, especially at the NS- propaganda system and how their specific structures came about after the Second World War. In the second part we will learn about the consequences for the post 1945 media system.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welch, David (1993): The Third Reich. Politics and propaganda. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, pp.17-39. Taylor, Philip M. (2008): Propaganda in World War II. In Wolfgang Donsbach (Ed.): The international encyclopedia of communication. 1st ed. Malden, MA [et al.] Blackwell Reference Online.
Week 3	<p>Media Structures in Germany today: Press System</p> <p>This session deals with the structures of the German press system as it is today. We will have a closer look how the Press has been reconstructed after the second world, its present market structures, present challenges and consequences for the public sphere and democracy.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humphreys, Peter (1994): Media and media policy in Germany. The press and broadcasting since 1945. 2nd ed. New York: Berg, pp. 1-11, 65-67,132-154, 164-176,190-192. Kleinstauber, Hans J. (2004): Germany. In Mary J. Kelly, Gianpietro Maz-zoleni, Denis McQuail (Eds.): The media in Europe. 3rd ed. London, Thou-sand Oaks, Calif: Sage, pp. 78–90.
Week 4	<p>Media Structures in Germany today: Public Service Broadcasting</p> <p>This week we will get to know the peculiarities of the German broadcasting system. We will focus on the structures of public service broadcasting in Germany, as well as the political motivations for the existence of the so-called “Dual System” of public and private broadcasting. We will also discuss, how this different structures have an influence on the programming and content.</p>

	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picard, Robert (2006): Financing Public Media: The Future of Collective Funding. In Christian S. Nissen (Ed.): Making a difference. Public service broadcasting in the European media landscape. Eastleigh, UK, Blooming-ton, IN: John Libbey Pub.; Distributed in North America by Indiana University Press, pp. 183–196. Press Offices of the ARD (2011): „The German Broadcasting System“.
Week 5	<p>Media Politics: Institutions, Regulations and Ethics</p> <p>So far, we have looked at theoretical, historical, political and structural aspects of the German media system. In this session, we will gain knowledge about the economic realities of media companies and the working situation and self-understanding of journalists. In order to complete the picture of how the media work, we will then turn to the legal frameworks in which media institutions and individuals operate and ask to which ethical guidelines they (should) adhere. One set of questions to be asked is: How political can the media be, and how free from politics can they act?</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward, David (2006): Can the market provide? - Public service media, market failure and public goods. In Christian S. Nissen (Ed.): Making a difference. Public service broadcasting in the European media landscape. Eastleigh, UK, Bloomington, pp. 51– 63. Puppis, Manuel (2010): Media Governance: A New Concept for the Analysis of Media Policy and Regulation. In Communication, Culture & Critique 3 (2), pp. 134–149.
Week 6	<p>Media Effects & Methods and Tools for the Analysis of Media Politics</p> <p>One aim of this course has been to equip its participants with knowledge and helpful tools that will enable them to analyse media politics outside of this course, too. In order to learn about how to use them, in this session we will discuss how to use and compare specific concepts and theories on Media Effects and Media Politics. In addition, we will have a colloquium discussing the paper outline topics.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grossberg, Lawrence; Wartella, Ellen; Whitney, D. Charles (2008): Mediamaking. Mass media in a popular culture. 2nd ed. London: Sage, pp. 357-373. Entman, Robert M. (1993): Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. In: Journal of Communication, Vol. 43(4), pp.51-58.
Week 7	<p>Freedom of the press and political interference</p> <p>With our newly-gained background on structures and activity frames of German media and media politics, we will start delving into specific issues at their points of interaction. Therefore, we will dedicate this session to a critical analysis of one of the touchiest subjects between politics and the media: the clash between freedom of the press/freedom of speech and political interference on behalf of certain interest groups or political power holders. We will also discuss how different countries in the world can be compared regarding their degree of press freedom.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft, Stephanie (2010): Press Freedom and Responsibility. IN: Meyers, Christopher (Ed): Journalism Ethics. A Philosophical Approach. Ox-ford/UK, 2010, pp.39-51. Freedomhouse (2017): Freedom of the Media 2019: A Downward Spiral.

<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Comparing Media Systems - European Neighbors</p> <p>In this session we will turn to our European neighbors and their media politics. Two case studies will take us to Italy and Great Britain where we will encounter two media moguls and their specific impact on the media system. Our comparative analysis will examine the impact of Media concentration/conglomerates and the merge of media and politics. We will also discuss different approaches for comparing media systems in general.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas, B.; Kleinsteuber, H.J. (2011): Comparing Media Systems: The European Dimension. IN: Trappel, J. et al (Eds.): Media in Europe Today, Bristol: Intellect, pp. 25-41. • Street, John (2011): Mass media, politics and democracy. 2nd ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 159-184.
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Mediatization of Politics</p> <p>Another field of interaction between politics and the media is the growing presence of the media in political campaigns. Do politicians use the media to their ends, or do the media provide ruthless insights into the candidates' true beliefs and motivations? What does it mean when political candidates not only need to be telegenic, but also well-versed in media use and manipulation these days? In this context, we will also focus on the US elections and how media coverage has been used and misused as a tool for impinging voters' opinion.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street, John (2011): Mass media, politics and democracy. 2nd ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 235-260. • Grabe, Maria Elizabeth; Bucy, E. Page (2009): Image bite politics. News and the visual framing of elections. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press (Series in political psychology), pp. 85-89; 93-101; 132-145. • Mazzoleni, Gianpedro; Schulz, Winfried (1999): "Mediatization" of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?, Political Communication, 16:3. Pp. 247-261.
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>New Media – New Politics? Digitalisation and current challenges to journalism and politics</p> <p>This session will take a look at new forms of information providers, the outcomes of digitalization and its influence on journalism and politics. What is the impact of news leaks, alternative media and cyber activism on the relationship of mass media, journalism and politics? Where is the limit between privacy and the right to freedom of information? How do bots and fake news endanger the democratic functions of mass media?</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruns Axel (2003): Gatewatching, Not Gatekeeping: Collaborative Online News. Media International Australia. 2003;107(1):31-44. Doi:10.1177/1329878X0310700106 • Milan, Stefania; Hintz, Arne (2013): Networked Collective Action and the Institutionalized Policy Debate: Bringing Cyberactivism to the Policy Arena? In Policy & Internet 5 (1), pp. 7–26. • Benkler, Yochai (2013): WikiLeaks and the Networked Fourth Estate. IN: Brevini, B; Hintz, A.; McCurdy, P. (Eds.): Beyond WikiLeaks. Implications for the Future of Communications, Journalism and Society. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.11-34.

<p>Week 11</p>	<p>Public Sphere in crisis?</p> <p>In the 21st century, as the internet is open to political commentary from everybody, new kinds of information providers influence mainstream media and politics in non-democratic and democratic societies alike. There is a growing distrust in 'traditional' mass media due to the discretisation by political opponents often supported by disinformation and 'fake news' being disseminated. Radical political point of views are shared on social networks avoiding any kind of political debate. Furthermore, political bots spread manipulative messages in order to influence opinion making. As a result, the general trust in information sources is decreasing and the public opinion is even more polarized. Who is behind the massive dissemination of false or manipulative messages and bots? How do bots and fake news endanger the democratic functions of mass media? What does this imply for the public sphere? In this session we will try to find answers to these questions.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers Simone (2020): Truth, Deliberative Democracy, and the Virtues of Accuracy: Is Fake News Destroying the Public Sphere? Political Studies. April 2020. doi:10.1177/0032321719890811 • Wardle, Claire; Derakhshan, Hossein (2017): Information Disorder. Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking. Council of Europe report DGI(2017)09.
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>Media Politics Revisited - Conclusion and Outlook</p> <p>We will look back and ahead at the end of this course and try to get a sense of the relationship between, and the future of, media and politics in modern Western societies in the 21st century: Are they opponents or accomplices? Do they strive for the same goals or for opposite ones? Is theirs a give-and-take situation or a tug-of-war? Do they critically control each other or secretly manipulate one another? Is there perhaps a middle way in each of these questions? And where do media and politics go in the future?</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balcytiene, Aukse; Raeymaeckers, Karin; Vartanova, Elena (2011): Changing Practices of Journalism. In Josef Trappel, Denis McQuail (Eds.): Media in Europe today. Bristol, UK, Chicago: Intellect, pp. 220-233.
<p>Week 13</p>	<p>Final exam</p>