

**MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**  
**MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
**8160512-Media and Politics**

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Class meets : Thursday / 09.40 – 12.30  
Room A300

### **Course Content:**

This course focuses on the relationship between the increasingly intimate relationship of media, the political system, and the public at large.

The media are widely acknowledged to wield considerable power in democratic politics. One of the assumptions of a democracy is that citizens have adequate knowledge of political events... The only way the average citizen learns about politics is via a mediation process in which the media play primary roles. Against this backdrop, the course will examine how well the media, as the primary source of political information, fulfill the democratic demands.

The course will also explore the influence of ownership and the interplay between political actors and the media in the recognition of political identities, and the opening up of new spaces for public discussion.

The implications for politics of ‘globalization’ and new media (satellite, digital and internet casting) are also considered. While new forms of mass communication constitute a key factor in a globalized world, traditional media continue to be influential when it comes to how we make sense of our political landscape.

### **Aims**

- To introduce students to the key concepts and theories involved in studying the relationship between politics and the media.
- To highlight the history of political communication and information sources and examine the influence of mass communications on the development of democratic politics.
- To consider the changing nature of political communication through an overview of the development of the press and TV including issues of media ownership and political bias.
- To provide an insight into the relationship between political actors, professional communicators and media personnel in the context of changing political and technological systems.
- To consider the role of the media in reporting and influencing elections, political protests, wars and foreign policy.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of;

- How the media influence various aspects of politics
- A more critical awareness of the power of the media to shape political events and our understanding of them.
- Ways of interpreting media ‘texts’ in terms of their ideology and mode of representation.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students should be able to;

- Give a critical account of, through discussion and written work, the role of political communication and information sources in political contexts;
- Identify the key factors which shape political communication;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the changing nature of political communication and an understanding of the importance of political bias and ownership of the media.
- Analyze and evaluate the role and influence of the media in reporting elections, political protest, and wars and foreign policy.

## Grading

Participation will be graded on the basis of three criteria:

- Research Paper : 40 %
- Case Studies : 30 %
- Course Participation : 30 %
  - Attendance 15 %
  - Oral Contribution 15 %

*Oral contribution or class discussion comes more easily for some people than for others. By temperament or habit, some are ‘talkers’ while others ‘listeners’.*

*Learn to be both.*

*An old Ghanaian proverb says that ‘we have two ears and one mouth, learn to use them in proportion.’*

*If you are a ‘talker’ learn to give enough space for others to speak. If a ‘listener’, try to participate more in discussion even if this means asking questions. Intelligent questioning is just as important as thoughtful commenting.*

*To learn to be both ‘talker’ and ‘listener’, we will devote at least one third of each session to discussion.*