

AN328: Political Media

Lecturer: Anthony Kelly

Time: Tuesday 11:00 - 13:00 (Semester 2)

Location: AX1

How does the political subject emerge from processes of mass mediation? In what ways does media commentary shape public perceptions of political issues? How are patterns of political affiliation, identification, and mobilisation tied to the circulation of politically charged media content? Through an ethnographic focus on political media in the US, this module seeks to explore the mediation of politics from a linguistic anthropological perspective. Students will be introduced to key works in the anthropology of language and media as well as to the anthropological analysis of established and emerging genres of political mediation. In the final part of the course, we will consider how social practices of media reflect and embody ideological orientations to ways of knowing and question what this means for how political realities get co-constructed.

Week 1: No Lectures (Jan 28th – Feb 1st)

Essential reading: Familiarise yourself with the course overview, including assessment requirements for the module and the extended reading list

Week 2: Introduction and Outline (Feb 4th – Feb 8th)

Reading: Silverstein, M. 2003. *Talking Politics: The Substance of Style from Abe to W*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press

Week 3: Publics and Counterpublics (Feb 25th – Mar 1st)

Essential reading: Warner, M. 2002. Publics and Counterpublics. *Public Culture* 14(1): 49-90

Fraser, N. 1990. Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text* 25/26: 56-80.

Week 4: Structures of Participation in Political (Mass) Media (Feb 11th – Feb 15th)

Essential reading: Irvine, J. 1996. Shadow Conversations: The Indeterminacy of Participant Roles. In Michael Silverstein, Michael and Greg Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Silverstein, M. 1996. The Secret Life of Texts. In Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: University of

Chicago Press.

**Week 5: Message and the Political Subject
(Feb 18th – Feb 22nd)**

Essential reading: Jakobson, R. 1960. Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics. In T. A. Sebeok, ed. *Style in Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Benveniste, É. 1971 (1958). *Problems in general linguistics*. M. E. Meek (trans.). Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press.

**Week 6: Truth, Theatre, and Presidential Politics in the US
(Mar 4th – Mar 8th)**

Essential reading: Hill, J. H. 2000. Read my article: ideological complexity and the overdetermination of promising in American presidential politics, in P. V. Kroskrity (ed.), *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.

Bauman, R. 1975. Verbal Art as Performance. *American Anthropologist* 77(2): 290-311.

**Week 7: Talk Radio and Political Punditry
(Mar 11th – Mar 15th)**

Essential reading: Shoaps, R. 1999. The Many Voices of Rush Limbaugh: The Use of Transposition in Constructing a Rhetoric of Common Sense. *Text & Talk* 19(3): 399-437

Spitulnik, D. 2010. 'Millennial encounters with mainstream television news: excess, void, and points of engagement', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2):372-388.

**Week 8: Political Satire
(Apr 1st – Apr 5th)**

Essential reading: Boyer, D. & A. Yurchak 2010. American Stioib: Or, What Late-Socialist Aesthetics of Parody Reveal about Contemporary Political Culture in the West. *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2): 179-221

Baym, G. 2005. The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism. *Political Communication* 22:259-276.

**Week 9: Conspiracy
(Apr 8th – Apr 12th)**

Essential reading: Hofstadter, Richard. 1965. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and*

Other Essays. New York: Knopf. Chapter 1 'The Paranoid Style in American Politics'

Week 10: Religion
(Apr 15th – Apr 19th)

Essential reading: Diamond, S. 1989. *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*. Boston: South End Press. Chapter 1 'Media Empires'

Kintz, L. 1997. *Between Jesus and the Market: The Emotions That Matter in Right-Wing America*. Durham: Duke University Press. Chapter 7 'God's Intentions for the Multinational Corporation: Seeing Reality True'

Week 11: Science (Fiction(s))
(Apr 22nd – Apr 26th)

Essential reading: Mooney, C. 2012. *The Republican brain: the science of why they deny science—and reality*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Chapter 8 'The Science of Fox News'

Dunlap, R. & A. McCright 2008. A Widening Gap: Republican and Democratic Views on Climate Change. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 50(5): 26-35.

Week 12: Review
(Apr 29th – May 3rd)

No assigned reading

Assessment:

1) Argument Analyses (25%)

Instructions: Each argument analysis will be framed by a question, to be set by the module lecturer. Students must compose a 200-word response to this question based on the relevant course literature stipulated in the question. There will be five argument analyses in total to be submitted over the course of the module; each is worth 5% of your overall grade for the module, up to a total of 25% of your overall grade. Please see the Argument Analysis Information Sheet for a schedule of submission dates.

Word Count: 5 x 200 words (1000 words equivalent)

Due Date: Various dates

2) Political Campaign Case Study (25%)

Instructions: Students must prepare a 1000-word case study on a political media campaign of their choice. Choices must first be discussed with the module lecturer. You should consider – but not limit yourself to – some of the following questions: How does the campaign make use of image and text? Are political opponents represented and, if so, how? How is the political message of the campaign constructed? What was the nature of the public response to the campaign?

Length: 1000 words

Due Date: Friday April 5th 2013

3) Essay (50%)

Instructions: Students must select one of the following topics and produce a 2500 word essay that engages, at minimum, with the relevant course literature (see extended reading list). Outside sources are also permitted. Those students wishing to choose their own topic must first discuss that topic with the module lecturer.

Essay 1: Michael Silverstein writes: “In our politics, identity is ‘message’ embodied” (2003: 132). What does he mean by this? Write an essay in which you discuss the poetic construction and mediation of the political subject, making reference to the relevant course literature.

Essay 2: Boyer and Yurchak (2010) note several tendencies in the form of political discourse in contemporary US media that are comparable to late-socialist hypernormalization. What is hypernormalization? Write an essay in which you discuss the nature of hypernormalization and some of the ways in which political satirists have responded to it.

Essay 3: Write an essay in which you discuss the fictionalisation and politicisation

of science. Make reference to the relevant course literature and use examples.

Essay 4: Candidate's choice of topic (to be discussed with lecturer)

Word Count: 2000 words

Due Date: Friday May 10th 2013

Extended Reading List:

Week 1: No Lectures (Jan 28th – Feb 1st)

Familiarise yourself with the course overview, including assessment requirements for the module and the extended reading list

Week 2: Introduction and Outline (Feb 4th – Feb 8th)

Essential reading: Silverstein, M. 2003. *Talking Politics: The Substance of Style from Abe to 'W'*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press

Week 3: Publics and Counterpublics (Feb 25th – Mar 1st)

Essential reading: Warner, M. 2002. Publics and Counterpublics. *Public Culture* 14(1): 49-90

Fraser, N. 1990. Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text* 25/26: 56-80.

Secondary reading: Habermas, J. 1989. *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Lee, B. 2001. Circulating the people, in S. Gal and K. A. Woolard (eds.), *Language and publics: the making of authority*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Week 4: Structures of Participation in Political (Mass) Media (Feb 11th – Feb 15th)

Essential reading: Irvine, J. 1996. Shadow Conversations: The Indeterminacy of Participant Roles. In Michael Silverstein, Michael and Greg Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Silverstein, M. 1996. The Secret Life of Texts. In Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Secondary reading: Agha, A. 2007. Recombinant selves in mass mediated spacetime. *Language & Communication* 27: 320-335.

Schulthies, B. L. 2009. The social circulation of media scripts and collaborative meaning-making in Moroccan and Lebanese family discourse. PhD Dissertation, University of Arizona.

Week 5: Message and the Political Subject (Feb 18th – Feb 22nd)

Essential reading: Jakobson, R. 1960. Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics. In T. A. Sebeok, ed. *Style in Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Benveniste, É. 1971 (1958). *Problems in general linguistics*. M. E. Meek (trans.). Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press.

Secondary reading: Urban, G. 1989. The “I” of discourse, in B. Lee and G. Urban (eds.), *Semiotics, self, and society*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lee, B. 1997. *Talking Heads: Language, metalanguage, and the semiotics of subjectivity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 6: Truth, Theatre, and Presidential Politics in the US (Mar 4th – Mar 8th)

Essential reading: Hill, J. H. 2000. Read my article: ideological complexity and the overdetermination of promising in American presidential politics, in P. V. Kroskrity (ed.), *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.

Bauman, R. 1975. Verbal Art as Performance. *American Anthropologist* 77(2): 290-311.

Secondary reading: Foucault, M. 2001. *Fearless speech*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).

Wortham, S. & M. Locher 1999. Embedded metapragmatics and lying politicians. *Language & Communication* 19: 109-125.

Week 7: Talk Radio and Political Punditry (Mar 11th – Mar 15th)

Essential reading: Shoaps, R. 1999. The Many Voices of Rush Limbaugh: The Use of Transposition in Constructing a Rhetoric of Common Sense. *Text & Talk* 19(3): 399-437

Spitulnik, D. 2010. ‘Millennial encounters with mainstream television news: excess, void, and points of engagement’, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2):372–388.

Secondary reading: Godfried, N. 2004. ‘Fellow Traveler of the Air’: Rod Holmgren and leftist radio news commentary in America’s Cold War. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 24(2): 233-251.

Warren, D. 1996. *Radio priest: Charles Coughlin, the father of hate radio*. New York, NY: The Free Press. Chapter 1 'A Child of Circumstance' + Chapter 2 'Inventing the Political Soap Opera'

Week 8: Political Satire (Apr 1st – Apr 5th)

Essential reading: Boyer, D. & A. Yurchak 2010. American Stio: Or, What Late-Socialist Aesthetics of Parody Reveal about Contemporary Political Culture in the West. *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2): 179-221

Baym, G. 2005. The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism. *Political Communication* 22:259–276.

Secondary reading: Baumgartner, J. & J. S. Morris 2006. The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth. *American Politics Research* 43(3):341-367.

Yurchak, A. 2006 *Everything Was Forever until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 9: Conspiracy (Apr 8th – Apr 12th)

Essential reading: Hofstadter, R. 1965. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf.

Ostler, J. The Rhetoric of Conspiracy and the Formation of Kansas Populism. *Agricultural History*. 69(1): 1-27.

Secondary reading: Wood, G. 1982. Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39(3): 402-441.

Marcus, G. 2006. *The Shape of Things to Come: Prophecy and the American Voice*. London: Faber and Faber.

Week 10: Religion (Apr 15th – Apr 19th)

Essential reading: Diamond, S. 1989. *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*. Boston: South End Press. Chapter 1 'Media Empires'

Kintz, L. 1997. *Between Jesus and the Market: The Emotions That Matter in Right-Wing America*. Durham: Duke University Press. Chapter 7 'God's Intentions for the Multinational Corporation: Seeing Reality True'

Secondary reading: Brooks Thistlethwaite, S. 2010. *Dreaming of Eden: American Religion and*

Politics in a Wired World. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Diamond, S. 1995. *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*. New York: Guilford Press.

Week 11: Science (Fiction(s))
(Apr 22nd – Apr 26th)

Essential reading: Mooney, C. 2012. *The Republican brain: the science of why they deny science—and reality*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Chapter 8 ‘The Science of Fox News’

Dunlap, R. & A. McCright 2008. A Widening Gap: Republican and Democratic Views on Climate Change. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 50(5): 26-35.

Secondary reading: Fritze, R. H. 2011. *Invented Knowledge: False History, Fake Science and Pseudo-religions*. London: Reaktion.

Toumey, C. 1994. *God's own scientists: creationists in a secular world*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Week 12: Review
(Apr 29th – May 3rd)

No assigned reading