

Name:	Kim Murphy
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Course title:	German Political Communications in a Digital Age
Track:	A-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	4

Course Description

This course explores different aspects of political communications in Germany and the challenges and transformations taking place in politics, government and media as a result of digital technologies. Students will analyze and learn about the structure of the German political system, the history of its media system, the relationship between politicians and journalists in Germany, and how these systems and relationships are affected by digitalization. Students will get an insight into relevant and current theoretical and empirical research in the field of political communications including, for example, new research on online political campaigning, polarization in the public sphere, the spread of disinformation and populism. They will also study a number of comparative communications studies to enable them to critically compare political communications in Germany with their own countries.

After taking the course, students will be able to critically analyze the history and structure of media and politics in Germany, the role of political communications in a democratic public sphere, its historical and political context and key current transformations taking place in this field. They will also learn some practical writing skills for working in the field of political communications.

Student Profile

All students are welcome regardless of their major or background. You should be interested in politics and media and eager to find out more about its current challenges, in particular, challenges posed by digital technologies. The course is particularly suited to students majoring in political science, communication, journalism or media studies and who would like to work in an area of media, politics, government or public affairs.

Prerequisites

Interest, curiosity and willingness to contribute to the course are prerequisites for this course as well as having C1-level English.

Course Requirements

The course uses a variety of teaching formats including lectures, seminar discussions, individual assignments, group work and presentations, combined with at least one field trip (e.g., the Bundespressekonferenz or the Bundespresseamt) and a guest lecture (a political journalist or government spokesperson) to give students an insight into politics and media in Germany. Regular attendance in class is required, as well as active participation. It is imperative that students read the literature and prepare the material assigned for each class

in order to be able to fulfil the course work and actively engage in discussions. Students will be assessed on their active participation in class, a number of practical writing exercises, and a presentation at the end of the course.

Grading

Regular attendance and active participation in class: 30%
 Practical writing exercises: 35%
 Presentation: 35%

Reading

A course reader will be provided.

Course Schedule

Date	Program*
Monday, July 15, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Structure of the German Political System, the Role of Political Parties & Current Changes 2. Comparing Political Systems (Comparative Politics)
Thursday, July 18, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Historical Development of the German Media System & Current Transformations 2. Comparing Media Systems: Great Britain, USA, Italy, France etc. 3. Introduction to the Theory of the Public Sphere
Monday, July 22, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political Media Relations in Germany 2. Comparing Political Media Relations in other Countries: Great Britain; USA 3. Field Trip: Bundespressekonferenz (Federal Press Conference)
Thursday, July 25, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political Communications in a Digital Age: A German Perspective 2. Guest Lecture & Q&A (Berlin-based political journalist or government spokesperson): Current challenges for political journalism in Germany 3. Practical Writing Exercise: Media Briefing

<p>Monday, July 29, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political Communications in a Digital Age: International Perspective (II) 2. Practical Writing Exercise: Political Policy Document
<p>Thursday, August 1, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government Communications, Public Organisations and Social Media 2. Field Trip: Bundespresseamt (Federal Press and Information Office)
<p>Monday, August 5, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political Election Campaigning in a Digital Age 2. Group Presentations
<p>Thursday, August 8, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media Regulation in a Digital Age: Regulating Facebook and Google & Co 2. Group Presentations

* Field trips and guest lecture may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers.