

POLITICAL ECONOMY:  
VOTERS, INFORMATION AND MEDIA  
ECO334H1S WINTER 2016  
THURSDAYS 11 TO 1 AT SS 1074

In this course, we will develop tools to analyze voters and the role of information in democracies. We will evaluate theories of voter information using empirical literature on media and the political economy of media. We will explore the effects of innovations in information technology and evaluate how the empirical results square with the theory. We will study newspapers, radio, television, cable, the Internet and social media, and focus on empirical methods used to identify effects of media on voters.

The goal of this course is to effectively evaluate work on the political economy of media. As such, you are required to read the course references before class to improve quality of lecture time. You will be required to apply strategies you have learned in class to problems sets, a midterm and term paper.

INSTRUCTOR:

Professor Yosh Halberstam, [yosh.halberstam@utoronto.ca](mailto:yosh.halberstam@utoronto.ca)

Office: Department of Economics, #311

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 to 1:00pm (by appointment only)

Tuesdays 3:30 to 5:30pm (drop in)

Appointments can be made at <http://www.calendly.com/yosh/oh>

TEACHING ASSISTANT:

Justin Mayne, [justin.mayne@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:justin.mayne@mail.utoronto.ca)

Office Hours: Fridays 9 to 11, Economics, GE 40

EVALUATION:

Problem sets (2) - 20%

Quizzes (10) - 10%

Midterm (1) - 30%

Paper (1) - 30%

Participation – 10%

PROBLEM SETS:

There will be two problem sets that address the material covered in the lectures. The first problem set will be due before reading week and the second after reading week, on weeks 4 and 12.

The goal of the problems is to help you internalize some of the theoretical and empirical concepts obtained in class. To earn credit you must hand in your assignment on time. There are no extensions.

QUIZZES:

There will be 10 random quizzes (no makeups) given throughout the semester. The quizzes are used to facilitate subsequent discussion as well as provide me with valuable feedback on your collective understanding as a class. I will provide aggregate survey results when possible.

MIDTERM:

There will be a midterm in class on week 5. The midterm will include any material we address by then, including the readings, problem set and quizzes. The midterm will comprise multiple-choice as well as essay questions.

#### PAPER:

You will be asked to apply the skills you obtained in the class in a paper on a particular phenomena related to voters and media, drawing from at least 5 academic sources. The writing assignment is a short research proposal of 1,500 to 2,000 words applying tools and results from this course to an assigned question. The topics will be assigned by reading week.

The assignment will be staged with two submissions, with an intervening peer assessment:

1. The first draft is due by Tuesday, March 8, at 11:00am.
2. Students will then be assigned three classmates' papers to read and provide constructive feedback and suggestions (using a form/rubric that I will provide). The deadline for providing the peer assessment is Friday, March 18, at 5:00pm.
3. Students will then have until Tuesday, April 5, at 11:00 am to submit their final draft that incorporates any useful suggestions or insights from the peer review process. Included in this submission will be a short reflection (no more than 500 words) on the peer reviews received, as well as an explanation of any other revisions made between the first and second submissions.

The final grade for paper will be based on:

1. The first draft; (25%)
2. The peer assessments provided for other papers; (25%)
3. The final draft, including the self-assessment of the explanation of the revisions to the first draft. (50%)

We will be using the software PeerScholar for the implementation of this assignment. The entire exercise is conducted online. Further details will be provided later in the course.

#### COURSE OUTLINE:

Date	Week	Topic(s)	Notes
Jan 14	1	Introduction	
Jan 21	2	Theoretical framework	
Jan 28	3	Political economy of media	
Feb 4	4	Social learning	Problem set 1
Feb 11	5	Midterm	In class
Feb 18	6	No class	Reading week
Feb 25	7	Newspapers I	
Mar 3	8	Newspapers II	
Mar 10	9	Radio	First draft (Tuesday)
Mar 17	10	Television and cable I	Peer assessment (Friday)
Mar 24	11	Television and cable II	
Mar 31	12	The Internet	Problem set 2
Apr 7	13	Social media and blogs	Final draft (Tuesday)

#### GENERAL RULES:

There are typically no extensions, make-ups or discussions of logistics. Penalty for lateness may range up to 1 point of your final grade per day. The TA is your initial contact for such affairs. Any appeal to reverse a TA decision must be filed to me in writing using no more than 250 words.