“New Media, New Politics” is an examination of the changing face of the media landscape. We look at three media sectors—cable TV, talk radio, and social media—to try to understand how they may be changing politics in America. A central question we'll address is how these new media differ from traditional mass media (so we'll read about traditional print newspapers and broadcast TV news as well). More broadly the course focuses on technological change, the changing nature of media enterprises, public policies (including deregulation), political and consumer behavior, and impact on the policymaking processes.

Given the controversy over social media, fake news, and the performance of the mainstream media in the 2016 election, we have incorporated a number of readings on these subjects. We recognize that we’re still learning about what went on and to that end, we’ve left room on the syllabus for some additional readings if we see some important new work as the course progresses through the spring. Please know, however, there will be no substantial addition to what is assigned below.

This course is a seminar and each class session will revolve around brief student reports and extensive debate on the readings. Thus, we will explore ideas, concepts, and current events as a group and learn through discussion and argumentation.

Professor Berry’s office hours this semester are Mondays 3:00-4:30, Wednesdays 10:30-12:00 and by appointment. Professor Liss will normally be on campus only on Mondays so please make an appointment if you’d like to meet with her. The best times would be before or after class.

Course requirements include two take home essays (each 25 percent of your grade) and a group research project (40 percent). Class participation will count for the
final 10 percent of your grade. The research project is described in a separate document. What is important to know about the research project right from the start is that everyone on an individual research team receives the same grade. In short, you sink or swim together. If you feel uncomfortable with this, PS 104 may not be the right class for you. That said, the vast majority of teams work really well together and last year’s projects were excellent.

Please note that you are expected to attend each and every class. We only meet a limited number of times during the semester and, as you will learn once we start up, there are not many notes to be taken. Thus, if you miss a class there will be little in the way of notes to borrow from a classmate. Class sessions are highly interactive and each student is expected to participate in the give-and-take about the questions at hand.

The following books are required for this class:

James Hamilton, *All the News That’s Fit to Sell*
Jeffrey Berry and Sarah Sobieraj, *The Outrage Industry*
Jonathan Ladd, *Why Americans Hate the Media and How It Matters*

Links to all the articles are on the Trunk site for the course. In addition, there are selections from four books, *Trial and Error: U.S. Newspapers’ Digital Struggles toward Inferiority*, *Post-Broadcast Democracy*, *After Broadcast News*, and *Democracy’s Detectives*. These are all on reserve at Tisch. However, please note that there is only one copy of each so you may want to Xerox the selected chapters sometime before the crunch just before discussion on them is due. The longest reading of these is Markus Prior’s *Post-Broadcast Democracy* (about 65 pages); it can be purchased on Amazon (used) for under $10 if you prefer to have your own copy. The other book selections are shorter. Unfortunately we cannot scan and distribute copies or place scanned book selections on Trunk as it’s a violation of copyright law.

**JAN. 23:**
Course introduction

**JAN 30:**
Hamilton, *All the News That’s Fit to Sell*, Chaps. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9

**FEB 6:**
Chyi, *Trial and Error: U.S. Newspapers’ Digital Struggles toward Inferiority*, Introduction and Chaps 1-3

Changing Technologies, Section 1: The Business of Online Media and Data
• “Virtual Beauty Parade” (from The Economist)
• “Buy, Buy, Baby” (from The Economist)
• “Getting to Know You” (from The Economist)
• Zeynep Tufekci “Engineering the public: Big data, surveillance and computational politics”

FEB 13:
Berry and Sobieraj, *The Outrage Industry*, Chaps. 1-5

FEB 23:
Berry and Sobieraj, *The Outrage Industry*, Chaps. 6-8

Changing Technologies, Section 2: Politics, Social Media and Algorithms
• Robert Epstein, “How Google Could Rig the 2016 Election”
• Eytan Bakshy et al, “Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook”
• Pew Research Center “The Evolving Role of News on Twitter and Facebook”
• Zeynep Tufekci “How Facebook’s Algorithm Suppresses Content Diversity (Modestly) and How the Newsfeed Rules Your Clicks”

FEB 27:
Marcus Prior, *Post-Broadcast Democracy*, Chaps. 2-3

Team research proposals (one page) due

MARCH 6:
Ladd, *Why Americans Hate the Media*, Chaps. 3-8

First essay question handed out

MARCH 13:
Changing Technologies, Section 3: 2016 Election, Social Media and Fake News
• Natalie Andrews and Brian McGill “What You Like Falls on Party Lines”
• Terrance McCoy “For the ‘New Yellow Journalists,’ Opportunity Comes in Clicks and Bucks”
• Sapna Maheshwari “How Fake News Goes Viral: A Study”
• Craig Silverman “This Analysis Shows How Fake Election News Stories Outperformed Real News On Facebook”
• Deepa Seetharaman “Facebook Employees Pushed to Remove Trump’s Posts as Hate Speech”
• Philip Bump “Google’s Top News Link for ‘Final Election Results’ Goes to a Fake News Site with False Numbers”
• Sasha Issenberg “Inside the Trump Bunker with 12 Days to Go”
Research teams meet with either professor Berry or Liss in second hour

First essay due in class

MARCH 27:
Bruce Williams and Michael Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News*, Chap. 4

Brendan Nyhan et al, “The Hazards of Correcting Myths about Health Care Reform”

Second essay handed out

APRIL 3:
“Page One” (Documentary)

Second essay due in class

Research teams meet with either professor Berry or Liss in second hour

APRIL 10:
“Spotlight” (Feature Film)

James T. Hamilton, *Democracy’s Detectives*, Chap. 5

APRIL 24:
Changing Technologies, Section 4: Future of Journalism
- Ken Doctor “The News Media and Trump”
- Columbia Journalism Review “Covering Trump: An Oral History of an Unforgettable Campaign”
- Columbia Journalism Review “Did Trump’s Scorched-Earth Tactics Mortally Wound the Media?”
- Will Oremus “The Real Problem Behind the Fake News”
- Thomas E. Patterson “News Coverage of the 2016 General Election: How the Press Failed the Voters”
- Pagan Kennedy, “How to Starve Online Hate”

MAY 1:
Research teams report in class

Papers due in class