

PMCb1008: Research on politics and media

Fall 2024 | Tuesday 12.00-13.40

7 ECTS

Room: P24b (<https://is.muni.cz/auth/kontakty/mistnost?fakulta=1421;obdobi=9483;id=13979>)

Teachers

Vlastimil Havlík (havlik@fss.muni.cz)

Lenka Hrbková (hrbkova@mail.muni.cz)

Kateřina Kirkosová (k.kirkosova@mail.muni.cz)

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Martina Novotná (mnovotna@fss.muni.cz)

If you have any inquiries or apprehensions regarding the course, please feel free to reach out to Martina Novotná at mnovotna@fss.muni.cz.

Course objectives

The course is designed to introduce to the students the most important research areas related to an examination of politics and media. Firstly, the students of the course will learn about the dominant issues in the area and about research methods and techniques of data collection. Secondly, the students will also learn about the key concepts and their measurements in available (international) data sets. The course is designed to cover the most used methods and techniques in the dominant research areas – in research on systems and contexts, in research on people (as political actors/citizens and as media consumers and users) and in research on media contents.

Learning outcomes

After completing a course, a student will be able to: know specific and key research areas, topics and theories in the area of politics and media; operationalize the key concepts in the area of politics and media; find relevant data for the issue; know the dominant methods in the area of politics and media – and their designs; choose and evaluate individual research methods and techniques for data collection applied to specific issues in the area of politics and media.

Assessment methods and criteria

2 position papers 40%

Presentation 20%

Oral exam 40%

Position papers (40%)

Students are required to write two position papers (PP), based on course methodology and with the support of relevant literature. Each paper must include a critical reflection of the research methods, a description of their strengths and weaknesses, and a comparison. The minimum length is between 7,200-9,000 characters (not including references).

To ensure a well-written position paper, it is important to follow a structured approach and keep it well-organized.

- **Introduction:** Begin with an engaging introduction focusing on either people-focused methodologies (first position paper) or content-focused methodologies (second position paper). Start with a broad research question that can be addressed using multiple methods. However, avoid narrowing your focus too much, as this could limit your ability to thoroughly explore and compare the methodologies. You may choose to emphasize one method over others in your comparisons.
- **Comparison:** this approach will allow you to effectively compare and contrast different methods while presenting your position on which method you find most effective and why. Make sure to discuss the applicability of each method to the chosen research question.
 - Use body paragraphs to support your thesis statement, with one paragraph per argument, including counterarguments. Strengthen your arguments by incorporating relevant information from the course literature. The main aim is to discuss the use of specific methods and compare them with each other regarding applicability to the selected research topic, strengths, and weaknesses.
- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and summarize your argument while reinforcing your thesis statement. Highlight the key takeaways from your comparison and any insights gained from the comparison.

The first position paper will focus on research methods discussed in the first part of the course: ethnographic research, surveys, experiments, comparative research and case studies. The submission deadline is **10. 11**. The second position paper will cover quantitative content analysis, visual analysis of media content, discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis with a submission deadline of **8. 12**. Proper citation and referencing must follow one of the recognized academic citation styles, such as APA, Chicago, etc. Both position papers should be uploaded to the "Homework Vaults" section of the Information System of Masaryk University (IS MUNI) under Study Materials.

Presentation (20 %)

For your coursework, you will present a 10-minute presentation on a topic of your choice and interest related to your field of study programme. You will present the topic by providing examples of two different research methodologies that are used to explore a selected topic. Compare and contrast the methods, discussing their specific characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses (or how they complement each other) in relation to a selected topic. *As an*

example, you can choose to present a survey and content analysis on the topic of negative campaigning during elections.

The main aim of this exercise is to create a research presentation with a main focus on methodology. Presentations should be supported by academic literature and relevant studies. Provide an introduction describing the main methodological characteristics. Discuss differences between methodological approaches and include concluding remarks.

- For your presentation, start with an introduction that outlines your chosen topic and explains its relevance to the study of politics, media, and/or communication. Clearly state your research question(s) and briefly summarize key findings from the literature related to your topic.
- Next, discuss two different research methodologies: describe each method, its relevance to your topic, and its strengths and weaknesses, supported by academic literature and real-world examples.
- Compare the two methodologies, highlighting their differences and similarities, and discuss how they complement each other. Conclude with a summary of the key takeaways about each methodology's effectiveness in researching your chosen topic. Please remember the following instruction: We want you to focus on discussing the specific characteristics of the selected methods within the context of the topic. For example, you can discuss how qualitative interviews are suitable for exploring people's perceptions of incivility and their actual experiences of uncivil behavior online. On the other hand, quantitative content analysis can provide valuable insights into the typology of uncivil comments commonly found in online environments. This type of reflection should go beyond stating that qualitative methods are good at going in-depth. Be specific and connect the methodological knowledge you learned with a particular case.

Use visual aids to enhance clarity and impact. Your ability to present clear ideas and relevant information and stick to timing will determine your presentation's evaluation. Take your time to select a topic that suits you the best.

Topic for presentation & date of the presentation

Please propose your presentation topics relevant to the study of politics, media, and/or communication in the IS system by **12. 11.**

- Vlastimil Havlík will then approve or disapprove the student's choice of topic. If you have any questions regarding selecting a topic, do not hesitate to write to havlik@fss.muni.cz. For more information on proposing your own topic in the IS system, please visit the following link:

https://is.muni.cz/napoveda/student/rozpisy_temat?lang=en#s_rozpis_zaloz_tema

Subscribe to the presentation date (during lectures in the 12th and 13th week of the semester) by **26. 11.**

- To access the presentation topics and date of the presentation, go to Information System → Student → Political Communication → Lists. The chosen topic will correspond to the date of your presentation. For more detailed instructions, please refer to the "How do I

choose the topic from the list?" question and the "Course topic lists" section at https://is.muni.cz/napoveda/student/rozpisy_temat?lang=en#s_rozpis_bez_baliku

Upload your presentation to the "Homework Vaults" section of the Information System of the Masaryk University (IS MUNI) under Study materials. The deadline for submission is **6. 12.**

Oral exam (40%)

For the course exam, you will randomly select a topic related to the course material and implement two research methodologies of your choice that were part of the course (including qualitative and quantitative methods). You will have 20 minutes to get ready for your answer and to formulate how to implement the selected methodology. This test will evaluate your understanding and application of a specific methodology, including its strengths and weaknesses in practice. You will need to demonstrate knowledge of the methodology's basic characteristics in the context of media studies and political science, particularly in relation to research strategy (qualitative, quantitative), defining research goals and questions, choosing a specific method, as well as sampling and data collection techniques (e.g., semi-structured interviews).

Please come prepared with a solid understanding of the course's research methodologies and the ability to think critically and apply your knowledge to new situations.

Terms for assignments

First position paper	10. 11.
Presentation topics selection	12. 11.
Subscribe to date for presentation	26. 11.
Presentation submission	6. 12.
Second position paper	8. 12.

Grading scale

Final grade	Points
A	100-92
B	91-84
C	83-76
D	75-68
E	67-60
F	59 and less

Rules for Using AI in Assignments

Allowed:

- **Research and Idea Generation:** You may use AI tools to help brainstorm ideas or conduct preliminary research for your assignments.
- **Proofreading and Grammar Check:** AI tools can be used to check grammar and spelling and improve the overall clarity of your writing.
- **Outline Creation:** You may use AI to assist in creating an outline or structure for your assignment.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI can help format citations correctly, but you must ensure that all sources are accurately and properly cited.

Not Allowed:

- **Content Generation:** Using AI to write substantial portions of your assignment is not permitted. Your work should reflect your own understanding and analysis.
- **Plagiarism:** Submitting AI-generated text as your own original work is strictly prohibited. All work must be authentically yours.
- **Automated Paraphrasing:** Rewording AI-generated content and presenting it as your own is not allowed.
- **Misrepresentation:** Using AI to fabricate or manipulate data, references, or research findings is not permitted.

Here you can find the statement of the application of AI at Masaryk University:

<https://www.muni.cz/en/about-us/official-notice-board/statement-on-the-application-of-ai>

Detailed schedule & Literature

1 WEEK 24. 9.	Introduction Teacher: Martina Novotná Organization of the course, tasks, workload, assignment, and readings.
2 WEEK 1. 10.	Survey and Experiment Teachers: Lenka Hrbková Polarization of contemporary politics; survey and experimental approaches Mandatory literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lelkes, Y. (2016). Mass polarization: Manifestations and measurements. <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, 80(S1), 392-410.• Druckman, J. N., & Levendusky, M. S. (2019). What do we measure when we measure affective polarization?. <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, 83(1), 114-122.• Whitt, S., Yanus, A. B., McDonald, B., Graeber, J., Setzler, M., Ballingrud, G., & Kifer, M. (2021). Tribalism in America: behavioral experiments on

	<p>affective polarization in the Trump era. <i>Journal of Experimental Political Science</i>, 8(3), 247-259.</p>
<p>3 WEEK 8. 10.</p>	<p>Survey and Experiment II Teachers: Lenka Hrbková</p> <p>Research on news and media consumption form survey and experimental perspectives</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023, p. 10-29 https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/Digital News Report 2023.pdf <i>Read the summary chapter of the Report, pay attention to survey questions (usually reported together with figures).</i> • <i>Go through the Reuters Institute Questionnaire and pay attention to the construction of survey questions and question wording</i> https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/DNR23_online_survey.pdf • Broockman, D., & Kalla, J. (2022). Consuming cross-cutting media causes learning and moderates attitudes: A field experiment with Fox News viewers.”. • Guess, A. M., Malhotra, N., Pan, J., Barberá, P., Allcott, H., Brown, T., ... & Tucker, J. A. (2023). How do social media feed algorithms affect attitudes and behavior in an election campaign?. <i>Science</i>, 381(6656), 398-404.
<p>4 WEEK 15. 10.</p>	<p>Survey data Teachers: Lenka Hrbková</p> <p>Seminar about survey data availability, presentation of websites and tools for survey data</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA
<p>5 WEEK 22. 10.</p>	<p>Ethnographic research Teachers: Khin Wee Chen</p> <p>A fundamental concept of ethnographic research applied to the study of political behavior, groups, events, and campaigns within the context of media.</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boswell, J., Corbett, J., Dommett, K., Jennings, W., Flinders, M., Rhodes, R. A. W., & Wood, M. (2019). State of the field: What can political ethnography tell us about anti-politics and democratic disaffection?. <i>European Journal of Political Research</i>, 58(1), 56-71. • Cesarino, L. (2020). How social media affords populist politics: remarks on liminality based on the Brazilian case. <i>Trabalhos em Linguística Aplicada</i>, 59, 404-427. • Coleman, E. G. (2010). Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media. <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>, 39(1), 487–505. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104945 <p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brewer, J. (2000). <i>Ethnography</i>. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
<p>6 WEEK 29. 10</p>	<p>Case studies and comparative research Teacher: Martina Novotná</p> <p>Case study research and case study as a method; comparative research and comparison as a method; comparing media and political systems; comparing journalism cultures</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esser, F. & Hanitzsch, T. 2012. On the Why and How of Comparative Inquiry in Communication Studies. Pp. 3-22 in Esser, F. & Hanitzsch, T.: <i>The Handbook of Comparative Communication Research</i>. New York: Routledge. • Hallin, D. & Mancini, P. 2004. Chapter 2 Comparing Media Systems (pp. 21-45) and Chapter 4 Media and Political Systems, and the Question of Differentiation (pp. 66-86) in Hallin, D. & Mancini, P.: <i>Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. • Yin, R. K. 2018. Chapter 1 Getting Started: How to Know Whether and When to Use the Case Study as a Research Method. Pp. 1-24 in Yin, R.: <i>Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods</i>. Sixth Edition. Los Angeles: Sage. <p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallin, D. & Mancini, P. 2017. Ten Years After Comparing Media Systems: What Have We Learned? <i>Political Communication</i> 34(2): 155-171. • Hepp, A. & Couldry, N. 2009. What Should Comparative Media Research be Comparing? Towards a Transcultural Approach to ‘Media Cultures’. Pp. 32-47 in Thussu, D.: <i>Internationalizing Media Studies</i>. Routledge. • Herrero, L.C. et al. 2017. Rethinking Hallin and Mancini Beyond the West: An Analysis of Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe. <i>International Journal of Communication</i> 11: 4797-4823.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kleinstauber, H. J. 2004. Comparing Mass Communication Systems: Media Formats, Media Contents, and Media Processes. Pp. 64-86 in F. Esser & B. Pfetsch (Eds.): <i>Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges (Communication, Society and Politics)</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. • Urbániková, M. 2023. Arguing About the Essence of Public Service in Public Service Media: A Case Study of a Newsroom Conflict at Slovak RTVS. <i>Journalism Studies</i> 24(10), 1352-1374. • Vliegenthart, R. 2012. Analyzing Comparative Data: Opportunities and Challenges. Pp. 486-500 in Esser, F. & Hanitzsch, T.: <i>The Handbook of Comparative Communication Research</i>. New York: Routledge. • Wirth, W. & Steffen Kolb, S. 2004. Designs and Methods of Comparative Political Communication Research. Pp. 87-111 in Esser, F. & Pfetsch, B.: <i>Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
<p>7 WEEK 5. 11.</p>	<p>Reading week</p>
<p>8 WEEK 12. 11.</p>	<p>Quantitative content analysis Teachers: Vlastimil Havlík</p> <p>Analysing media content/campaigns/manifesto</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blassnig, S. (2022): Content Analysis in the Research Field of Political Communication: The Self-Presentation of Political Actors. In: F. Oehmer-Pedrazzi, S. H. Kessler, E. Humprecht, K. Sommer and L. Castro (eds.): <i>Standardisierte Inhaltsanalyse in der Kommunikationswissenschaft – Standardized Content Analysis in Communication Research. Ein Handbuch - A Handbook</i>. Springer, pp.301-312. • Hameleers, M., Schmuck, D., Bos, L., & Ecklebe, S. (2021). Interacting with the ordinary people: How populist messages and styles communicated by politicians trigger users' behaviour on social media in a comparative context. <i>European journal of communication</i>, 36(3), 238-253. • Baumann, M., Debus, M., & Gross, M. (2021). Strategic issue emphasis in parties' election campaign statements. <i>Party Politics</i>, 27(3), 515-527. <p>We will work with the data used in Baumann et al. You can access and download the data at https://muni.cz/go/0102b3. See the codebook and the three datasets "Self_v1" (parties talking about themselves), "Other_v1" (parties talking about other parties) and "Journalist_v1" (journalists talking about parties). The data will also be uploaded in the Learning Materials before the class.</p>

	<p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooduijn, M., & Pauwels, T. (2011). Measuring populism: Comparing two methods of content analysis. <i>West European Politics</i>, 34(6), 1272-1283. • Jungar, A. C., & Jupskås, A. R. (2014). Populist radical right parties in the Nordic region: A new and distinct party family?. <i>Scandinavian Political Studies</i>, 37(3), 215-238. • Manifesto Project (https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/) - one of the most widely used tool for analysis policy positionong of political parties based on quantitative content analysis.
<p>9 WEEK 19. 11.</p>	<p>Visual analysis in political communication Teacher: Alena Kluknavská</p> <p>In this lecture, we will explore the influential realm of visual analysis, with a particular focus on its application in the context of political communication. We will analyze how images, symbols, and visual representations are strategically employed by political actors and campaigns to convey messages, express emotions, and affect audience engagement.</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lilleker, D., & Veneti, A. (2023). Introduction to the Research Handbook on Visual Politics. In <i>Research Handbook on Visual Politics</i> (pp. xvii-xxx). Edward Elgar Publishing. • Farkas, X., & Bene, M. (2021). Images, politicians, and social media: Patterns and effects of politicians’ image-based political communication strategies on social media. <i>The international journal of press/politics</i>, 26(1), 119-142. • Farkas, X., Jackson, D., Baranowski, P., Bene, M., Russmann, U., & Veneti, A. (2022). Strikingly similar: Comparing visual political communication of populist and non-populist parties across 28 countries. <i>European Journal of Communication</i>, 37(5), 545-562. <p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moffitt, B. (2022). How do populists visually represent ‘the people’? A systematic comparative visual content analysis of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders’ Instagram accounts. <i>The International Journal of Press/Politics</i>, 19401612221100418. • Bossetta, M., & Schmøkel, R. (2023). Cross-platform emotions and audience engagement in social media political campaigning: Comparing candidates’ Facebook and Instagram images in the 2020 US election. <i>Political Communication</i>, 40(1), 48-68.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haim, M., & Jungblut, M. (2021). Politicians' self-depiction and their news portrayal: Evidence from 28 countries using visual computational analysis. <i>Political Communication</i>, 38(1-2), 55-74.
<p>10 WEEK 26. 11.</p>	<p>Critical discourse analysis in media research Teachers: Kateřina Kirkosová</p> <p>In this lecture, we will focus on the analysis of verbal language, on the ways social norms are re/negotiated in media and cultural discourses, and on how certain ideologies and positions may thus get privileged and taken for granted, while others are pushed aside as marginal, unimportant or deviant.</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowerdew, J. & Richardson, J.E. (2018). Introduction. In Flowerdew, J. & J.E. Richardson (Eds.), <i>The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies</i> (pp. 1-10). London: Taylor & Francis. • Mark Nartey (2022) Centering marginalized voices: a discourse analytic study of the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter, <i>Critical Discourse Studies</i>, 19:5, 523-538, DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2021.1999284 • Sophie Hines & Bianca Fileborn (2020) "Girl power gone wrong": #MeToo, Aziz Ansari, and media reporting of (grey area) sexual violence, <i>Feminist Media Studies</i>, 20:5, 639-656, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2019.1606843 <p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cammaerts, B. (2022). The abnormalisation of social justice: The 'anti-woke culture war' discourse in the UK. <i>Discourse & Society</i>, 33(6), 730–743. https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265221095407 • Huijae Yu (2023) 'If she asked for settlement money, she must not be a real victim': an interdisciplinary analysis of the discourse of victims and perpetrators of sexual violence, <i>Critical Discourse Studies</i>, 20:3, 333-344, DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2022.2102521 • Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (2002). Critical discourse analysis: history, agenda, theory, and methodology. In Wodak, R. & M. Meyer (Eds.), <i>Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis</i> (pp. 1-33). London: Sage Publications.
<p>11 WEEK 3. 12.</p>	<p>Content analysis on social media Teachers: Martina Novotná</p> <p>The lecture will cover the challenges and opportunities of using qualitative and quantitative content analysis to comprehensively understand social media content, particularly online political discussion.</p> <p>Mandatory literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bouvier, G., & Rasmussen, J. (2022). <i>Qualitative Research Using Social Media</i>. Routledge.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter: Qualitative content analysis: text and speech-based material (pp. 25-39) ● Rega, R., Marchetti, R., & Stanziano, A. (2023). Incivility in Online Discussion: An examination of impolite and intolerant comments. <i>Social Media + Society</i>, 9(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231180638 ● Vochocová, L., Numerator, D, Sedláčková, T. (2022). Opting for Polarising Emotions: Strategies of Czech Pro-Vaccination Discussants in the Emotionalized Public Sphere and Debate on a Measles Epidemic. <i>International Journal of Communication</i>. 16, 1006–1026. <p>Recommended literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humprecht, E., Hellmueller, L., & Lischka, J. A. (2020). Hostile Emotions in News Comments: A CrossNational Analysis of Facebook Discussions. <i>Social Media + society</i>, 6(1), 1 –12. ● Numerato, D., Vochocová, L., Štětka, V., & Macková, A. (2019). The vaccination debate in the “post-truth” era: Social media as sites of multi-layered reflexivity. <i>Social Health & Illness</i>, 41, 82–97.
<p>WEEK 12 10. 12.</p>	<p>Selected international studies: students’ presentations Teachers: Alena Kluknavská</p>
<p>WEEK 13 17. 12.</p>	<p>Selected international studies: students’ presentations Teachers: Vlastimil Havlík</p>