

Pol 217: Final Group Project

One of the central themes of this course has been a focus on how the expansion of media has led to the expansion of how we perceive politics (but in turn may also be leading to everyone having a different sense of reality). For this final project, you will (in a group of 3-4 people, giving us somewhere between 6-8 groups) explore how multiple media entities cover a topic, looking in particular at the focus of coverage, the framing, the bias, the amount of coverage, and anything else that jumps out at you. The general question here is how media covers your topic, but the larger question is how different sources cover media differently.

For this project, you will need to follow **at least 5** sources over an extended period of time (at least a few weeks). You will want to choose 1 of the following types of sources:

1. A television source (local news, national news, or cable)
2. A newspaper source (a newspaper's website)
3. An online source (not directly linked to a national newspaper or TV network)
4. A left-wing source
5. A right-wing source

Various sources can encompass multiple criteria here (for example, the editorial content of Fox News and MSNBC cover #s 1 and 5 and #s 1 and 4 respectively). The main goal is to see how different sources with different audiences (and different available time frames and space restrictions) cover issues.

Ideally, I would like you to put together your own groups, but if you don't know anyone in the class (or would rather allow me to randomly add you to a group, I'm happy to do that as well. After all groups are assembled (likely to be completed by the end of the week of September 30), your group will send me a list of Top 5 preferences on topics from the following list of 10 topics that have recently or likely will receive significant media attention in the next 2 months. Preference on topics will be given to emails I receive first.

TOPICS

- Brexit (with particular focus on the House of Commons)
- Climate Change and Global Warming
- Criminal Justice Policy
- The Democratic Primary
- Gubernatorial Elections in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi (Choose one of the three)
- Guns and 2nd Amendment Rights

- Immigration and Migration
- The Impeachment Inquiry into President Donald Trump (and Impeachment itself, if that occurs during the project)
- North Korea
- Vaping and e-cigarettes

This project consists of 3 parts: A 10-12-page group paper due on the final day of class (December 4th) outlining what you've found and the nature of coverage on your topic area, a 15-minute presentation that will summarize what you've been seeing and outlines the differences at the outset and throughout (I will leave formatting up to you but I recommend PowerPoint/Google Slides), and a brief, 1-2 page individual paper (also due on the last day of class) reflecting on the project itself.

Paper formatting: 12-point font, double spaced, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins (this is Word's default), citation method up to you but be consistent. You will want a clear thesis statement at the outset of the group paper outlining what you've found in exploration. Use the paper as well to structure your presentation.

We will likely end up with about 6-8 groups. Once groups are formalized and topics are given out, I will randomize and give out presentation dates. My estimate is that we would have 3-4 groups present on Monday, December 2, and 3-4 groups present on Wednesday, December 4. Regardless of presentation date, the paper itself is due to me over email on the 4th at the beginning of class, as well as the individual reflection papers (which I will set up an assignment forum for in Sakai).