

SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (SMPA)

Explanation of Course Numbers

- Courses in the 1000s are primarily introductory undergraduate courses
- Those in the 2000s to 4000s are upper-level undergraduate courses that can also be taken for graduate credit with permission and additional work assigned
- Those in the 6000s and 8000s are for master's, doctoral, and professional-level students
- The 6000s are open to advanced undergraduate students with approval of the instructor and the dean or advising office

SMPA 1000. Dean's Seminar. 3 Credits.

The Dean's Seminars provide Columbian College first-year students focused scholarship on specific intellectual challenges. Topics vary by semester; see department for more details.

SMPA 1050. Media in a Free Society. 3 Credits.

The role of mass communication in democratic political systems: informational requirements of democracy, sources of political information and the role of news media and other channels in creating and disseminating it; issues relating to propaganda and public information; and the interaction between information flows and democratic political culture. Not open to SMPA majors.

SMPA 1099. Variable Topics. 1-36 Credits.

SMPA 1225. Forensics Practice (Debate). 1 Credit.

SMPA 2101. Journalism: Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.

Overview of theories and key issues in journalism in the United States. News and democracy, the historical and social evolution of journalism, news values, journalism as occupation/profession, technologies, and changes in journalistic practices. Restricted to SMPA students.

SMPA 2102. Introduction to Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Basic concepts and theories of political communication; development of a framework for analyzing political communication; applications in the United States, other countries, and the international system. Open only to SMPA majors. Prerequisite: PSC 1002.

SMPA 2110W. Introduction to News Writing and Reporting. 3 Credits.

Fundamentals of news reporting and writing, with emphasis on print media; news judgment, information gathering skills, and crafting news and feature stories. Directly admitted freshmen may enroll in their second semester; all other freshmen require departmental permission. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement.

SMPA 2111W. Advanced News Reporting. 4 Credits.

Reporting, writing, and computer skills for covering beats and developing in-depth news stories. Techniques in researching, observing, and interviewing to frame stories of public interest; outside and in-class reporting and writing assignments. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Laboratory fee. Restricted to journalism and mass communication majors, or students with permission of the instructor. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 2112. Digital Media I: Introduction to Video Production. 3 Credits.

Foundational introduction to digital media production. Videography and non-linear editing, with emphasis on use in journalism and political communication. Laboratory fee. Restricted to students in the political communication and journalism and mass communication programs.

SMPA 2113. Digital Media II: Introduction to Web Production and Social Media. 3 Credits.

Foundational introduction to digital media production. Web content and design; photography and audio applied to the web; and using social media. Emphasis on use in journalism and political communication. Restricted to students in the political communication and journalism and mass communication programs. Prerequisites: SMPA 2112.

SMPA 2120. Public Opinion. 3 Credits.

Key aspects of the literature on public opinion, with emphasis on the role of media in opinion formation and change. Topics include the meaning of public opinion in a democratic society, a review of methods used to measure opinions, and media effects on opinion.

SMPA 2151. Research Methods. 3 Credits.

Processes of inquiry within mediated communication. The concepts of framing research questions, conducting literature reviews, developing a research design, and interpreting results of cultural and social science research within a societal framework. Prerequisites: STAT 1053 or STAT 1051 or STAT 1111 or STAT 1127.

SMPA 2152. Data Analysis for Journalism and Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Understanding, critiquing, and performing analysis of data sets with applications to journalism and political communication; using data to tell stories and answer questions. Analyzing A/B tests and field experiments; basics of visualizing data; regression. Laboratory fee. Prerequisites: STAT 1051 or STAT 1053 or STAT 1111 or STAT 1127.

SMPA 2173. Media Law. 3 Credits.

Freedom of the press. Changing laws of journalism and mass communication, including defamation, privacy, reporting access, obscenity and indecency, media ownership, intellectual property, advertising, and electronic communication.

SMPA 2177. Media History. 3 Credits.

American media from colonial times to the present, set against a backdrop of ongoing political, social, and economic developments. The development of press, radio, television, cable, satellite, and the Internet; government regulation and media relations; journalistic rights and responsibilities.

SMPA 3099. Variable Topics. 1-12 Credits.**SMPA 3150. Journalism Ethics. 3 Credits.**

Principles of media ethics; application to contemporary and developing issues and challenges in journalism. Restricted to juniors and seniors only. Prerequisite: SMPA 2111W.

SMPA 3193. Selected Topics in Journalism and Mass Communication Skills. 3-4 Credits.

Topics announced in Schedule of Classes. May be repeated for credit if the topic differs.

SMPA 3194. Selected Topics in Political Communication. 3-4 Credits.

Topic announced in the Schedule of Classes. May be repeated if the topic differs, but may only count once toward the political communication major.

SMPA 3195. Selected Topics in Journalism and Mass Communication. 3-4 Credits.

Topic announced in the Schedule of Classes. May be repeated for credit if the topic differs.

SMPA 3195W. Selected Topics in Journalism and Mass Communication. 3-4 Credits.

Topic announced in the Schedule of Classes. May be repeated for credit if the topic differs. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement.

SMPA 3196. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.

Students pursue a program of directed reading, research, and writing under the direction of a faculty advisor. Restricted to seniors.

SMPA 3197. Internship. 1-3 Credits.

Students spend at least five hours per week per credit with an approved news organization, agency, or office under the general guidance of a faculty advisor. Guidelines are available in the SMPA office and online. May be taken P/NP only. Restricted to SMPA majors and minors in the junior and senior year. May be repeated for up to 6 credits.

SMPA 3230. Reporting in the Digital Age. 3 Credits.

Understanding the emerging tools and developing the technological skills needed to analyze data for news. Students learn to find reliable information through social media and other online tools, use spreadsheets as a reporting tool, and download data for analysis, to create graphics, and to report and write stories based on the analysis. Laboratory fee. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3231. Sustainability Reporting. 3-4 Credits.

A hybrid, hands-on learning and reporting course with a deadline-oriented approach.

SMPA 3232. Online Journalism Workshop. 4 Credits.

Capstone production experience for SMPA majors. Provides advanced journalism and multimedia production skills needed to produce and report for a news website. Laboratory fee. Prerequisites: SMPA 2110W and SMPA 2112.

SMPA 3233. Photojournalism. 3 Credits.

Elements of effective news and feature photos, including study and evaluation of slides taken by students. Picture selection, cropping, captions. Student costs include film and developing. Laboratory fee.

SMPA 3234. Editing and Design for Print and Web. 3 Credits.

Editing, design, layout, and photo selection for newspapers, magazines, and web. Selecting and editing stories; writing headlines and photo captions; sizing and cropping graphic materials; laying out pages. Ethics of editing. Prerequisites: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3235W. Broadcast News Writing. 3 Credits.

Introduction to writing television news scripts based on actual events. Using workshop techniques, scripts are evaluated for content, structure, and use of words, pictures, and sound. Extensive writing and rewriting using streaming video from professional newscasts. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3236W. Broadcast News Reporting. 3 Credits.

Advanced techniques in television news reporting and editing. Students produce, shoot, and edit news packages by teaming up to report in the field. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisites: SMPA 2110W and SMPA 2112.

SMPA 3239. Television News Practicum. 4 Credits.

Capstone production experience for SMPA majors. Students report, produce, direct, and edit GW student news broadcast. Laboratory fee. Prerequisites: SMPA 3235W and SMPA 3236W.

SMPA 3240W. Washington Reporting. 3 Credits.

Examination of reporting and writing techniques employed in news coverage of the national government, with an emphasis on serving a regional readership or audience. Using Washington as a laboratory, students focus on contemporary issues and news makers in the legislative and executive branches of government. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3241W. Campaign Reporting. 3 Credits.

Development of news gathering and writing skills needed for the coverage of political campaigns. Using in-class exercises and outside assignments, students acquire reporting and writing proficiency to illuminate how campaigns work and how politics affects the lives of citizens. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3242. Investigative Reporting. 3 Credits.

Hands-on intensive training in reporting and writing in-depth enterprise news stories that expose hidden problems or wrongdoing. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3243W. Feature Writing. 3 Credits.

Learn to frame, research, and write a wide range of feature articles, including profiles, interviews and personal memoirs. Weekly writing assignments and a major final project are discussed and scrutinized in a workshop setting. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3244W. Narrative Journalism. 3 Credits.

The narrative or story-telling tradition in journalism. Students experiment with narrative techniques in a series of written exercises and a final project. Restricted to Enrollment is limited with preference given to upper-class SMPA majors and graduate students. Prerequisites: SMPA 2110W. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement.

SMPA 3245W. Editorial and Persuasive Writing. 3 Credits.

Techniques of editorial and column writing; editorial page and public affairs programming; function of commentary in a free press. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110.

SMPA 3246. Specialized Reporting. 3 Credits.

Advanced reporting in specialized fields, such as business, science, medicine. Topics and instructors vary each semester. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3246W. Specialized Reporting. 3 Credits.

Advanced reporting in specialized fields, such as business, science, medicine. Topics and instructors vary each semester. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement. Prerequisite: SMPA 2110W.

SMPA 3247. Documentary Production. 4 Credits.

Advanced techniques in writing, researching, producing, and editing long-form documentaries. Prerequisites: SMPA 2112 and SMPA 3479; or permission of the instructor.

SMPA 3333. Media Organizations and Audiences. 3 Credits.

Organizations and economic relationships in the U.S. entertainment industry, particularly television and film; relationships within and between organizations, how media industries operate, and how media professionals carry out their work.

SMPA 3348. Political Communication Ethics. 3 Credits.

Theoretical and practical examination of the ethical challenges faced by political communication professionals.

SMPA 3350. Public Diplomacy. 3 Credits.

The theory and practice of public diplomacy: informing, influencing, and establishing dialogue with international publics and institutions. A conceptual and historical examination of public diplomacy, current practices, and contemporary issues, including international information dissemination, educational and cultural exchange, and international broadcasting.

SMPA 3352. Principles of Public Relations. 3 Credits.

Principles, problems, ethics, and law of public relations for government, private concerns, educational and other public institutions.

SMPA 3353. Strategic Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Origins of strategic approaches to political communication; techniques. Use of strategic communication by individuals, groups, organizations, and governments in both domestic politics and policymaking and in the international system. Prerequisites: SMPA 2102 or permission of the instructor.

SMPA 3354. Political Campaign Communication. 4 Credits.

Communication aspects of political campaigns for candidates and ballot issues. Examination of techniques and channels of communication, role of communication in campaign strategy, ethics and implications of campaign decision making.

SMPA 3357W. Political Speech Writing. 3-4 Credits.

Theory and practice of public speaking in the context of mediated political communication. Students analyze, write, and give speeches. Includes a significant engagement in writing as a form of critical inquiry and scholarly expression to satisfy the WID requirement.

SMPA 3358. Strategic Practicum. 3 Credits.

Working in small groups, students research and develop full-scale plans for hypothetical, reality-based, strategic communication campaigns that test and apply theoretical advances in the field. Prerequisite: SMPA 3353.

SMPA 3428. Media, Politics, and Government. 3 Credits.

The impact of mainstream media and online outlets on politics and the governing process. Topics include the role of social media, online advertising, comedy shows, and the changing ways that voters receive information. Instructor permission required. Same As: PSC 2228.

SMPA 3450. Social Media. 3 Credits.

Practical and theoretical implications of social media; what it means to be social and how social media has changed how individuals interact and do business; birth and history of social media and why certain forms of social media flourish while others fail.

SMPA 3459. Language and Politics. 3 Credits.

Connections between language and the political world. Theory and practice of language in politics and the impact on the creation and consumption of politics.

SMPA 3460. Race, Media, and Politics. 3 Credits.

Examination of the place of race in American society and politics, with attention to the role of media reporting in helping to shape understanding of race and racial matters, public opinion about race, and race and electoral politics.

SMPA 3466. Media and War. 3 Credits.

Combines historic and contemporary examination of the relationship between media and war, with emphasis on two methods of analysis: Empirical—what does social science and historical research tell us; and normative—how should it be.

SMPA 3467. Globalization and Media. 3 Credits.

The media have played a central role in shaping the rapidly changing international scene—both its new global connectedness and its intensifying tribal impulses. At the same time, a new category of media has emerged which is truly global in scope, even while national and regional media have retained their own distinctive characteristics. The great challenges confronting media in a time of technological revolution and cultural tension are sometimes broadly shared across national frontiers and sometimes sharply differentiated. These themes are explored in this course which includes a short term abroad component in Paris over spring break. Students meet with journalists, executives, government officials and scholars who bring both an international and European perspective on major media issues.

SMPA 3468. Communication and Global Social Change. 3 Credits.

The study and practice of communication, development, and social change; theories and arguments informing debates and communication programs, merits and impact of various approaches, and design and implementation of communication programs.

SMPA 3469. International Communication. 3 Credits.

A survey of theoretical themes in international communication and their practical applications: information production and circulation, global media industries, and cultures.

SMPA 3471. Media in the Developing World. 3 Credits.

Contemporary views of media roles in developing nations. The role of the press and electronic media in economic, social, and national development, including media as agents of modernization, development journalism, and post-colonial responses to Western “cultural imperialism.” Media and Islam; role of the Internet; and theories of media and globalization.

SMPA 3472. Media and Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.

The emerging role of news media in international affairs and diplomacy. Globalization of news media advances in digital information and communication technologies and consequences for the international system and diplomacy.

SMPA 3475. Media Management. 3 Credits.

Decision making, strategic planning, and daily operations of all types of media organizations. Sales strategies, promotion, and research.

SMPA 3476. Media, Technology, and Culture. 3 Credits.

Concepts, principles, and socio-political implications of new and changing media and related technologies. Focus on intersection of new technologies and the anthropology of everyday life, in particular self-governance, policy development, cultural rupture and cohesion, the tension between national security and individual privacy rights, and First Amendment issues.

SMPA 3477. Information Technology and Politics. 3 Credits.

The effect of new information technologies on the media, public discourse, and political life; ways in which politics has shaped the development of technology.

SMPA 3479. Documentary. 3 Credits.

Origins, genres, and analysis of documentary film. Power, reach, and conceptual frameworks of documentary filmmaking.

SMPA 3480. The Future of Journalism. 3 Credits.

Reasons behind the decline of traditional newspaper and broadcast journalism; the impact of the web and other digital tools on traditional journalism values; new business models for news.

SMPA 4180. Online Journalism Workshop. 4 Credits.

Capstone experience for journalism majors. Advanced journalism and multimedia production skills needed to produce and report for a news website. Prerequisites: SMPA 2112 and SMPA 2113; and SMPA 2111W. (Same as SMPA 3232)

SMPA 4181. Television News Workshop. 4 Credits.

Capstone production experience for SMPA majors. Students report, produce, direct, and edit GW student news broadcasts. Laboratory fee. Prerequisites: SMPA 2111 or SMPA 2111W; and SMPA 2112, SMPA 2113 and SMPA 3236W. (Same as SMPA 3239)

SMPA 4182. Specialized Journalism Workshop. 4 Credits.

Capstone experience for journalism majors. In-depth study of advanced journalism skills or specific topic areas. Laboratory fee. Prerequisites: SMPA 2111W; and SMPA 2112 and SMPA 2113.

SMPA 4198. Special Honors Research Seminar. 3 Credits.

. Restricted to senior special honors candidates in political communication. Prerequisites: SMPA 4199 and permission of the department.

SMPA 4199. Senior Seminar. 3 Credits.

Capstone course limited to SMPA majors.

SMPA 5099. Variable Topics. 1-99 Credits.**SMPA 6201. Strategic Communications Skills. 1.5 Credit.**

Specialized skills, such as crisis communication, political uses of social media, digital PR, web development and strategy, and speechwriting. Topics vary by semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits provided the topic differs. See department for more details.

SMPA 6202. Media Effects, Public Opinion, and Persuasion. 3 Credits.

Theories of media effects and persuasion. Institutional functions and individual effects of mediated communication. Impacts of different textual content and format on individual thinking and emotion; forces that shape content production.

SMPA 6203. Information, Technology, and Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Issues pertaining to the political uses of the Internet, social media, and other new media; the effect that new information technologies have on political life and the ways in which politics shape technology development.

SMPA 6204. Strategic Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Theory, techniques, and implications of strategic communication as employed by individuals, groups, organizations, and governments to advance their interests; applications to non-electoral politics and policymaking; use of political, psychological, sociological, and other processes; methodological considerations; domestic and international applications.

SMPA 6205. Media, Development, and Globalization. 3 Credits.

Theories of media and globalization. The changing role of communication media, including the Internet and other newer technologies as well as traditional books, film, newspapers, telephone, and satellite in establishing closer relationships and interdependencies among people, their cultures, and their organizations in various countries.

SMPA 6206. Advocacy Communication and Political Networks. 3 Credits.

Cross-disciplinary approaches to global changes in the nature of governance and collective action. The role of new technology, social movements, NGOs and transnational advocacy networks. Information campaigns and advocacy communication.

SMPA 6207. Political Persuasion and Public Opinion. 3 Credits.

Major theories and perspectives in public opinion and persuasion research. Information processing, psychological models applied to politics and media research (cognition, attitudes, resistance, heuristics), public opinion dynamics.

SMPA 6208. Politics and Public Relations Fundamentals. 3 Credits.

Basic knowledge of the skills to design, implement, and evaluate public relations activities. Case studies of public relations applied to politics. Techniques and tactics used by public relations professionals.

SMPA 6210. Media and Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.

The effects of U.S. media on U.S. and foreign governments, and of foreign media on the U.S.; effects of other countries' media on each other; the impact of the Internet, inexpensive global phoning, CNN, al Jazeera, and other newer technologies and networks on the stuff of international relations: diplomacy, military operations, trade negotiations.

SMPA 6220. Strategic Practicum. 3 Credits.

Design of strategy for an information and influence campaign. Research on issues and actors, identification of critical decision-making points and key constituencies, development of communication strategies more likely to achieve stated objectives of a campaign. Prerequisite: SMPA 6204. For students doing a strategic communication capstone project, this course replaces SMPA 6297.

SMPA 6230. Principles and Methods of Documentary Filmmaking. 6 Credits.

Analytical and practical exploration of the elements of documentary filmmaking. The genres of nonfiction filmmaking; fundamentals of film conceptualization, documentary screenwriting, story structure, and production theory; and basic practical elements of production. Permission of the instructor required prior to enrollment.

SMPA 6231. Documentary Filmmaking Practicum. 3 Credits.

Intensive practical experience in documentary film production. Students produce a 10 to 15-minute documentary film on a selected topic. Emphasis on major markers in film production: treatment and script writing, location shooting, Final Cut Pro editing, graphics, music, and final sound mix. Prerequisites: SMPA 6230 and permission of the instructor.

SMPA 6241. Research Design. 3 Credits.

Design, applications, and limitations of quantitative research as applied to the field of media and strategic communication. Framing of research questions, identification of variables and formulation of hypotheses, measurement, sampling, data gathering techniques, and preparation of research reports. Brief exposure to qualitative research.

SMPA 6242. Analytics and Data Analysis for Strategic Communication. 3 Credits.

Familiarity with major data analytic and analysis techniques used by strategic communication practitioners. Topics covered include basic statistical analysis, multivariate regression, experiments, focus groups, and survey research. Prerequisite: An undergraduate statistics course.

SMPA 6250. Topics in Media Processes and Institutions. 3 Credits.

Topics address such issues as the history of media content, institutions, and process; impact of changing communication technology on culture; history and development of mass-produced culture; and professional ideology and practice of journalism. May be repeated for credit provided the topic differs.

SMPA 6270. Special Topics in Media and Public Affairs. 3 Credits.

Topics vary by semester. Consult the Schedule of Classes for more details.

SMPA 6272. Media Bias, Power, and Democracy. 3 Credits.

Consideration of the available scholarly evidence in order to develop a more sophisticated empirical and theoretical understanding of what constitutes media bias. How do we recognize and measure bias? Are there patterns in decisions about news coverage that indicate bias? Which political parties and economic interests benefit from patterns of news coverage?.

SMPA 6274. Media and War. 3 Credits.

Historic and contemporary examination of the media's role in wartime. Topics include covering war, the role of the media in generating support for foreign intervention, propaganda, effects of war coverage on public opinion, media and genocide, and public diplomacy. Ethical, philosophical and political implications of the media's role.

SMPA 6275. Public Diplomacy. 3 Credits.

The theory and practice of public diplomacy: informing, influencing, and establishing dialogue with international publics and institutions. A conceptual and historical examination of public diplomacy, current practices, and contemporary issues, including international information dissemination, educational and cultural exchange, and international broadcasting.

SMPA 6276. Global Communication. 3 Credits.

Survey of the economic, political, and social dimensions of media producers, infrastructures and patterns of circulation operating across national borders. Covers the dominant theories, fields, and professions that comprise global communication. Restricted to students in the MA programs in global communication and in media and strategic communication.

SMPA 6280. Science and Environmental Communication. 3 Credits.

The theory and practice of communicating with the public, the press and policy makers about science and the environment.

SMPA 6296. Directed Readings and Research. 3 Credits.

Independent research with SMPA faculty member. Must be approved in advance by supervising professor and director of graduate studies.

SMPA 6297. Media Capstone Project. 3 Credits.

Production of a professional-level media project exploring a salient topic in depth. The final project must be research-based and adhere to professional norms specific to the project, as determined by the advisor and reader(s). Restricted to graduate students in the MA in media and strategic communication program.

SMPA 6298. Strategic Communication Capstone Project. 3 Credits.

Students apply knowledge of the theory and techniques of strategic political communication, as well as related subject-area knowledge, to design a strategic communication campaign grounded in real-world, real-time issues and data. Restricted to graduate students in MA in media and strategic communication. Prerequisites: SMPA 6220.

SMPA 6999. Thesis Research. 3 Credits.

Development of a thesis project and accompanying research. Restricted to students in the MA in media and strategic communication program.