



COURSE DATA

DATA SUBJECT

Code: 44891
Name: Mass Media and Public Opinion
Cycle: Master's Degree
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
2239 - Master's Degree in New Journalism, Political Communication and Knowledge So	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	1	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
2239 - Master's Degree in New Journalism, Political Communication and Knowledge So	Medios de comunicación y opinión pública	COMPULSORY

COORDINATION

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SUMMARY

This subject aims to introduce students to the transformations experienced by the concept of public opinion in liberal-democratic societies, highly mediated by the mass media and digital communication networks. In addition to the major problems linked to the formation of public opinion in liberal-democratic political systems raised by Lippmann, Dewey, Noelle-Neumann, Mills, Ginsberg and others, there are now the problems of what Bernard Manin has called an audience democracy, that is, the existence of democratic systems that are highly mediated by the media and by the adaptation of the political message, forms of leadership and political communication to the routines of the media. In addition to a general introduction to the subject, looking at the relationship between public opinion and the media through opinion polls and social media, the module sets out three areas of development of the subject. Firstly, the changing link between political-ideological leadership and democracy. This will range from the sociological models of leadership established by Weber to the new forms of leadership characteristic of the society of the spectacle. Secondly, the historical relationship between media and politics will establish the typology and intensity of the media used throughout history to seduce the governed, as well as the theocracy of power and the relationship between communication, power and (official) memory. Thirdly, and bearing in mind that in the knowledge society and in the democracy of audiences, issues related to science (e.g. climate change) and technology are pressing, the links between public authorities, experts, mediators and audiences in the transmission of scientific or technological knowledge will be studied. Overall, the aim is to study in depth the ways in which public opinion is created in societies that are highly mediated by



mass media and digital communication.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Achieve the organisational and relational capacity to integrate personal work and capacities into the collective work carried out in teams, even in multidisciplinary environments.

Be able to analyse large masses of data, opinion polls and/or measurements of a communicative nature (such as audience) in social, political and cultural processes.

Be able to carry out theoretical work in the specific field of communication and journalism.

Be able to differentiate and discuss ways of transmitting all kinds of public policies from the institutions to the citizenry.

Know the difference between informational communication and persuasive communication, both within organisations and in the relationship between organisations, society and their political communities.

Know the traditional and current relationship between public opinion and the media, taking into account different social and political contexts, the implementation of the knowledge society and the relevance of ICTs.

Respect and promote fundamental rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination on the grounds of economic status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or beliefs.

Respect and promote the principles of equality between men and women, universal accessibility for people with functional diversity, democratic values, the culture of peace and sustainability.

Ser capaz de realizar trabajos prácticos, adaptados a entornos comunicacionales reales, con especificidad en los campos de la comunicación política y/o de las nuevas especializaciones periodísticas, aplicando los conocimientos, las capacidades y las habilidades adquiridas.

Ser capaz de vincular las tradiciones informativas y las tradiciones políticas en las democracias contemporáneas, pero también en sistemas políticos de otra naturaleza, para definir los campos de la opinión pública, la acción comunicativa o la acción social.



Show sensitivity for work carried out with rigor, commitment and emphasis, by using inclusive, non-sexist and non-discriminatory language.

Students should apply acquired knowledge to solve problems in unfamiliar contexts within their field of study, including multidisciplinary scenarios.

Students should demonstrate self-directed learning skills for continued academic growth.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1.

Starting from Bernard Manin's definition of what is known as audience democracy, characterised by the increasing interrelation between the democratic political system and the model of mass media audiences (especially television), it will be established how the relationship between democratic political systems and public opinion has been altering, what role the mass media have played in this interaction and what role social networks are currently playing. Public opinion will not be viewed through a normative definition, but rather through the historical patterns that have determined how it has been shaped and its role in political regimes.

2.

What is leadership and how many types of leadership exist? How has the nature of leadership been altered throughout history? What is leadership like in democratic societies? The aim is to answer these questions starting from Weber's classic definitions of the forms and typologies of leadership, appealing to the political tradition on charisma (caudillaje, populism, etc.), to arrive at the ways in which politicians and political power currently use both conventional mass media and social networks, in the search for a public image and public leadership structure. A special effort will be made to provide a framework, that of the society of the spectacle (Debord, Schwartzberg, Postman, etc.), to the relationships between leadership, politics and forms of communication in today's societies.

3.

The aim of this thematic unit is to explain how the technocommunication explosion of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries has modified (along with other variables) the way in which political discourse is constructed in the eyes of the public. From the typology of the media to the forms of political visibility have varied substantially and can only be understood historically. Today it is not necessary to share the same space because visibility is established as a given fact. However, as Thompson argues, modern mediated visibility is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, politics takes advantage of the media and adapts to its language to build emotional bonds with audiences, but, on the other hand, they are exposed to new dangers. The contents of the unit will establish, diachronically, how political visibility has changed over time, as well as the ways in which public authorities, rulers and aspiring rulers relate to the governed.



4.

This thematic unit studies the links between public authorities, experts, mediators and audiences in the transmission of scientific or technological knowledge. In today's knowledge societies, scientific and technological popularization no longer falls on the bottom line of those people who, out of educational curiosity, are interested in matters of high culture; in fact, it has become a commonplace that is talked about in all types of information formats, regardless of their medium. But, properly? through the right mediator? with an understandable language? Scientific and technological dissemination is also a crucial issue for political decision-making in the societies of the third millennium, since understanding the most pressing problems of humanity (from the demographic explosion to climate change) necessarily requires an understanding of the scientific dimension of these issues.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	37,50
Total hours	37,50

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	12,50
Individual or group project	50,00
Independent study and work	50,00
Preparation of lessons	25,00
Preparation for assessment activities	0,00
Resolution of case studies	12,50
Total hours	150,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION

The evaluation system of the subject will be carried out in accordance with the following evaluation elements



1. Multiple-choice exam on the subject: 30%.
2. Attendance and participation in cooperative work, debates, seminars, workshops and conferences: 20%.
3. Evaluation of course work: 50%.

Second sitting: marks will be kept from the first to the second sitting (not from one year to the next), so that only those elements failed in the first sitting will need to be made up.

Conditions:

- It will be necessary to pass the exam with a minimum of five points out of ten in order to average with the rest of the elements of the evaluation.
- It is necessary to attend 80% of the classes in order to be evaluated for class participation.
- **ATTENTION:** The papers, exams or any other activity that students prepare for their teaching assessment must be original, without plagiarism or improper use of artificial intelligence. The detection of plagiarism, as a serious offence, will result in immediate suspension from the respective course. Copying or facilitating the copying of work between students on the degree course, irregular access to or early appropriation of the content of a test or exam, facilitating or procuring the appropriation, alteration or destruction of the content or results of an assessable activity, and impersonation in exams will also be considered serious misconduct and will therefore lead to immediate suspension from the exam session.

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