



**Jindal School of Government
and Public Policy**
India's First Public Policy School



O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service

Political Communication – Power, Purpose and Potential

Course Description

Course Information

Course Instructor: Ms. Priyanka Chaturvedi

Course Duration: August 2026 – December 2026

Credit Hours:

Prerequisites: None

Equivalent Courses: Not Applicable

Exclusive Courses: Not Applicable

Political Communication – Power, Purpose and Potential is an interdisciplinary course that explores how communication shapes political processes, public opinion, and democratic life, with a particular emphasis on India's vibrant, complex, and exceptional democracy. Drawing from political science, media studies, sociology, psychology, and digital culture studies, the course introduces students to foundational theories such as agenda-setting, framing, priming, propaganda, political persuasion, and mediatization. Students will examine how political messages influence perception, identity, participation, and behavior in both traditional and digital environments.

The course investigates how governments, political parties, media organizations, civil society groups, influencers, and citizens strategically use communication to inform, persuade, mobilize, and sustain political power. Particular attention is given to India's democratic landscape, where linguistic diversity, regional identities, social inequalities, and rapidly expanding digital platforms interact in shaping political narratives and electoral outcomes. Students will also engage with comparative global perspectives to understand how political communication operates in different democratic and authoritarian contexts.

Through the analysis of speeches, campaign advertisements, debates, political branding, news coverage, memes, social media campaigns, and public discourse, students will critically evaluate persuasive strategies and narrative techniques. The course combines theoretical understanding with practical application, enabling students to design communication strategies, create audience-specific political messaging, assess media effectiveness, and critically analyze political campaigns in the age of artificial intelligence, algorithms, and data analytics.

Ethical issues including misinformation, disinformation, fake news, propaganda, media bias, political polarization, surveillance, and digital manipulation are integrated throughout the

course. By situating political communication within the changing global order and the evolving media ecosystem, the course equips students with analytical, research, and practical skills necessary for critically understanding and participating in contemporary political communication.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Develop applied political communication strategies
- Create targeted political narratives for different audiences
- Apply theory to contemporary political communication practice
- Designing integrated communication strategies
- Audience analysis and message customization
- Crisis communication and reputation management
- Speech writing and rapid response communication
- Media planning and campaign simulations
- Future trends in political communication

Recommended Skills Developed

- Critical thinking and political analysis
- Media literacy and digital literacy
- Strategic communication and persuasive writing
- Research and analytical skills
- Public speaking and presentation skills
- Ethical reasoning in communication and governance

Course Modules

Module 1: Political Communication in India: From Colonial Resistance to Digital Democracy

This module introduces students to the historical evolution of political communication in India, the philosophy around it, tracing its development from the colonial period to the contemporary digital age. Students examine how newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, protest songs, public meetings, and nationalist movements were used as tools of resistance during the freedom struggle. The module explores the communication strategies of key political leaders and movements in mobilizing public opinion against colonial rule and shaping early democratic consciousness.

The module then examines political communication in post-independence India, including the rise of radio, television, political advertising, electoral campaigns, and party-centred

communication. Students analyse how caste, religion, language, regional identity, and political symbolism became central to democratic mobilization in India. The module concludes by examining the transition to digital politics, where social media platforms, data-driven campaigns, influencers, and algorithmic communication increasingly shape political narratives, elections, and public discourse in the world's largest democracy.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the historical evolution of political communication in India
- Examine communication strategies during the Indian freedom movement
- Analyse the role of media and identity in post-independence politics
- Evaluate the impact of digital platforms on contemporary Indian democracy

Module 2: India's Political Communication Landscape

This module examines the distinctiveness of political communication in India by analysing how caste, religion, language, region, and identity intersect with media and electoral politics from the rest of the world. Students explore the evolution of communication strategies in Indian democracy, from traditional mass mobilization to digital campaigning and personality-driven politics. The module also focuses on governance communication, welfare narratives, and the role of symbolism, slogans, and leadership branding in shaping public opinion across India's diverse political landscape.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand the uniqueness of India's political communication system
- Analyse identity-driven political narratives
- Examine communication strategies used in Indian politics

Module 4: Election Campaigns, Branding, and Political Strategy

This module focuses on the structure and evolution of modern political campaigns. Students examine how political actors build brands, construct leadership images, and strategically communicate with different voter groups through slogans, manifestos, and targeted messaging. The module analyses both grassroots mobilization and digital campaigning while introducing students to campaign management techniques, political consulting, voter segmentation, and the role of communication war rooms in contemporary elections.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand the structure of modern election campaigns
- Evaluate branding strategies used by political actors

- Develop strategic approaches to campaign communication

Module 5: Television, Spectacle, and News Politics

This module investigates how television and news media shape political discourse through spectacle, performance, and continuous visibility. Students analyse debate culture, breaking news formats, sensationalism, media trials, and infotainment as influential elements of contemporary political communication. The module also critically evaluates journalistic credibility, political bias, and the transformation of political authority in a media environment where visibility and performance often become more influential than policy substance.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Analyse how television shapes political narratives
- Critically assess political journalism and media bias
- Examine spectacle as a political communication strategy

Module 6: Social Media, Algorithms, and Digital Mobilisation

This module explores the growing influence of social media platforms on political communication, participation, and mobilisation. Students examine how platforms such as Instagram, X, WhatsApp, and YouTube shape political visibility through algorithms, virality, and creator-driven content. The module studies digital tribes, echo chambers, influencer politics, and hashtag activism while also analysing the challenges of platform governance, regulation, and democratic accountability in highly networked societies.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand how platforms influence political participation
- Analyse algorithmic control over visibility and discourse
- Evaluate social media mobilisation strategies

Module 7: Artificial Intelligence, Data, and Computational Politics

This module examines how artificial intelligence, big data, and computational systems are transforming political communication and democratic processes. Students explore data-driven campaigning, behavioural targeting, voter profiling, and the increasing use of AI-generated political content such as deepfakes and synthetic media. The module critically analyses automation, bots, and algorithmic governance while engaging with ethical concerns surrounding surveillance, manipulation, and the concentration of informational power in digital democracies.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Examine the role of data and AI in politics
- Understand computational propaganda techniques
- Critically evaluate ethical concerns in AI-driven politics

Module 8: Misinformation, Propaganda, and Information Warfare

This module investigates the rise of misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda within contemporary political ecosystems. Students analyse how fake news, coordinated trolling, emotional manipulation, and digital influence campaigns shape political behaviour and public discourse during elections, conflicts, and crises. The module also examines information warfare, geopolitical influence operations, and the role of nationalism and fear in political persuasion, while introducing students to fact-checking practices, verification tools, and media literacy frameworks.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Identify propaganda and disinformation techniques
- Analyse the political effects of misinformation
- Apply verification tools to political content

Module 9: Gender, Identity, and Political Communication

This module explores how identity shapes political communication in contemporary societies, with particular attention to gender, youth, representation, and cultural polarization. Students examine gendered experiences in political and digital spaces, including online harassment, hate speech, and unequal participation in public discourse. The module also analyses identity politics, youth-led digital activism, feminist communication movements, and the representation of marginalized communities within media and political institutions.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Analyse gendered experiences in political communication
- Understand identity-based political mobilisation
- Evaluate representation and exclusion in political discourse

Module 10: Political Communication, Populism, and Global Power

This module situates political communication within broader global and geopolitical transformations. Students examine the rise of populism, charismatic leadership, nationalism, and digital political culture across different regions of the world. The module explores public diplomacy, soft power, global media systems, and political communication during wars, crises, and international conflicts, enabling students to understand how states and political actors strategically shape national and international narratives.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Examine global trends in political communication
- Analyse populist and nationalist communication strategies
- Understand communication as an instrument of geopolitical power

Module 11: Ethics, Surveillance, and Democracy

This module critically examines the ethical and democratic challenges emerging from contemporary communication systems. Students explore debates surrounding privacy, surveillance, free speech, censorship, platform accountability, and data capitalism in increasingly digitized societies. The module analyses how governments, corporations, and digital platforms influence public discourse, regulate information, and shape democratic trust while raising questions about the future of citizenship, rights, and democratic participation.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Critically examine ethical dilemmas in political communication
- Understand tensions between regulation and freedom
- Analyse surveillance and corporate power in democracies

Module 12: Political Communication Studio – Narratives, Strategy, and Practice

This applied module enables students to translate theoretical knowledge into practical political communication strategies. Students engage in campaign simulations, audience analysis, speech writing, rapid-response communication, and digital storytelling exercises using formats such as memes, short-form video, and social media campaigns. The module also introduces crisis communication and reputation management, encouraging students to critically assess how political narratives are designed, amplified, and contested in contemporary democratic environments.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Develop practical political communication strategies
- Create audience-specific political messages
- Apply theoretical concepts to real-world communication scenarios

Suggested Assessment Structure: Continuous Assessment

- Class Participation and Discussion – 10%
- Media Analysis Assignments – 15%

- Campaign Case Study Presentation – 15%
- Mid-Semester Examination – 20%
- Research Paper/Project – 20%
- Final Examination or Campaign Simulation Project – 20%

Teaching Methods

- Lectures and interactive discussions
- Case studies from India and around the world
- Analysis of speeches, advertisements, debates, and social media campaigns
- Workshops on political messaging and media analysis
- Simulation exercises and campaign design activities
- Guest lectures from journalists, strategists, and policymakers

Reading List

S. No.	Title	Author(s)/Editor(s) /Creator(s)
1	<i>India After Gandhi</i>	Ramachandra Guha
2	<i>Animal Farm</i>	George Orwell
3	<i>Political Communication and Mobilisation: The Hindi Media in India</i>	Taberez Ahmed Neyazi
4	<i>Political Campaigning in Digital India</i>	Anil Varughese & Holli A. Semetko
5	<i>The Incarcerated Press: News Media and the State in India</i>	Satyajit Dasgupta
6	<i>The New Experts: Populist Elites and Technocratic Promises in Modi's India</i>	Anuradha Sajjanhar
7	<i>Letters for a Nation</i>	Jawaharlal Nehru
8	<i>Impact of Social Media on Indian Political System</i>	Dr. A. Ahmad
9	<i>Political Communication in Contemporary India</i>	Yatindra Singh Sisodia & Pratip Chattopadhyay (Eds.)
10	<i>The Verdict: Decoding India's Elections</i>	Prannoy Roy
11	<i>The Game of Votes: Visual Media Politics and Elections in the Digital Era</i>	Farhat Basir Khan
12	<i>The Chaos Machine</i>	Max Fisher
13	<i>Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear</i>	Frank Luntz
14	<i>India Dissents</i>	Ashok Vajpeyi (Ed.)
15	<i>The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age</i>	Archie Brown
16	<i>Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind</i>	Yuval Noah Harari

17	<i>History and Debates of Constituent Assembly of India</i>	Dr. Kartikeswar Patra
18	<i>Women Voters in Indian Elections: Changing Trends and Emerging Patterns</i>	Sanjay Kumar (Ed.)
19	<i>India Elections: The Power of Like, Share and Vote</i>	Palki Sharma
20	<i>Grand Tamasha</i>	Milan Vaishnav
21	<i>The Backstage of Democracy</i>	Joyojeet Pal
22	<i>While We Watched</i>	Vinay Shukla
23	<i>An Insignificant Man</i>	Khushboo Ranka & Vinay Shukla

Module	Reading
Module 1: Political Communication: The Power, The Purpose and The Potential	<i>Political Communication and Mobilisation</i> (Neyazi); <i>Letters for a Nation</i> (Nehru); <i>India After Gandhi</i> (Guha)
Module 2: Media, Democracy, and Public Opinion	<i>The Incarcerated Press</i> (Dasgupta); <i>Animal Farm</i> (Orwell); <i>India Dissents</i> (Vajpeyi)
Module 3: Election Campaigns, Political Branding, and Leadership	<i>The Verdict</i> (Roy); <i>The Myth of the Strong Leader</i> (Brown); <i>Words That Work</i> (Luntz)
Module 4: Television Politics and the Spectacle of Democracy	<i>The Game of Votes</i> (Khan); <i>While We Watched</i>
Module 5: Social Media, Algorithms, and Platform Politics	<i>Impact of Social Media on Indian Political System</i> (Ahmad); <i>The Chaos Machine</i> (Fisher); <i>India Elections: The Power of Like, Share and Vote</i>
Module 6: Artificial Intelligence, Data, and Computational Politics	<i>The Chaos Machine</i> (Fisher); selected contemporary reports on AI and political communication
Module 7: Propaganda, Misinformation, and Information Warfare	<i>Animal Farm</i> (Orwell); <i>Words That Work</i> (Luntz); contemporary misinformation case studies
Module 8: Gender, Identity, and Political Communication	<i>Women Voters in Indian Elections</i> (Kumar); selected reports on gender and political participation

Module 9: Political Communication, Populism, and Global Power	<i>The New Experts</i> (Sajjanhar); <i>Sapiens</i> (Harari); <i>Grand Tamasha</i> episodes
Module 10: Ethics, Surveillance, and Democracy	<i>India Dissents</i> (Vajpeyi); <i>Political Communication in Contemporary India</i> (Sisodia & Chattopadhyay)
Module 11: Youth, Digital Culture, and Political Participation	<i>The Chaos Machine</i> (Fisher); <i>The Backstage of Democracy</i> (Pal)
Module 12: Political Communication Studio: Narratives, Strategy, and Practice	<i>Words That Work</i> (Luntz); <i>Political Campaigning in Digital India</i> (Varughese & Semetko); campaign simulations and digital case studies