

IMS FSV UK – Katedra severoamerických studií

Summer Semester 2019

Tomáš Klvaňa, PhD, MA (Office hours by appointment)

Course	AMERICAN POLITICAL THEATER (MAJOR ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC DEBATES IN THE US)
Class Description	<p>The aim of the course is to monitor and analyze events in US politics in real-time, while profiling key Washington media players and their unique selling points on political/media stage. Looking at important issues that shape the public debate in the US, the course will provide insight into issues that are crucial for understanding contemporary US politics. Monitoring their dynamism requires reading and following real-time sources of information and opinion. To use the expression of Timothy Garton Ash, the course gives you a picture of "history of the present".</p> <p>The focus here is twofold; on issues, for example Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, foreign policy crises, #MeToo campaign, feminism, campus controversy, never-Trump movement, budget negotiations and other emerging themes and topics; and also on key Beltway media actors. Students will look at their media personae through the analytical lens of Aristotelian dramatic perspective.</p>
Assessment Components	<p>10% -- Class Attendance</p> <p>15% -- Class Activity: Discussion moderated by professor based on course reading, videos and lectures</p> <p>35% -- Teams of students leading class discussions on key Beltway actors</p> <p>40% -- Profiles of key Beltway actors (6 double-spaced pages, applying Aristotelian dramatic perspective)</p> <p><i>A failure to submit or fulfill any of the above shall result in the F grade for the course.</i></p>
Assessment Expectations	<p>Grade A: Excellent work demonstrating a critical and observant approach to the subject, sound research and an ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively. Grade B: Very good work. Grade C: Satisfactory work. Grade F: Failure to achieve a passable standard.</p>
Grading	A = 91-100, B = 81-90, C = 71-80, F = 70 and below
Required Text(s)	<p>Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aristotle – Poetics (<i>book</i>)• Mark Leibovich – This Town. Two Parties and a Funeral—plus plenty of valet parking! (<i>book</i>)• Mark Leibovich – This Town Melts Down (The New York Times Magazine <i>article</i>)• Articles and commentaries by key contemporary Beltway actors – before each class students must read at least two short texts by the personalities <p>Videos and Podcasts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numerous videos and podcasts by key contemporary Beltway actors

Course Schedule

1. **February 19**
Introduction and Course Requirements
2. **February 26**
Rachel Maddow, talk show host, MSNBC
Aristotelian Dramatic Perspective
Reading: Aristotle's *Poetics*
3. **March 5**
John Oliver, comedian, HBO
Inside the Beltway, the Broadway of Politics
Reading: Leibovich, *This Town*, Prologue and Chapters 1-5
4. **March 12**
Jordan Peterson, psychologist and public intellectual
Reading: Leibovich, *This Town*, Ch 6-10
5. **March 19**
Ben Shapiro, talk show host, editor, The Daily Wire
Reading: Leibovich, *This Town*, Ch 11-Epilogue
6. **March 26**
Naomi Klein, journalist and activist, author of No Logo and Shock Doctrine
Reading: Leibovich, *This Town Melts Down*
7. **April 2**
Ta-Nehisi Coates, author, The Atlantic
8. **April 9**
Bill Kristol, editor, The Weekly Standard
9. **April 16**
Andrew Sullivan, writer, New York Magazine
10. **April 23**
Sean Hannity, talk show host, Fox News Channel
11. **April 30**
Terry Gross, interviewer, NPR Fresh Air
12. **May 7 Charles University Rector's Day – No Classes**
13. **May 14**
David Axelrod, The Axe Files podcast/CNN; University of Chicago Institute of Politics
14. **Final Profiles Due: May 21**