“The most important [political] office, and the one which all of us can and should fill, is that of private citizen”
- Louis D. Brandeis

“There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance”
- Socrates

**Faculty Head**: Eileen McNamara, Professor of the Practice of Journalism and American Studies

**Note**: This is a preliminary description of the syllabus and may be subject to some change. Students are encouraged to contact me using the information above with any further questions

**Course description**: Wherever your time at Brandeis may take you, a solid grasp of media, politics and the relationship between them will be critical for your success as good citizens and leaders. From knowing how to critically inform yourselves while being aware of the limitations and advantages of news sources and journalists, to skillfully expressing yourselves and getting your word out there in speaking and writing and understanding how to work through political systems – making a difference requires an understanding of media and political environments.

The Media and Politics Experiential Learning Practicum is designed to push students to strengthen their abilities exactly in those ways. Throughout the fall semester, we will engage with media and politics in the following ways:

- Closely follow, debate and analyze current events through a diversity of media outlets and information sources representing a wide array of opinions. During an election year, this is bound to be particularly fascinating.
- Develop a basic understanding of the history and development of American Journalism and its relationship with the political world, from the constitution to the contemporary world of social media.
- Meet experts from Brandeis and beyond to discuss acute social issues, and the way they are represented by the media and handled by the political system. Topics will include: Race, gender, law, foreign policy, the environment, as well as topics important to students.
- Make strong connections, both during guest lectures and in other ways, that would help you make the most out of your time at Brandeis.
- Speak out – by honing writing and speaking skills and working to get them published.
- Discuss campus and local community issues students are passionate about, and work together to design projects to address them.
**Course Materials**

Below is a partial and non-finalized list of materials for the course. Excerpts from books will be assigned, not full books. The final list will be larger and may change slightly, but this should give students an idea of what we will be looking at:

- A wide variety of media outlets from across the political spectrum, including but not limited to the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *mic.com*, *breitbart.com*, *CNN*, *Fox News*, *MSNBC*, *Vice News*, and others.
- *Public Opinion*, Walter Lipmann 1921
- Court Case – New York Times Vs. Sullivan (1964)

**Guest Speakers**: Throughout the course leading faculty and administration members will join the students to discuss the issues in question. Guest lectures fulfill two objectives: Provide expertise essential to exploring issues of media and politics, while allowing students to get to know exceptional campus figures on a personal level and begin building relationships with them.

Below is a list of likely guest lecturers. The list may change, but you can expect at least six guest speakers.

- Eileen McNamara, Professor of the Practice of Journalism and American Studies, Pulitzer Prize Winner (Faculty Leader of the Media and Politics)
- Michael Willrich, Professor of History. Expertise: United States social, legal, and political history.
- Steve Whitfield, Professor of American Studies. Expertise: Twentieth-century American political and cultural history
- Dr. Andrew Flagel, Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment. Teaches public speaking.
- Kanan Makiya, Professor of Islamic and Middle East Studies. Expertise: the Arab and Muslim world and its interaction with the west.
- Anita Hill, Professor of Social Policy. Expertise: Social Policy, Law, and Women's and Gender Studies

**Expectations**: As a two-credit course, class will meet once a week for 80 minute session and students will be expected to spend 4.5 hours per week working outside the classroom. Times and locations TBD.

The grading criteria are yet to be finalized, but students can expect an emphasis on class participation and demonstrated engagement with the topics. Assignments will likely include weekly responses on current events, class presentations, potentially one short paper and a project plan towards the end of the semester.

I look forward to meeting all of you, and for a great semester

Chen Arad, Instructor