

Political Journalism in 2019

A study group with Edward-Isaac Dove, *The Atlantic*

Meeting information

The study group will meet on Tuesdays, September 24, October 22, and November 19 from 1pm to 3pm in the Kim Koo Library at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, 111 Thayer Street.

What is “the media” anyway, and what role does it play in shaping American politics? How has that changed, especially since the 2016 election? What lessons were learned, and what lessons should have been learned, by political journalists since the last presidential election? This three-part seminar will explore all those questions and more, right at the moment that the 2020 presidential election—arguably the most important in American history, and certainly the most media-saturated—takes off.

Edward-Isaac Dove is a staff writer for *The Atlantic*. He started his career covering New York politics and went on to be the chief White House correspondent during the Obama White House. He serves as *The Atlantic's* chief campaign correspondent for the 2020 Democratic primary race. He has reported from Riyadh to Cedar Rapids, from New Hampshire to Hiroshima. His work has been recognized by the New York Press Club and Society of Professional Journalists, and is the winner of the 2017 Merriman Smith Award from the White House Correspondents Association. He will also be the author of the upcoming “You Are Right to Be Concerned: Democrats in Crisis in the Age of Trump,” due out from Viking in 2021.

1. How We Got Here

- Background on me, and how I got into the field
- The ongoing revolution in the media landscape - what is “the media” anyway?
- A look at what has changed in how presidential campaigns are covered, and what campaigns do in response, from 2012-2016, and from 2016-now.

Assignment: Follow a story about a political event on Twitter, in a daily newspaper article, in internet coverage and in a TV segment. What differences do you see? / Write your own 3-400 word version of it after.

2. Where We Are

- What differences does the medium and the timing make in coverage?
- What are the storylines that have been forming the backdrop to the 2020 campaign coverage, and how do those shape the larger discussion?
- How has Trump’s mastery of the news cycle helped him, and what effect has that had on the political coverage overall?
- What have news organizations worked to do in response?

Assignment: Follow how a candidate or issue is treated in right wing reporting (Daily Caller, Breitbart, Fox News, etc.), left wing reporting (Huffington Post, the Intercept, MSNBC, etc.) and in non-partisan reporting (The Atlantic, New York Times, the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, etc.). How are the same facts presented differently?

3. Where We're Going

-What benefits do you see to the partisan media? What downsides do you see?

-What level of faith do you have in the 2020 race being covered correctly? What about for issues you care about—will those be given proper due?

-What does a future in journalism look like, and how might you fit in as either a journalist or consumer of journalism?