

**Campaigns and Elections**  
**POLS 318**  
**Fall 2010**  
**Pulliam Hall 0119**  
**T/TH 3:35-4:50**

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Office Hours: T/TH 1:00-2:30, W 11:00-12:30, and by appointment

## **1 Course Description**

This course focuses on the analysis of modern political campaigns and the role they play in a democracy. Emphasis will be on recent developments in the planning and execution of campaigns by mass media and communication specialists and the role of the political parties and the public opinion polls in this process.

## **2 Course Objectives**

- To gain factual knowledge of how campaigns and elections work.
- To think critically and analytically about campaigns and elections.
- To apply what you learn in this class to the real world so that you have a critical understanding of why campaigns and elections are important and what their outcome means to the future of society.

## **3 Class Requirements and Grading**

### **3.1 Exams**

There are two exams in this class, a midterm and a final. Questions on the exams will cover both classroom and reading material. Both exams will consist of identification and short answer questions. In addition to short answer and identification questions, the final exam will also include an essay. The midterm exam is worth 15% of your overall grade and the final exam is worth 25% of your overall grade.

## 3.2 Attendance and Participation

While I will lecture from time to time, this class will largely be discussion based. This means that it is important that everyone (1) comes to class, (2) is prepared, and (3) participates in the class discussion. Attendance and participation account for 20% of your overall grade. Your grade is solely based on my subjective evaluation of your contribution to the class discussion. Keep in mind that if you are not in class, then you are not participating.

However, your attendance and participation is not only important to you but also to the entire class. I will take attendance at least once a week. Every unexcused absence beyond your third absence will result in a one letter grade deduction on your final grade.

## 3.3 Campaign Blog

In the last decade, new media has played an increasing roll in political campaigns. In 2008, Obama's use of new media helped him defeat Hilary Clinton in the Democratic primary by raising small amounts of money from a large donor pool, organizing supporters, and energizing young voters. New media has transformed the way campaigns are run.

For this class you will follow and keep a blog, one type of new media, about a campaign. You may choose to follow any campaign, but it must meet these criteria: 1) No one else in the class may be following the same campaign. This means that you will need to send me an email letting me know which campaign you intend to follow. Campaigns are available on a first-come-first-serve basis. I will keep an updated list of taken campaigns on Blackboard. 2) The campaign must be a close race-within 10% in the latest poll. 3) The campaign must be for either a state or federal office-no local offices.

On August 31, we will meet in a computer lab (Faner 3208) to sign-up for blogs and talk about the initial set-up. At a minimum, your blog should contain at least three pages: one page for each of the candidates and one for analysis. The pages for the candidates should contain biographical information, an overview of the candidates' position on issues important to the campaign, and any important news stories or events.

The analysis page should be the main or "home" page of the blog, which you will update at least once a week. Your job is to provide a critical analysis of the campaign. With the exception of the week preceding the election, you may write on any topic you choose. On the week preceding the election, you are required to make a prediction about who is going to win the election. Other topics that you may wish to write about are: public opinion, citizen participation, district characteristics, surge and decline, campaign money, campaign strategy, media, parties, or interest groups.

Writing for a blog is a little different than writing a regular class paper. Your blog posts should have short, descriptive titles that draw the reader in and make it easy for search engines to find your post. Your posts should also make use of lists and images. In addition, your post should use short paragraphs to make it easy for the reader to scan. However, just like a formal class paper, spelling and grammar are important.

For most of you, this is probably your first blog and since you are being graded on your blog, it is important that you get feedback early in the process. Therefore, you should set up

an appointment with me to discuss your blog between September 20th and October 1st. By this time, your blog should be set-up and you should have written at least two blog posts.

You are welcome to blog as much as you like, but you must provide at least one new blog post each week. Your blog is worth 30% of your grade. A rubric is provided at the end of the syllabus and describes how you will be graded.

### **3.4 Analysis Paper**

Most of this class focuses on the small picture-the candidate or the campaign. However, it is important to reflect on the big picture-the changing make-up of congress and state legislatures. Therefore, you will write a post-election analysis paper for this class. The paper should be 3-5 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins all around) and discuss whether the prediction you made in your blog about the election outcome was correct and, if not, why. You should also analyze what the election outcomes mean for the next few years. This paper is due in class on November 18, 2010, and is worth 10% of your overall grade. The rubric at the end of the syllabus describes how you will be graded. Late papers will NOT be accepted, except as university policy applies.

### **3.5 Due Dates**

Blogs-Weekly

Participation: Weekly

Paper: November 18

Midterm Exam: October 5

Final Exam: December 14th, 5:50 PM -7:50 PM

### **3.6 Grades**

Blog: 30%

Participation: 20%

Paper: 10%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 25%

## 3.7 Grading Scale

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 59 and below

## 4 Class Policies

### 4.1 Attendance

You are expected to attend every class. If you must miss a class you may receive an excused absence by contacting the instructor in advance. I reserve the right to ask for documentation of your absence and decide what constitutes an excused absence. It is your responsibility to figure out what you missed on any days that you are absent. I strongly encourage you to exchange contact information with one of your classmates.

### 4.2 Late Work

Late assignments will not be accepted in this class, except as university policy applies. I encourage you to plan ahead and start assignments early.

### 4.3 Classroom Decorum

In order for this to be a productive learning environment, we need to keep basic classroom decorum. Classroom behavior that disrupts class will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Talking while others are speaking.
- Crossing the civility line.
- Texting, surfing the internet, or answering a call on a cell phone (please put your phone on silent or vibrate prior to arriving to class). If you must take a call, you should let the instructor know prior to class.
- Reading the newspaper.
- Working on assignments for another class.
- Leaving early or arriving late.

## 4.4 Make-Up Exams

There are no make-up exams, except as university policy applies. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero for that exam. If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time remaining. If you must miss an exam, you should contact the professor prior to class.

## 4.5 Academic Dishonesty and Cheating

I will not tolerate any cheating or academic dishonesty. Anyone engaging in cheating or academic dishonesty will receive an F in the course and be reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts for further disciplinary action outlined in the University Code of Student Conduct. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies and codes. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or cheating, you should contact the instructor prior to submitting any work.

## 4.6 Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from coming to class, taking a test, or turning in an assignment, you should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The best way to contact me is via email (seibjd@siu.edu). Students contacting me prior to missing an assignment will receive greater leniency. Examples of excuses that do not qualify as problems and emergencies include, but are not limited to, the following: oversleeping, taking too much medication, being incarcerated, or having a cold. You are welcome to clarify what I consider to be an acceptable excuse to me at any point in the semester.

## 4.7 Contacting the Instructor

I am happy to help you in any way that I can. If you have any questions please feel free to send me an email and I will reply back as soon as possible. If the question requires a lengthy explanation, please stop by my office during office hours or make an appointment. Correspondence should be professional. If you send an email to the instructor, it should:

- respectfully address the instructor
- identify the student's name and class
- use proper grammar, including capital letters, complete sentences, and periods
- include information on where I can best reply with an answer to your question

## 5 Required Texts and Reading

### 5.1 Assigned Readings

Hernson, Paul S. 2007. *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington*. CQ Press.

Kahn, Kim F. and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. *The Spectacle of U.S. Senate Campaigns*. Princeton University Press.

Other readings available on Blackboard.

### 5.2 News

We are fortunate this semester that there is a midterm election which will serve as a background for the material we cover. However, in order for this to happen, you will need to keep up with the news. You should take a few minutes each day and look through the news to see if there is anything in the news about the up-coming elections. I only expect you to keep up with campaign and election related news at the national and state level. I encourage you to be critical as you read the stories. Think of the source and think about what impact the story and/or event is likely to have on the campaign and the make-up (Democrat or Republican, divided or unified) of government. In addition, think about how the story fits into what you have read and learned in class.

## 6 Course Schedule

### Week 1

8/24-Introduction to the Course

8/26-Do Campaigns Matter

Brady et al. (Blackboard)

### Week 2

8/31- Blog setup-location TBA

Must have selected a race to follow

9/2-No Class

### Week 3

9/7-Who Participates

Rosenstone and Hansen (Blackboard)

Keeter et al. (Blackboard)

Campbell (Blackboard)

9/9-Mobilizing Voters

Green and Gerber (Blackboard)  
Wolfinger and Hoffman (Blackboard)

#### **Week 4**

9/14-Citizen Competence  
Kahn and Kenny Chapter 8  
Delli Carpini (Blackboard)  
9/16-How Voters Decide  
Khan and Kenney Chapter 9  
Neimi and Wiesberg (Blackboard)

#### **Week 5**

9/21-Candidate Characteristics  
Squire pages 892-899 (Blackboard)  
Maestas and Rugely (Blackboard)  
9/23-Midterm Elections  
Erikson-Read pages 1011-1014 and 1027-1028; skim other pages (Blackboard)  
Mistake for Dems to Dodge Obama (Blackboard)  
Obama as ATM (Blackboard)

#### **Week 6**

9/28-Term Limits  
term-limits (Blackboard)  
Newton-Small (Blackboard)  
9/30-The Nomination Process  
Hernson Chapter 2  
Atkeson and Maestas (Blackboard)  
Helderman (Blackboard)

#### **Week 7**

10/5-Midterm Exam  
Covers all material up to date of exam  
10/7-Anatomy of a Campaign  
Hernson Chapter 3

#### **Week 8**

10/12-Conducting Polls  
Zukin (Blackboard)  
Nardi (Blackboard)  
10/14-Using Polls  
Medvic (Blackboard)  
Wright (Blackboard)

**Week 9**

- 10/19-Campaigns Strategy
  - Kahn and Kenney Chapter 3
  - Hernson Chapter 7
- 10/21- Going Negative
  - Kahn and Kenney Chapter 4
  - Ansolabehere and Iyengar (Blackboard)
  - Espo (Blackboard)

**Week 10**

- 10/26-Campaign Communication
  - Hernson Chapter 8
  - Simon (Blackboard)
  - Singelman (Blackboard)
- 10/28-Campaigns and Media
  - Kahn and Kenney Chapters 5-6

**Week 11**

- 11/2-New Media
  - Haynes and Pitts (Blackboard)
  - Sabato pages 287-201(Blackboard)
- 11/4-Post Election Discussion
  - Read at least 3 post election analysis articles of your choosing from the news.

**Week 12**

- 11/9-Money and Resources
  - Squire pages 900-903 (Blackboard)
  - Hernson Chapter 6
- 11/11-No Class (Veterans Day)

**Week 13**

- 11/16-Parties
  - Hernson Chapter 4
- 11/18-Interest Groups
  - Hernson Chapter 5
  - Eggan (Blackboard)

**Thanksgiving Break****Week 14**

- 11/30-Elections and Success
  - Hernson Chapter 9
- 12/2-Elections and Governance
  - Hernson Ch Chapter 10



**Week 15**

12/7-Campaign Reform

Hernson Chapter 11

Liptak (Blackboard)

12/9-Do Campaigns Matter, Revisited

Kahn and Kenney Chapter 10

**Final Exam is Tuesday, December 14th, 5:50 PM-7:50 PM**

## 7 Rubric

In order to provide some guidance as you work on your blog assignment and analysis paper, I have provided a rubric that describes how you will be graded. If you have questions or need further clarification on how you will be graded, do not hesitate to ask.

	3	2	1	0
Facts	Facts presented are accurate	A few inaccuracies in the facts	Some of the facts presented are inaccurate	Many of the facts presented are inaccurate
Understands	Demonstrates a clear understanding of how campaigns and elections work	Demonstrates an understanding of how campaigns and elections work	Shows knowledge of how campaigns and elections work	Shows little to no knowledge of how campaigns and elections work
Course Material	Demonstrates good knowledge of course material	Demonstrates some knowledge of course material	Demonstrates little knowledge of course material	Demonstrates no knowledge of course material
Draws Conclusions	Draws conclusions, where appropriate that are based on a sound argument, facts, and evidence	Draws conclusions that are based on facts and evidence	Draws conclusions, but provides no facts or evidence to support the conclusions	Draws misleading or erroneous conclusions
Spelling and Grammar	Very few, if any, spelling/grammar mistakes	A few spelling/grammar mistakes	Some spelling/grammar mistakes	Numerous spelling/grammar mistakes