

Government 370L  
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Unique number: 38990

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### **American Election Campaigns**

This course comes in four intermingled parts. The bulk of our meetings will be as a seminar, meaning that *we*, not *I*, shall discuss the readings (see below). The next largest share will be devoted to a computer simulation of a U.S. Senate election. Your candidate may make personal appearances, produce and air campaign commercials, make appeals by direct mail, fund-raise, conduct polls, and so on, and the outcome will depend on the choices you and your opponents make. One or more other sessions are usually given over to guest speakers who have been involved in election campaigns in one capacity or another. And, finally, several sessions will be devoted to discussions of writing and written assignments.

Past semesters' speakers have included Tom Craddick, a Texas State Representative and formerly Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives; U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar; Justice Bob Gammage, late of the Texas Supreme Court and before that a U.S. Congressman; Bernard Rapoport, a longtime Democratic activist and fundraiser (and former Chair of the UT Board of Regents); Royal Masset, Political Director of the Republican Party of Texas; Dave MacNeely, a journalist covering state and national politics for the Austin-American Statesman; William P. Hobby, the former Lieutenant Governor; Susan Hendrix of H & C Media, a Democratic media consultant; Dean Rindy and Cynthia Miller of Rindy Miller Garcia Media, also Democratic media consultants; David Weeks and Suzanne Erickson of Media Southwest, a Republican media consultant who has worked for Rick Perry and Kay Bailey Hutchinson, among others; Blaine Bull of Public Strategies, Inc., a major consulting firm; Matthew Dowd, once of Public Strategies, Inc., more recently of the Bush 2000 and 2004 campaigns and Bush administration, and now a prominent national political commentator; Mark MacKinnon, also of Public Strategies, Inc., the principal media advisor to George W. Bush's 2000 and 2004 campaigns and to John McCain's 2008 nomination campaign, and now a prominent national political commentator and founder of the No Labels movement; Bill Emery and Peck Young of Emery and Young, a Democratic consulting firm; Dan Bartlett, an alumnus of this course who served as a spokesman for Governor Bush and the Bush 2000 campaign and later as Communications Director in the Bush White House; and Karl Rove, formerly of Karl Rove & Company, a Republican consulting firm, later the chief political strategist for the Bush 2000 and 2004 campaigns and Counselor to President Bush), and now (does anyone not know all this?) a prominent national political commentator and principal of American Crossroads, a major Republican super-PAC.

There are no formal prerequisites beyond eligibility to take upper division Government courses. The goal is for students to learn and think about contemporary American election campaigns—about both how they work and the ways in which that may be desirable or undesirable. There will be no exams, but a great deal of reading and two papers drawing on the

readings. You will also be asked to provide written feedback on another student's paper. The papers, feedback, and contributions in class discussion will be the means of assessing how far individual students have met the course goal.

The class is a seminar, and I expect students to participate in the discussion. Not just to talk for the sake of talking, of course, but to make sensible, insightful contributions, based at least partly on the readings.

A tentative course schedule, indicating when we shall do what, is given below. The class will use the UT Blackboard website, on which I shall post some course materials, and through which I shall send emails as necessary. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

The course also carries a **Writing Flag**, which means that there will be written assignments, on which there will be feedback from your fellow students and me, and that those assignments will constitute a significant portion of your course grade.

The reading load is unusually heavy, and I do sometimes ask students about their reactions to the readings. So, even though the two papers are the only written assignments, and there are no exams, this is not a course for the faint-hearted. Be warned! It will be a lot of work. But also a lot of fun.

### Texts

Herbert B. Asher. 2010. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Steven E. Schier (eds.). 2009. *The American Elections of 2008*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin. 2010. *American Public Opinion* (8th ed., updated). New York, NY: Longman.

William H. Flanigan and Nancy Zingale. 2009. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber. 2008. *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Brookings.

Paul S. Herrnson. 2011. *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Costas Panagopoulos (ed.). 2009. *Politicking Online: The Transformation of Election Campaign Communications*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Daron R. Shaw. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Daniel M. Shea and Michael John Burton. 2010. *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Praeger.

James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.). 2009. *Campaigns and Elections American Style* (3rd ed.) Boulder, CO: Westview.

Darrell M. West. 2009. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns 1952-2008* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White. 1995. *The Elements of Style* (3rd ed.). New York: Allyn and Bacon.

*Robert's Rules* (a guide to writing), to be posted on Blackboard.

Course packet, consisting of *On the Campaign Trail* (a manual to the simulation that also contains a great deal of information about real-world campaigns), to be available from Paradigm, on 24<sup>th</sup> St., just off Guadalupe, and a supplementary set of instructions, to be posted on Blackboard.

## Outline and Readings

### I The Electorate

#### A. How We Know about Voters

Erikson and Tedin, secs. 1.3-1.5, ch. 2.

Asher, chs. 3-5, 8.

Flanagan and Zingale, app.

#### B. What (and How Much) People Think about Politics

Erikson and Tedin, secs. 3.1-3.2, chs. 4, 7.

Asher, ch. 2.

Flanagan and Zingale, chs. 1, 6.

#### C. Who Are the Voters (and Nonvoters)?

Flanagan and Zingale, ch. 2

#### D. How People Vote

Erikson and Tedin, ch. 9.

Flanagan and Zingale, ch. 8.

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, chs. 6-7.

### II The Role of the Parties

Erikson and Tedin, sec. 3.3.

Flanagan and Zingale, chs. 3-5.

### **III The Role of the Media**

Erikson and Tedin, secs. 8.1-8.2.

Asher, ch. 6.

Flanagan and Zingale, ch. 7.

### **IV The Campaign**

#### **A. Organization and Strategy**

West, chs. 7-8.

Shea and Burton, chs. 1-3, 8.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 2-4, 17.

Herrnson, chs. 3, 5, 7.

#### **B. Polls, Focus Groups, and Other Research**

Shea and Burton, chs. 4-7.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 13-14.

#### **C. Advertising**

West, chs. 1-3, 5, 9.

Shea and Burton, ch. 10.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 7-8.

Herrnson, ch. 8.

#### **D. Campaigning Online**

Panagopoulos, chs. 1-4, 12-16.

#### **E. “Free Media”: Press Coverage of Campaigns**

West, chs. 4, 6.

Shea and Burton, ch. 11.

Erikson and Tedin, sec. 8.3.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 9-10.

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, ch. 2.

Asher, ch. 7-8.

#### **F. Field Organization and Getting Out the Vote**

Green and Gerber, entire.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 11-12.

Shea and Burton, ch. 12.

Panagopoulos, chs. 7-8.

### **G. Fund-Raising**

Shea and Burton, ch. 9.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 5-6.

Herrnson, ch. 6.

Panagopoulos, ch. 6.

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, ch. 8.

## **V Kinds of Elections**

### **A. Congressional Elections**

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, ch. 5.

Herrnson, chs. 1, 4, 5, 9.

West, ch. 9.

*On the Campaign Trail*, entire.

### **B. Presidential Elections**

Shaw, chs. 1-5.

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, ch. 4.

### **C. Primary Elections**

Herrnson, ch. 2.

Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, ch. 3.

## **VI Overview and Evaluation**

Asher, chs. 1, 9.

West, ch. 10.

Shea and Burton, ch. 13.

Thurber and Nelson, chs. 15-16, 18.

Herrnson, chs. 10-11.

## **Requirements**

### **Papers**

There will be two papers, each on a common, prescribed topic. The first compares the election simulation game you will play to real elections: how does it capture, and how does it fail to capture, important aspects of real campaigns? The second is an evaluation of American elections and election campaigns: What, if anything, is right and what, if anything, is wrong about them?

On each paper, you should develop your reasons and cite your evidence, drawing generously and explicitly on the course readings in doing so. **Your explicit, sensible, and appropriate use of the course readings will be a prime criterion in the substantive portion of your paper grade.**

Each paper should be between 8 and 12 pages. The font should be 12 point, the margins between 1 and 1.25 inches. Endnotes, tables, figures (graphs), references, and appendices do not figure in these page totals. **Number your pages!!! Use the APSA format for citations.** (Look at the articles in any recent issue of the *American Political Science Review* to get the idea.) **All papers are to be submitted as email attachments in MS-Word format.**

### **Class Participation**

As noted above, the class is a seminar, and I expect students to participate meaningfully—sensibly and insightfully—in the discussion. Please keep up with and be prepared to discuss the readings—which will also make writing the papers less of a painful rush.) I'd suggest taking note, as you read, of facts and arguments you find particularly interesting, important, or questionable.

### **Feedback & Revision**

You will be expected to submit the first paper in both a preliminary and a revised version. The preliminary version will receive feedback from me and from other students. In particular, you will be assigned to copyedit one other student's paper and to make your copyediting available to the other student and to me. The revised version, due a couple of weeks later, is what I shall grade. I shall also grade the feedback you give your fellow student.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required. Unexcused absences affect the participation grade (see above). It is up to me to determine what absences may be excusable.

### **Grading**

Your grade will be determined on the basis of your class participation, the papers, and your feedback on another student's paper. Class participation will count for 35% (20% for attendance/discussion, 10% for effort in the simulations, and 5% for the feedback you give other students on their papers), and the papers for 65%. The papers will be graded 65% on the basis of substance and 35% on the basis strictly of writing. Read and reread Strunk and White and Robert's Rules and try to implement their precepts. .

**NB:** The writing portion of the paper grade will rest on the clarity, accuracy, felicity, and economy with which you express yourself. Taking more words than you need to express a given thought will lower your grade. So will saying things that don't need saying or saying anything twice (or more). The substantive portion of the grade will rest heavily on your making generous, appropriate, and sensible use of the assigned readings—although writing in a broad sense (the cogency and organization of the ideas expressed) will enter into this portion as well. Please construct your own arguments. Do the readings, think about them, and decide what *you* want to say. Cite them parenthetically, for support or to indicate disagreement. Cite, do not quote—

excepting only those rare cases where another's exact words are memorably quotable or wrong (and you intend saying why). I shall count off for any unnecessary quotes. The average paper should contain none at all! Do not mention the author(s)' first name(s) or the titles of books or articles, except in a list of references at the end. Do not begin any sentences with phrases like "According to X," "As X says," or "X shows that." Just say what you think and cite X at the end of the relevant clause or sentence.

Attendance is required, and there is a penalty (in the participation grade) for every unexcused absence beyond a quota of two. The course grades will include pluses and minuses, as merited.

There will be bonuses of three points (on the standard 100-point scale) in the simulation grade for members of teams that win the simulated election and further small bonuses, also in the simulation grade, for members of teams that do much better than other teams of the same party. The attendance/discussion grade is based on my overall impression of the quality and quantity of your participation, adjusted downward for excessive absences.

There will be a penalty of 4 points on the usual 50-100 scale for every day (including weekend days) any written assignment (either of the two papers or your feedback on another student's paper) is late. The penalty may only be waived for legitimate and fully documented excuses. (What is "legitimate" and "fully documented" is up to me.) Cheating or plagiarism means a failing grade not only for the paper but for the course. **NB:** Frequently, I take attendance by circulating a "sign-up sheet." Signing someone else's name to the sheet constitutes cheating—by the person whose name is signed and by the person who signs it for him/her.

**Tentative Schedule\***

January	14 (Organizational)	16 (IA)
	21 (IA-IB)	23 (IB)
	28 (IB-IC)	30 (IC)
February	4 (ID)	6 (II)
	11 (III)	13 (OCT practice)
	18 (OCT Week 1)	20 (OCT Week 2)
	25 (OCT Week 3)	27 (OCT Week 4)
March	4 (OCT Week 5)	6 (OCT Week 6 and election)

## Spring Break

	18 (Discussion of Writing)	20 (IVA-B) <sup>†</sup>
	25 (Student Feedback) <sup>††</sup>	27 (More Discussion of Writing)
April	1 (IVC-D)	3 (Guest Speaker, TBA) <sup>†††</sup>
	8 (Guest Speaker, TBA)	10 (IVE)
	15 (VF-G)	17 (V)
	22 (Discussion of Writing)	24 (Guest Speaker, TBA)
	29 (VI)	
May		1 (VI) <sup>△</sup>

\*The exact dates *are* tentative. Much depends on our progress through the material and the schedules of our guest speakers (and how many guest speakers we wind up with). The dates of the simulation and on which the papers are due, however, should be taken as fixed.

<sup>†</sup>Preliminary draft of first paper due.

<sup>††</sup>Student feed back due.

<sup>†††</sup>Revised draft of first paper due.

<sup>△</sup>Second paper due.