POLS 193: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Fall 2008
MWF, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM, 232 WPC

Prof. Keith Smith
ksmith4@pacific.edu

Office: 120 WPC
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs., 10 AM – 12 PM, and by appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to campaigns and elections in the American political system. It is not a class about how to run successful campaigns (although we will talk about what does and does not work). Instead, the focus is on what political science has discovered about campaigns – their operation and their relative influence on elections – as well as other determinants of who wins elected office.

In the course, we will examine of the relative importance of five sets of actors (candidates, the media, voters, parties, and campaign professionals) across two kinds of elections (congressional and presidential). We will explore their interactions and evaluate their relative influence within a set of constitutional and legal rules (e.g., the Electoral College) and within the broader American political culture, which together create the institutional and normative framework for campaign activity.

Topics for this course include: The normative and institutional structure of American elections (and their implications for campaigns); who votes in elections; what determines their vote; whether turnout matters (usually not!); what influences the decision to vote; who runs for office (congressional and presidential); who wins nomination (and why); campaign finance; the Electoral College; legislative redistricting; the impact of race and gender; the role of the media and, in particular, television advertising in campaigns and elections; and whether campaigns, particularly presidential campaigns, matter in the final outcome.

A couple more notes on the course:

• This course is an advanced course. Several of the readings will include statistical analyses. We will spend some time on how to interpret regression results, but you should be comfortable reading data tables.

• I do not plan on lecturing at all during the semester. The class will be run as a semi-structured discussion. Your participation will be key to the success of the course. You should come prepared to discuss the day’s readings in detail.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should:

1) Understand the basic structure and dynamics of American elections,

2) Understand some of the key political science debates surrounding campaigns and elections,

3) Develop informed opinions about the roles of campaigns and elections in American politics and their execution, and

4) Have a better understanding of how to write a case study and give a successful briefing.
III. BOOKS AND OTHER READINGS

There are three required books for this course. They are available through the campus bookstore and most on-line retailers. Be sure to get the proper edition (especially of the Wayne book) as the contents do change.


In addition, there will be several pieces posted to the course Blackboard site (as noted in the course outline). As this is an election year, we will spend a fair amount of class time talking about current events in the presidential, congressional, and state elections. Students should keep abreast of the latest news (and gossip) by reading newspapers and campaign blogs and watching the news.

Finally, I have also ordered the following book as a supplementary text. I hope you buy it and read it as you will be doing a fair bit of its subject and students frequently get it wrong.


IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Case Study</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Students will write a 10- to 15-page case study of a legislative election (including the nomination contests) and formally present their findings to the class. The election will be assigned in the second week of classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Students will complete a series of short assignments throughout the semester. The assignments will each only require 1-2 hours to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Night Memo</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Students will write a one-page memo describing a significant race (or other facet of the Nov. 4 elections as assigned) to be distributed at the university’s election night celebration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Night Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Students will give a five-minute presentation on their race at the university’s election night celebration. Visual aids are encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>The midterm exam will cover the first half of the course. It will be composed of identification, short answer, and essay questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>The final exam will cover material from the second half of the course only (i.e., it will not be cumulative). The format will be the same as the midterm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Over the course of the semester I will give a series of pop quizzes (consisting of one question) on the assigned readings. Missed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
quizzes cannot be made up. Only documented emergencies will be excused.

**Attendance** 5%  
Students may miss up to three classes with no attendance penalties. After the third class missed, students will lose 10 points for each additional session missed.

**Participation** 10%  
Students must participate meaningfully in each class session. We will discuss what this entails during the first class session.

Copies of student work may be retained to assess how course learning objectives are being met. Papers will be submitted through the Blackboard site and processed through anti-plagiarism software.

### V. Grading

I will use +/− grades in this course. The cut-offs for each grade appear in accompanying table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100.0 – 97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96.9 – 93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92.9 – 90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.9 – 87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86.9 – 83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82.9 – 80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9 – 77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76.9 – 73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72.9 – 70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69.9 – 67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66.9 – 63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62.9 – 60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.0 – 0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An “A” paper or exam meets all of the requirements of an assignment and has these characteristics: It shows creativity and originality in thought and implementation; addresses audience concerns with subtlety; develops ideas amply with a variety of evidence and explanation; follows an effective organization plan; exhibits a fluency of style; contains no serious grammatical or mechanical errors and few, if any, minor errors; and displays a polish resulting from careful editing.

A “B” paper or exam meets all the requirements of the assignment and has these characteristics: It handles the topic in a thoughtful manner, but may lack the insight or conviction that an A paper would possess, is written in an appropriate voice for the audience, presents a clear thesis and well-supported body paragraphs, has an effective organization plan, may lack an A paper’s fluency of style and control of sentence structure, has some grammar and mechanical errors but few or no serious ones, and displays ample evidence of proofreading.

A “C” paper or exam follows directions, completes the assignment, and has these characteristics: It shows minimal originality or creativity in thought, shows some awareness of audience, but often in a self-conscious way, states, discusses, and at least minimally supports and develops its ideas, demonstrates a sense of organization and purpose, contains minimal sentence variety, has some grammar and mechanical errors including some serious ones, and displays some evidence of proofreading.

A “D” paper or exam inadequately follows or completes the assignment and/or has one or more of the following faults: It treats its subject superficially; displays little sense of audience; inadequately or inconsistently states, discusses, supports, and/or develops its ideas; follows an ineffective and/or
confusing organization; has some garbled or stylistically immature or inappropriate prose, including empty or superfluous words; contains many errors in mechanics, grammar, and phrasing; and shows inadequate evidence of proofreading.

An “F” paper or exam fails to follow or complete the assignment and/or has one or more of the following faults: It demonstrates an inadequate grasp of the subject matter and/or treats its subject superficially; has no sense of audience; fails to state, discuss, support, and/or develop its ideas effectively; tends toward redundancy and repetition; lacks organization or has an organization that makes no sense; has garbled or stylistically immature or inappropriate prose; contains frequent errors in mechanics, grammar, and phrasing and/or many major errors; shows little evidence of proofreading; and gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste.

VI. LATE POLICY

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Work submitted after class has begun but before the end of the due date (5:00 PM) will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g., dropping an A to an A-). An additional 1/3 grade will be deducted for each day the work is late (e.g., dropping the A- to a B+); and Saturdays and Sundays count. Late work must be submitted to my office. **Extensions (1) will only be granted for documented cases of need and (2) must be arranged at least one week before the due date (medical emergencies excepted).**

VII. UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC HONOR CODE

The University Honor Code is an essential element in academic integrity. It is a violation of the Honor Code to give or receive information from another student during an examination, to use unauthorized sources during an examination, or to submit all or part of someone else’s work or ideas as your own (i.e., plagiarism). Do not do it. If you do, and I find out about it, you will fail the course. Violations will also be referred to the Dean of Students, and you may be reprimanded or suspended from the University. A complete statement of the Honor Code may be found in the Student Handbook, *Tiger Lore.*

VIII. CLASSROOM CONDUCT

It is imperative that we treat each other with civility, respect, and dignity in this class. We may discuss topics about which people feel passionately and disagree intensely. (It is a class about politics. How could we not?) While part of the academic experience is to challenge deeply held beliefs, we must do so in a positive, constructive fashion. *Ad hominem* attacks, disrespectful language, and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Such behavior violates the Student Code of Conduct, and, if necessary, I will refer offenses to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

IX. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who need accommodations due to a disability should arrange a meeting with me within the first two weeks of class to discuss options and provide an accommodations request letter from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (101 Bannister Hall).
X. COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE OF READINGS

I reserve the right to amend the class outline at any time as needed. It is incumbent upon you to check Blackboard frequently for announcements and attend class regularly.

Readings should be completed for the listed date. Readings followed by [BB] are available through the course Blackboard site. Readings followed by [JSTOR] are available through J-START (with links on Blackboard). You cannot access J-START from off campus. You are responsible for accessing and reading the material before you come to class.

Part 1: Introduction

Aug. 27: Introductions, class syllabus, course expectations
  • Please note that I will not be available for office hours on Aug. 28 as I will be in Boston for the American Political Science Association meetings.

Aug. 29: No class. I will still be at the American Political Science Association meetings.

Sept. 1: No class. Labor Day.

Sept. 3 & 5: The Strategic Context of Elections
  • Herrnson, Ch. 1
  • Wayne, pp. 95-108
  • Abramowitz, “The Strategic Environment of Elections” [BB]


Sept. 8: Who Votes?
  • Franklin, “Electoral Participation” [BB]
  • Abramson et al., “Who Voted?” [BB]

Sept. 10: The Myth of the Vanishing Voter
  • McDonald and Popkin, “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter” [JSTOR]

Sept. 12: Can We Improve Turnout?
  • Highton, “Voter Registration and Turnout in the United States” [BB]
  • Berinsky, “The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States” [BB]

Sept. 15: Does the Technology Matter?
  • Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, “Residual Votes Attributable to Technology”¹ [BB]
  • Supplemental: Brady et al., “Counting All the Votes: The Performance of Voting Technology in the United States” [BB]

Sept. 17: What about Voter ID Requirements?
  • Crawford v. Marion County Election Board – read at least the syllabus [BB]

¹ This report essentially reaches the same conclusion as the Brady et al. report (the supplemental piece), but it is shorter. It is a revised report. Demonstrating that sometimes even well-known, successful political scientists get it wrong, the initial version actually reached a different conclusions (particularly that MRE’s were significantly better), but it was subsequently (and substantially) revised to agree with the Brady et al. report.
• Brennan Center, “The Truth about Voter Fraud” [BB]
• Ansolabehere and Persily, “Vote Fraud in the Eye of the Beholder” [BB]
• Alvarez, Bailey, Katz, “The Effect of Voter Identification Laws on Turnout” [BB]

Sept. 19: What if Everyone Voted?
• DeNardo, “Turnout and the Vote: The Joke’s on the Democrats” [JSTOR]
• Highton and Wolfinger, “The Political Implications of Higher Turnout” [JSTOR]

Sept. 22: Models of Voters
• Lau and Redlawsk, How Voters Decide, “Introduction” [BB]
• Green, Palquist, and Schickler, “How Partisan Attachments Structure Politics” [BB]

Part 3: Do Campaigns Matter

Sept. 24: Maybe Campaigns Don’t Matter
• PS Symposium on predicting presidential elections [BB]

Sept. 26: The Argument Against Campaigns
• Holbrook, “The Evidence Against Campaign Effects” [BB]

Sept. 29: Maybe Campaigns Do Matter
• ... So Goes the Nation

Oct. 1: The Argument For Campaigns
• Holbrook and McClurg, “The Mobilization of Core Supporters: Campaigns, Turnout, and Electoral Composition in United States Presidential Elections” [JSTOR]

Oct. 3: No class. Fall student break.

Part 4: Nominations

Oct. 6: Who Runs for Office? Why?
• Semiatin, Ch. 2 & 3 [BB]

Oct. 8: Candidate Emergence in Congressional Elections
• Herrnson, Ch. 2 (esp. pp. 35-48)
• Stone & Maisel, “Determinants of Candidate Emergence in U.S. House Elections.” [JSTOR]

Oct. 10: The Evolution of the Presidential Nomination System
• Wayne, Ch. 1
• Midterm review guide distributed.

Oct. 13: More on the Nomination System
• Wayne, Ch. 4

Oct. 15: The Frontloading Problem
• Busch and Mayer, “The Front-Loading Problem” [BB]

Oct. 17: Midterm Exam
Oct. 20: Who Wins Presidential Nominations?
- Wayne, Ch. 5

Oct. 22: Who Wins Congressional Nominations?
- Masket, “If We Don’t Control You, Who the Hell Does?” [BB]
- The Katherine Harris Saga, selected newspaper articles [BB]

Part 5: Campaigns
Oct. 24: The Modern Campaign Finance System
- Wayne, Ch. 2

Oct. 27: Parties and Interest Group Giving in Congressional Campaigns
- Herrnson, Ch. 4 & 5

Oct. 29: The Electoral College
- Koza et al., Every Vote Equal, pp. 1–23 & 33–69 [BB]

Election Week Interlude
Oct. 31: How to Give Briefings (Or, What Not to Do with PowerPoint)
- Guidelines for Preparing Briefings (http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/2005/CP269.pdf)

Nov. 3: Finish (and Practice) Presentations for Election Night Celebration.
- Memos due.

Nov. 4: Election Night Celebration – Students will present assigned aspects of tonight’s elections.

Nov. 5: Breaking Down the Results/Lessons Learned

Part 5: Campaigns Continued
Nov. 7: The Congressional Campaign
- Herrnson, Ch. 3 & 7

Nov. 10: The Congressional Campaign
- Mr. Moore Goes to Washington

Nov. 12: The Presidential Campaign
- Wayne, Ch. 7

Nov. 14: Race and Campaigns
- The Perils of Identity Politics – collected editorials [BB]
- Wright, Austin, and Middleton, “The Limitations of the Deracialized Concept in the 2001 Los Angeles Mayoral Election” [JSTOR]

Nov. 17: Gender and Campaigns
• Witt, Paget, and Matthews, “Crossing the Credibility Threshold: Credentials, Confidence, and Credibility” [BB]
• Fox, “Congressional Campaigns: Where Are We on the Road to Gender Parity?” [BB]

Nov. 19: Case study presentations
Nov. 21: Case study presentations

Part 6: Redistricting, Money, and Competitive Congressional Elections

Nov. 24: Have Congressional Elections Become Less Competitive?
• Jacobson, The Politics of Congressional Elections, pp. 23–51 [BB]
• Ansolabehere et al., “The Vanishing Marginals and Electoral Responsiveness” [JSTOR]

Nov. 26: No class. Thanksgiving.
Nov. 28: No class. Thanksgiving.

Dec. 1: The Role of Redistricting in Competitive Elections
• Toobin, “The Great Election Grab” [BB]
• Oppenheimer, “Deep Red and Blue Congressional Districts” [BB]
• Abramowitz, Alexander, & Gunning, “Don’t Blame Redistricting for Uncompetitive Elections.” [BB]
• McDonald, “Drawing the Line on District Competition.” [BB]
• Case study papers due.

Dec. 3: The Role of Money in Competitive Elections
• Jacobson, “The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections” [JSTOR]

Part 7: Advertising in Campaigns

Dec. 5: Advertising Basics
• West, Ch. 1 & 3
• Final review guide distributed.

Dec. 8: What Do Ads Do?
• West, Ch. 5-7

Dec. 10: The Role of Negative Advertising
• Mark, “Eye of the Beholder: Defining Negative Campaigning” [BB]
• Lau and Pomper, “Normative Thoughts on Negative Campaigning” [BB]

Dec. 12: Wrap up and final review

Dec. 17: Final Exam – 8 AM to 11 AM.
• Please note that I cannot approve any change to the final date and time. You must arrange for any alternative with the Office of the Dean of the College of the Pacific.