

POLI 4026
Campaigns and Elections
Tuesday & Thursday, 10:30 AM – 11:50 AM
15 Atkinson Hall
Spring 2016

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Office hours: Tuesday 1-3 PM; Wednesday 9-11 AM

Course Overview:

This class aims to give students a better understanding of voting and elections in the U.S. We will address a series of questions that are relevant to understanding how elections actually work in the US:

- How does economic performance shape election outcomes?
- Do campaigns encourage political participation?
- How has campaign strategy changed in the past two decades?
- Can we predict the election outcome this November?

Though these questions are discussed often in the media, they are not always discussed well. We will try to understand where the conventional wisdom is helpful, and where it leads us astray. We'll spend a great deal of time discussing the 2016 election, but we'll also try to situate it historically in a broader context.

In addition to the articles posted online and required textbook (see below), students should follow the elections carefully in a reputable national news source (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc.).

Assignments:

There are 4 requirements for this course, detailed below. Students should note that all assignments must be completed and submitted to the instructor on the dates noted in the syllabus to receive credit. Failure to complete any assignment may result in a failing grade for the class.

Super Tuesday Primary Report: 25%

Three short response papers: 30%

Final Exam: 35%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Super Tuesday Primary Report: In lieu of a midterm exam, you will be assigned a Super Tuesday primary state (not Louisiana) on which to prepare a report. This report will

include information on campaign organization, candidate visits, opinion polling, and the results of the race. A more detailed description of the assignment will be provided at a later date.

Short Response Papers: You will be assigned three response papers over the course of the semester. These papers should be no longer than three pages, double-spaced. Topics will be distributed during the assigned class period. Short responses should relate that week's readings to current events and show evidence of additional academic research on that topic. Students must e-mail the paper to me no later than the beginning of class on the day each assigned topic is due.

Final Exam: There will be a cumulative final exam. The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer questions (where you will be asked to define and give the significance of a series of concepts), and short essays.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. Excused absences must comply with the policy below. Though most of this grade will be based on attendance, active participation in the in-class exercises and the class discussion is expected. Failure to participate in class – or looking at your phone during class (yes, I can tell) – will be reflected in your grade.

Policy on Late Work

All work is due at the date and time discussed in class. Any late work will be docked one letter grade per day late. A paper due at 12 noon, but submitted at 12:01 PM will be docked one letter grade (an A paper becomes a B, a C paper becomes a D, and so on).

Communication

All students are required to check their LSU e-mail account regularly. I frequently communicate with students via email and Moodle, and not checking your email will not be an excuse for missing an assignment or reading. I will make an effort to reply to all e-mails within 24 hours, and will not reply to e-mails sent after 5PM until the next business day.

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course. In order to have any accommodations met, you must be registered with the LSU Office of Disabilities Services. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website:

<http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/ods.nsf/index>

Statement of Academic Integrity

Students are bound to uphold the Code of Academic Integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community. Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the office of Student Advocacy & Accountability. A first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. Ignorance of these guidelines is no excuse for failure to comply with them.

Attendance & Excused Absences

Each student must attend class, and attendance will be taken during each class period. Excused absences will be granted with a signed statement from a doctor or LSU administrator. (Please note that the LSU Student Health Center will not provide medical excuses for short-term illness or injury.) If you know you will miss class with an excused absence, please discuss these planned absences with me well ahead of time. In the event of an excused absence interfering with the due date of an assignment, the assignment will be due on a date agreed upon by the student and myself, depending upon the circumstances of the absence. In the event of a missed exam (with excused absence), a make-up exam will be administered in my office (204 Hodges Hall). Makeup exams will not be administered for exams missed with unexcused absences.

Grade Scale

LSU has adopted a +/- grading scale for the 2015-2016 academic year. Grades in this class will follow the scale below.

96.5 and above	A+	76.50–79.99	C+
93.50 – 96.49	A	73.50–76.49	C
90.00–93.49	A-	70.00–73.49	C-
86.50–89.99	B+	66.50–69.99	D+
83.50–86.49	B	63.50–66.49	D
80.00–83.49	B-	60.00–63.49	D-
		59.00—0	F

Readings:

Two books are required for this class and are available at any major retailer. Other readings are posted online to [Canvas/Blackboard].

The required books are:

- Sides, John & Lynn Vavreck. (2013). The Gamble. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [SV on the syllabus].
- Sides, John, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, and Keena Lipsitz. (2015). Campaigns and Elections: 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. [CE on the syllabus]
 - The first edition of this book is also acceptable – and much cheaper!

Schedule:

Th 1/14: Introduction and course overview. Political science or punditry?

T 1/19: A history of campaigns.

- CE, ch. 3: “The Transformation of American Campaigns”
- Campbell, James. (2001). [“When Have Presidential Campaigns Decided Election Outcomes?”](#) *American Politics Research* 29: 437-460.

Th 1/21: The role of parties. **Full Super Tuesday Report assignment distributed.**

- CE, ch. 6: “Political Parties”

T 1/26: The Presidential Primary System

- SV, ch. 3.
- CE, ch. 9.
- Marx, Greg & Hans Noel. (2011). [“How to understand the ‘invisible primary.’”](#) 5 July. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Th 1/28: Primaries – Iowa and everything after

- SV, ch. 4.
- Redlawsk, David, Caroline Tolbert, and Todd Donovan. (2011). [Why Iowa? How Caucuses and Sequential Elections Improve the Nominating Process.](#) Chicago: University of Chicago Press; [Chapter 3, “Iowa Caucus Rules”](#)

T 2/2: Turnout (and Iowa recap) **(Short Paper 1 assigned)**

- CE, ch. 12: “Voter Participation”
- Meredith, Marc. (2009). “Persistence in Political Participation.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 4:186-208. (Moodle)

Th 2/4: The Economy

- SV ch. 2.
- Gerber, Alan and Gregory Huber. (2010). [“Partisanship, Political Control, and Economic Assessments.”](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 54:153-73.

T 2/9: Mardi Gras break, no class

Th 2/11: What works – and how do we know?

- SV, ch. 7.

T 2/16: Media I – Structure and effects **(Short paper 1 due)**

- CE, ch. 8: “Media”
- Arceneaux, Kevin. (2014). [“Why you shouldn’t blame polarization on partisan news.”](#) *The Washington Post*, 4 February.

Th 2/18: Media II – Earned media

- Flowers, Julianne, Audrey Haynes, and Michael Crespin. (2003). “The media, the campaign, and the message.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 47:2, 259-273. (Moodle)

- Darr, Joshua. (2016). [“Presence to press: How campaigns earn local media.”](#) *Political Communication*.

T 2/23: Campaigns I – Strategic Decisions and Consequences

- SV, ch. 5.
- Gimpel, James, Karen Kaufman, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. (2007). “Battleground vs. Blackout States: The Behavioral Implications of Modern Presidential Campaigns.” *Journal of Politics* 69:786-97. (Moodle)

Th 2/25: Campaigns II – Managing events

- CE, ch. 5. “Modern Campaign Strategies”
- SV, ch. 6.

T 3/1: Campaigns III: Advertisements

- Arceneaux, Kevin and Greg Huber. (2007). “Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 51, 957-977. (Moodle)
- Brader, Ted. (2005). [“Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions.”](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 388-405.

Th 3/3: Campaigns IV: Mobilization

- Darr, Joshua and Matthew Levendusky. (2014). [“Relying on the Ground Game: The Placement and Effects of Campaign Field Offices.”](#) *American Politics Research*, 42:3, 529-548.
- Gerber, Alan, Donald Green, and Christopher Larimer. 2008. [“Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment.”](#) *American Political Science Review* 102:33-48.

T 3/8: **Super Tuesday report due:** in-class discussion on each state.

Th 3/10: Social media

- Pew Research Center Staff. (2011). [“Twitter and the Campaign.”](#)

T 3/15: How Much Does Money Matter?

- CE, ch. 4: “Financing Campaigns”
- [“Take the Money and Run for Office,”](#) *This American Life*, 30 March 2012. (Transcript)

Th 3/17: What about uninformed voters?

- Bartels, Larry. (1996). [“Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections.”](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 194-230.
- Lupia, Arthur. (1994). [“Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in California insurance reform elections.”](#) *American Political Science Review*, 88:1, 63-76.

T 3/22, Th 3/24: Spring break, no class

T 3/29: Data I: Modeling

- Nickerson, David, and Todd Rogers. (2014). [“Political campaigns and big data.”](#) *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28:2, 51-74.
- Hamburger, Tom. (2015). [“Cruz campaign credits psychological data and analytics for its rising success.”](#) *The Washington Post*, 13 December.

Th 3/31: Data II – Experimentation (**Short paper 2 assigned**)

- Issenberg, Sasha. (2012). [“A more perfect union.”](#) *MIT Technology Review*. 19 December.
- Issenberg, Sasha. (2014). [“Department of Experiments.”](#) POLITICO, 27 February.

T 4/5: Political Participation I: Resources

- CE ch. 12: “Voter Participation”
- Brady, Henry and Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. (1995). [“Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation.”](#) *American Political Science Review* 89: 271-294.

Th 4/7: Political Participation II: Motivations (**Short paper 2 due**)

- Han, Hahrie. (2016). [“The organizational roots of political activism: Field experiments on creating a relational context.”](#) *American Political Science Review*.

T 4/12: Congressional Elections I

- CE, ch. 10: “Congressional Campaigns”
- Jacobson, Gary. (2009). *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. 9th Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, [chapter 4: “Congressional Campaigns”](#)

Th 4/14: Congressional Elections II: Incumbency. (**Short paper 3 assigned**)

- Druckman, James, Martin Kifer, and Michael Parkin. (2009). [“Campaign communications in U.S. Congressional elections.”](#) *American Political Science Review*, 103:3, 343-366.
- Abramowitz, Alan, Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. 2006. [“Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections.”](#) *Journal of Politics* 68:75-88.

T 4/19: State and local campaigns

- CE, ch. 11: “State and Local Campaigns”

Th 4/21: Direct democracy (**Short paper 3 due**)

- Smith, Daniel and Caroline Tolbert. (2007). “The Instrumental and Educative Effects of Ballot Measures: Research on Direct Democracy in the American States.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 7:416-445. (Moodle)
- Abrajano, Marisa. (2010). “Are Blacks and Latinos Responsible for the Passage of Proposition 8? Analyzing Voter Attitudes on California’s Proposal to Ban Same-Sex Marriage in 2008.” *Political Research Quarterly*, 63, 922-932.

T 4/26: Predicting elections

- Silver, Nate. (2014). [“How the FiveThirtyEight Senate forecast model works.”](#) FiveThirtyEight.com, 17 September.

Th 4/28: Looking forward to November; course wrap-up

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 6 – 10 AM