

## ★ PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS ★

PSC 344, Spring 2017  
University at Buffalo, SUNY  
107 Talbert Hall  
2:00 – 3:20pm Tuesdays & Thursdays  
Office Hours: 3:30 - 4:30pm Tuesdays & Thursdays and by appointment

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### ***Course Description***

This course examines the fundamental characteristics of American presidential campaigns and how they affect elections and the public's ability to control the government. This semester the course focuses particular attention on the 2016 presidential campaign and on explanations of recent presidential campaigns and elections. The course also examines more broadly the impact of the candidates in presidential elections, systematic or regular aspects of campaign effects on elections, and concerns about the negativity of presidential campaigns.

The lectures and readings address many other basic questions about political campaigns as well:

What is a campaign? What are campaigns supposed to do?

What are the most basic factors affecting the outcome of presidential elections?

How have presidential campaigns changed throughout American history?

What are the basic strategies involved in political campaigns?

What resources are most important in campaigns?

Has the increased polarization of the public and the parties affected campaigns and election outcomes?

Do campaigns stimulate citizens to participate or turn them off on politics?

Do presidential campaigns help to inform voters about the issues and the candidates or do they help candidates to manipulate what voters think?

Are campaigns too negative and what kind of candidates run more negative campaigns?

Have campaigns grown more negative in recent years?

Is the television advertising of the candidates' messages to voters effective, either from an informational standpoint or in terms of gaining votes?

Do presidential campaigns weaken or strengthen partisanship in the electorate?

What is the role of the economy in elections?

Are elections with an incumbent in the race fundamentally different from "open seat" elections?

Do all incumbents have the same advantages or are first party-term incumbents particularly privileged?

How much of a difference do campaigns make to the vote margins between the candidates?

How often do presidential campaigns make a difference to the outcomes of the election?

Do elections carry with them mandates for how winning candidates should govern (their policies)?

Are campaign effects on the vote systematic or do they depend largely on the chance developments of events, the particular strategies of the candidates' campaigns, and unforeseeable errors and gaffes of the candidates and their supporters?

The course this semester is organized somewhat differently than in past semesters because it is offered so soon after the presidential election, before a good deal of serious scholarship on the election has been published. As a result, we will examine the reasons for the 2016 election's outcome in light of some background on the candidates, some initial preliminary interpretations of what happened in the election, my election forecasting model, my analysis of previous election outcomes as well as several articles I wrote during the election season, and a range of primary research materials on the election. These include: the election results at both the national and state levels, the exit polls in both the 2016 and 2012 elections, campaign finance data, preference poll data of the campaign horserace and public opinion on the issues and other matters, data regarding economic growth, and a variety of other data. Provided with this background of journalistic speculations, analyses of the last four presidential elections, evidence of the pre-campaign context of the 2016 election, and polling done during the campaign as well as exit poll results gathered on Election Day, we should be able to determine why the election turned out as it did and what the results mean for American government, reveal about the American public, and portend for future elections. In short, we should be able to figure out what is going on.

There are many more specific questions to address in examining the 2016 presidential election:  
Was the election a fluke decided by an Electoral College that “misfired”?  
Did Russian hacking or the FBI’s statement about Clinton’s e-mail controversy decide the election?  
Why didn’t the demographic advantages that Democrats were supposed to enjoy lead Clinton to victory?  
Was the 2016 a nativist, anti-immigrant revolt?  
How did the economy affect the election?  
How could a candidate with zero political experience like Donald Trump get elected?  
Was he elected because of his bombastic style or despite it?  
What role did polarization play in this election?  
Was the 2016 election a rejection of political liberalism and a victory for political conservatism?  
What role did Obamacare play in this election?  
Was terrorism and foreign policy a factor in the election?  
How did an electorate that elected Obama in 2008 and 2012 then turn around and elect Trump in 2016?  
Did Clinton lose the election because of an unwillingness of voters to elect a woman president?  
Did Trump bring out a ground swell of voters who had not voted in previous elections?  
How did turnout change from 2012 and 2016?  
Does approval of a president performance mean anything if the president is not running?  
Was the election of Donald Trump an endorsement of him, a repudiation of Clinton, or something else?  
We will try to answer these and many more questions about the election in the coming weeks.

### ***REQUIRED READING***

There are two required texts and several articles available through the internet for this course. The books in their order of appearance in the course are:

James E. Campbell, 2008. *The American Campaign: U.S. Presidential Campaigns and the National Vote*, second edition, Texas A&M University Press.

Emmett H. Buell and Lee Sigelman, 2009. *Attack Politics: Negativity in Presidential Campaigns since 1960*, second edition, revised and updated University Press of Kansas.

There are also two videos that you should watch and be prepared to discuss.

Theda Skocpol. 2016. “Understanding Election 2016,” *Critical Conversations*, Office of the President UB, UB Lecture on November 17, 2016. Video.

<https://www.buffalo.edu/president/programs/critical-conversations/Skocpol.html>

Frontline, 2016. *The Choice 2016*. Video. <http://www.pbs.org/video/2365848966/>

The two books are available for purchase at the UB bookstore. The books are referred to by the author's last name in the listing of reading assignments. The two videos are available on the internet at the specified URL. In addition to these books, we will read a number of essays and primary materials regarding past elections and the 2016 election. These will be available on HUB or on the internet. These readings are included in the assigned reading list for each week.

Note that the class lectures will be covering material not in the reading and will necessarily vary from the reading. Do not expect that what you are reading will necessarily match up with what we are discussing in the next class session. The course covers a good deal more than what you can read in a semester, so the lectures and readings cannot be tightly coordinated (if they were we would not get to many important and timely subjects). Also, since the course is being conducted in the midst of a presidential campaign, we will regularly discuss issues and questions raised by the campaign. We will also, from time to time, view documentaries. You are as responsible for this material as that in the lectures and readings.

## ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

Your course grade will be based of five considerations. These will combined in the following percentages to compute your overall course grade:

Class Participation	14%
Quizzes	10%
Election Analysis Paper	16%
Midterm Examination	27%
Final Examination	33%

Student Learning Outcomes and Grades: The extent to which you have achieved the learning outcomes itemized at the beginning of this syllabus will be assessed by each of the five evaluation components of the grade: participation, quizzes, the term-paper, and the midterm and final examinations.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Class participation counts for 14% of your course grade. Although the evaluation of your course participation is unavoidably subjective, two factors will affect this component of your grade.

(1.) Attendance counts. You are expected to attend class regularly. You are expected to know about anything said in the class lectures or discussions. Nothing short of a personal or family emergency is as important as this class during its scheduled meeting time. Attendance will be taken at different times in the course on a random basis. Unless it cannot possibly be avoided, do not plan to be anywhere else when this class is scheduled (no vacations, no appointments, etc.)

(2.) The quality of your participation counts. Insightful questions and comments will be rewarded in the participation grade. Inattentive and/or distracting behavior will detract *substantially* from your participation grade. In this regard, I must also make a point of classroom behavior. All students attending class are expected to pay attention and attend the entire class meeting, unless arrangements have been made with me before the class. Students who are obviously not paying attention (eg. reading newspapers) or who leave class prior to the end of the class meeting will receive a failing class participation grade. Also, remember that this is not a “movie.” It is inappropriate to leave the class room while a lecture or discussion is in progress unless it is an emergency (you feel sick or must otherwise use the bathroom facilities).

6 Key points: Attend every class (unless excused),  
Pay attention throughout every class,  
Do not leave the class unless for an emergency,  
Turn your cell phones off during class,  
Do not use your computers during the class, and  
Be prepared to participate in every class (that means keep up with the reading).

### **QUIZZES**

There will be at least two quizzes and perhaps a couple more. One will be an unannounced quiz sometime before the midterm exam. Another will be a quiz after the midterm examination drawn from that exam. There are absolutely no make-up options for these quizzes. There may also be other quizzes given, especially when videos are shown to the class. The quizzes will count for a combined 10% of your grade. Any quiz given before the third week of the class will be dropped from the grade if it hurts your overall quiz grade. That is, any quiz in the first two weeks will only be counted if it helps your grade.

### **ELECTION ANALYSIS PAPER**

The 2016 election was quite unusual in many ways. Commentators frequently observed that all the normal rules of elections, candidate strategies and behavior were broken in this election. Your assignment is to write a **7-page paper** answering the question:

Which previous presidential election in American electoral history (elections since 1896) was *most similar* to the 2016 presidential election? Explain the most important ways in which the two elections were similar and the most important ways in which they differed.

**Table 1. Election Results for the In-Party Presidential Candidate, 1896-2016**

<i>In-Party Candidate and Election Type</i>	<i>Election Outcome for the In-Party</i>		
	<i>Won</i>	<i>Lost</i>	<i>Mean 2-pty Vote %</i>
Not Incumbent, Open Seat	5	6	49.4
Incumbent, First-Party Term	11	1	56.3
Incumbent, Not First-Party Term	4	4	49.1

*Note:* 2000 and 2016 are counted as a popular vote win for the in-party candidate. Counted as electoral vote losses, the open seat record is 3 wins and 7 losses.

**Table 2. Presidential Elections from 1896 to 2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>In-Party Candidate</i>	<i>Out-Party Candidate</i>	<i>In-Party Outcome</i>	<i>Type of Race</i>
<b>1896</b>	<b><i>Bryan (D)</i></b>	<b><i>McKinley (R)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1900	<u>McKinley (R)</u>	Bryan (D)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1904	<u>T. Roosevelt (R)</u>	Parker (D)	Won	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1908</b>	<b><i>Taft (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Bryan (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Won</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1912	<u>Taft (Repub)</u>	Wilson (Dem)	Lost	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1916	<u>Wilson (Dem)</u>	Hughes (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1920</b>	<b><i>Cox (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Harding (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1924	<u>Coolidge (Repub)</u>	Davis (Dem)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1928</b>	<b><i>Hoover (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Smith (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Won</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1932	<u>Hoover (Repub)</u>	F. Roosevelt (Dem)	Lost	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1936	<u>F. Roosevelt (Dem)</u>	Landon (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1940	<u>F. Roosevelt (Dem)</u>	Willkie (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1944	<u>F. Roosevelt (Dem)</u>	Dewey (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1948	<u>Truman (Dem)</u>	Dewey (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1952</b>	<b><i>Stevenson (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Eisenhower (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1956	<u>Eisenhower (Repub)</u>	Stevenson (Dem)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1960</b>	<b><i>Nixon (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Kennedy (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1964	<u>Johnson (Dem)</u>	Goldwater (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1968</b>	<b><i>Humphrey (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Nixon (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1972	<u>Nixon (Repub)</u>	McGovern (Dem)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1976	<u>Ford (Repub)</u>	Carter (Dem)	Lost	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1980	<u>Carter (Dem)</u>	Reagan (Repub)	Lost	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1984	<u>Reagan (Repub)</u>	Mondale (Dem)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>1988</b>	<b><i>G.H.W. Bush (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Dukakis (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Won</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
1992	<u>G.H.W. Bush (Repub)</u>	Clinton (Dem)	Lost	Incumbent/Not 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
1996	<u>Clinton (Dem)</u>	Dole (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>2000</b>	<b><i>Gore (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>G.W. Bush (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
2004	<u>G.W. Bush (Repub)</u>	Kerry (Dem)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
<b>2008</b>	<b><i>McCain (Repub)</i></b>	<b><i>Obama (Dem)</i></b>	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>
2012	<u>Obama (Dem)</u>	Romney (Repub)	Won	Incumbent/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Term
2016	H. Clinton (Dem)	Trump (Repub)	<b><i>Lost</i></b>	<b><i>Open Seat</i></b>

Be sure to respond to the question and its components. This is not a general essay on a particular election. READ your paper several times carefully before you hand it in. It should be coherent and tightly organized. In answering the question, you should examine as many sources as possible, including newspapers and news magazines, economic data, personal and electoral histories, and any other reliable source that you can find. Preference should be given to original rather than secondary sources (e.g., Wikipedia is definitely a least preferred source, not the highest authority and do NOT use encyclopedias as authoritative sources.).

Your grade on the paper will be based on:

(1.) how thoroughly and creatively you have searched for reliable information (dig for original sources, read newspapers and news magazines of that time such as Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report and others, read presidential speeches, etc.). Do not just rely on convenient website materials. They are only a starting point. Do Not make vague assertions and provide evidence for specific assertions. If you write X, why should anyone believe it?

You may want to examine presidential approval ratings available at the Roper Center's website and Gallup's Job Approval Center (1948 to present) at the Gallup website. At Gallup, presidential approval ratings are available for the general public as well as for party identifiers (Democrats, Independents, and Republicans). You might also examine economic data such as the % change in real GDP available at the website of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (since 1930 annually and 1947 quarterly) and unemployment rates available at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (since 1948). Summaries of national nominating campaigns and conventions are available in *CQ's Guide to U.S. Elections* available in the reference section of the library.

(2.) how insightfully and carefully you analyzed this information to reach your conclusion, and

(3.) how well you organized the paper to present clearly your assessment of the election's outcome.

Regarding the format and length of your paper:

(1.) The text of the paper (*excluding* title page, endnotes and references) should be no longer than **7 pages** (double-spaced with 1 inch margins and a 12 point font). Observe the correct capitalization of parties and offices: Republican Party, Democratic Party, Congress, president (unless a title).

(2.) Citations within the paper to sources listed in a reference section at the end of the paper should use the standard social scientific format. For example, (Skowronek 2008) or specifically to a page, (Skowronek 2008, 52). You must cite sources correctly and enter them in the references correctly.

(3.) The references should be listed alphabetically on a separate page(s) after the text.

(4.) Endnotes should be used sparingly and only for substantive comments. These should be placed between the text and the list of references.

(5.) The paper should have a cover page with a title, your name, the course number and name, the university, and the semester.

(6.) Note: Works of non-fiction should NOT be referred to as "novels"!

Do not wait to get started on this paper. Your paper will be due on **Tuesday, MAY 9<sup>th</sup>**. Your paper will count for 15% of your course grade.

## **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

A midterm is scheduled for Week 7, March 16. It will cover the lectures and assigned readings up to and including that covered in Week 7. I reserve the right to push back the date of the midterm based on the progress of the course, but will inform you of any change at least two class meetings before the test.

## FINAL EXAMINATION

The final exam will be comprehensive, covering material throughout the course, but will emphasize material covered after the midterm test. The midterm examination will be composed of "objective" questions (true-false, multiple choice, list). Once examinations are distributed to the class, *no one* will be permitted to leave the room and return to the test. The midterm counts for 26% of your grade and the final examination counts for 33%.

### *Student Learning Outcomes*

My hope is that this course will teach you to think more rigorously in general and particularly about the politics involved in the electoral process. Beyond that, I hope is that the course will provide you with important information and theories regarding the electoral process in a democratic republic. If successful, these learning outcomes will be useful to you in many capacities of everyday life, in your roles as active citizens, and in your occupations, should your careers move you toward an engagement in the political process and government. More specifically, students are expected by the end of the semester to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

1. Be familiar with different explanations of the effects of presidential campaigns,
2. Understand the history of recent elections,
3. Understand the fundamental characteristics of American electoral politics,
4. Improve their ability to apply social scientific reasoning,
5. Improve their ability to express clearly their reasoning in both written and verbal forms,
6. Be able to interpret statistics applied to social scientific questions,
7. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of modern campaigns in democratic politics.

**Grades:** Grades on the five components of your overall course grade are based on 100 point scale. Numerical grades are rounded. The instructor reserves the right to scale exams and quizzes depending on their degree of difficulty. The numerical and letter grades are associated as follows

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
A	91.5 to 100
A-	89.5 to 91.4
B+	87.5 to 89.4
B	81.5 to 87.4
B-	79.5 to 81.4
C+	77.5 to 79.4
C	71.5 to 77.4
C-	69.5 to 71.4
D+	67.5 to 69.4
D	59.5 to 67.4
F	59.4 and below

You are expected to take the exams at the times scheduled for the whole class. Failure to take a test at the specified time will be counted as a zero for that portion of the course. Exceptions to this rule will only be made when the student confronts extreme circumstances and then, only when arrangements have been made with me *prior* to the examination or due date. If you have difficulty getting in touch with me, you can always send me an e-mail or leave a message for me on my office phone answering machine. But in any case, if you have significant problems you should get in touch with me *as early as possible*. My contact information is at the top of the first page of this syllabus. You should familiarize yourself with UB's policy regarding incomplete grades.

In more general terms, you are expected at all times to conduct yourself in accord with the university's policy regarding **Academic Integrity**. If you are not already familiar with UB's standards of academic responsibility and integrity, you should familiarize yourself with them at <http://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu/> You should also be familiar with UB's policy regarding "Obstruction or Disruption in the Classroom" at <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/judicial/classroom.php>

Additionally, as the **Accessibility Resources** website indicates: "the University at Buffalo is committed to providing students with disabilities access to all the university's resources and programs. While this goal is shared across the campus community, AR coordinates requests for reasonable accommodations to help ensure that your needs are met in a timely and effective way. Accommodations are various modifications or adjustments that are made to provide people with disabilities equal opportunity to access information, programs, services. If you need to request an accommodation please contact us to arrange a meeting with AR staff." For more information see: <http://www.buffalo.edu/accessibility/students.php>

Finally, this syllabus is in keeping with UB's policy of May 8, 2013 regarding "Course Syllabi Requirements." The above sections of the syllabus have presented a course description, course requirements, the academic content of the course, intended student learning outcomes, my grading policy, the link of the intended learning outcomes to each of the components in the course grade, UB's academic integrity policy (they are for it), UB's available accessibility resources, and my office hours. If this syllabus gets any longer, it may rival the small print of a credit card application or the license agreements on software that none of us read – but it is all here, and if not, please feel free to let me know. I will try to answer any question about the course that you might have.



### COURSE OUTLINE

- I. The 2016 Presidential Election: Explaining the Election's Outcome
  - A. Frontline: Clinton v Trump
  - B. UB Lecture by Dr. Theda Skocpol on "Understanding Election 2016"
  - C. Reflections by the Campaign Managers
  - D. What are Presidential Elections About? The Message (Values and Performance) and the Messengers
- II. Forecasting Presidential Elections: The Trial-Heat and Economy Models in 2016
- III. The Fundamentals in the 2016 Presidential Election
  - A. The Presidential Elections Leading Up to the 2016 Election (2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012)
  - B. Polarization and Party Parity
  - C. An Open Seat Election
  - D. Fragile and Weak Economic Growth
  - E. The Public's Mood: Wrong Direction, Not Right Track
  - F. Two Divided Nomination Contests
  - G. Two Problematic Candidates
- IV. The Course of the 2016 Campaign
  - A. The Conventions
  - B. The FBI, Wikileaks, Access Hollywood Scandals
  - C. The Debates
  - D. Media Coverage
  - E. The Polls
- V. The General Analysis of Presidential Elections and Campaigns
  - A. Key Questions
  - B. Groundwork: Definition, Functions, Potential Effects, Problems with Evidence
  - C. An Overview of a Theory of Presidential Campaigns (The Theory of the Predictable Campaign):
    - 1. The Journalistic Perspective vs the Conventional Political Science Perspective
    - 2. Reasons to be Skeptical of Campaign Effects
    - 3. The Campaign: Systematic and Unsystematic Effects

- VI. The Fundamentals of the Context Matters – Context, Candidates, and Campaigns
  - A. Partisanship
    - 1. The Two-Party System
    - 2. Partisanship: Pervasive and Balanced
    - 3. How Does Partisanship Affect Election Results?
  - B. Polarization: Of the Public and the Parties
  - C. Perennial Issues and Familiar Candidates
  - D. The Consistency of Voting Cues and Early Decisions: Easy Decisions can be Early Decisions
  - E. Incumbency
    - 1. The In-Party's Record
    - 2. Incumbent vs Open-Seat Elections
    - 3. Presidential Approval
    - 4. Personal Incumbency and Party Incumbency
  - F. The Economy
    - 1. The Economic Record
    - 2. The Election-Year Economy
    - 3. Economic Responsibility: The Economy and Incumbency
  
- VII. The Campaign and the Candidates: The Message and the Messenger
  - The Definition of the Campaign
  - A. Candidate Backgrounds and Historic Roles
  - B. The Campaign Message: Giving Voters a Convincing Reason to Vote for You
    - 1. Candidate Strategy: 10 Rules
    - 2. Emphasizing the Candidates Strengths
    - 3. Evaluating the Opposition
      - a. Mobilizing Supporters in the Base Matters
      - b. Reaching Out to the Political Center Matters
      - c. Politicizing the Context: Realizing Potential, Seizing Opportunities
  - C. The Campaign Organization: Adaptability and Planning
  - D. Campaign Resources: In Organization, PACs, and In-Kind
  - E. Getting the Candidates' Messages Through: The Media as Mediator, Guardian, or Obstacle?
  - F. The Mesh of Context with Candidate Strategy Matters
    - 1. Candidate Situation and Strength Should Mesh with Campaign Strategy
    - 2. Candidate Poll Standing Should Mesh with Campaign Strategy (Positive or Negative)
  
- VIII. Campaign Effects and Events
  - A. The Narrowing Effect of Campaigns: The Effect of Intense Competition
  - B. The Nomination Campaign: Early Party Unity
  - C. Convention Bumps
  - D. Presidential Debate Effects
  - E. The Effects of Negative Campaigns
  
- IX. The Impact of Presidential Campaigns
  - A. Systematic and Non-systematic Campaign Effects
    - 1. Campaign Events Matter: Usually at the Margins and Occasionally Much More
    - 2. Do Campaigns Affect Turnout?
    - 3. Do Campaigns Affect the Vote Percentages for Candidates?
  - B. When Have Presidential Campaigns been Decisive?
  
- X. Presidential Campaigns and Democracy
  - A. Do Campaigns Improve Representation?
  - B. Who Are Campaigns Run For?
  - C. Do Campaigns Impede Governing?
  - D. Do Elections Provide Mandates?
  - E. How Can Campaigns Be Improved?

Additionally, running throughout the course will be discussions of particular presidential campaigns over the course of American history.



## COURSE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

### **WEEK 1: JANUARY 31 & FEBRUARY 2**

Introduction to the Course

Some Basic Questions About Campaigns

Groundwork on Campaigns and their Functions

The 2016 Presidential Election: What Happened?

Some Views and Interpretations: How the Election was Interpreted

“War Stories: Inside Campaign 2016”

Harvard Institute of Politics Conference: Jake Tapper, Kellyanne Conway, Robby Mook

<http://iop.harvard.edu/forum/war-stories-inside-campaign-2016> *or*

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?419547-1/harvard-2016-presidential-campaign-managers-panel>

#### **View Website Videos:**

Frontline, “The Choice 2016”

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-choice-2016/>

Theda Skocpol, "Understanding Election 2016" (Skocpol Lecture, Not Panel Discussion)

<https://www.buffalo.edu/president/programs/critical-conversations/Skocpol.html>

**Read:** Dan Balz and Philip Rucker, 2016 “An oral history of 2016—How Donald Trump won: The insiders tell their story” *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2016

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/how-donald-trump-won-the-inside-story/>

Cook Political Report Staff, 2016. “56 Interesting Facts about the 2016 Election,”

*The Cook Political Report*, December 16, 2016.

Recommended but not required:

Harvard IOP’s *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at 2016* (audio)

<http://iop.harvard.edu/get-inspired/campaign-managers-conference/campaign-president-managers-look-2016>

### **WEEK 2. FEBRUARY 7 & 9**

The Fundamentals in the 2016 Presidential Election

The Previous Four Presidential Elections: 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012

Pre-election Public Opinion

Nominations and the General Election

The Political and Economic Context for the 2016 Election

**Read:** Campbell, 2010. “The Exceptional Election of 2008: Performance, Values, and Crisis,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, v.40, n.2 (June 2010), pp. 225-46.

Campbell, 2013. “The Miserable Presidential Election of 2012: A First Party-Term Incumbent Survives,” *The Forum*, v.10, n.4 (February 2013) pp.20-28.

Pew Research Center, 2015. *Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government*. Introduction and Chapter 7.

Republican Party Primary and Caucus Exit Poll Summary.

Campbell, 2014. “A look at past elections shows that the 2016 presidential race will be extremely tight,” *LSE Blogs* (London School of Economics and Political Science) (4/23/14).

Economic Growth during the Obama Presidency (from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Percent change in Gross Domestic Product (quarterly) from the end of the Great Recession

### **WEEK 3. FEBRUARY 14 & 16**

The Forecasts of the 2016 Presidential Election

The Course of the 2016 Presidential Campaign

The Candidates and the Campaign in 2016

**Read:** Campbell, 2016. “Introduction: Forecasting the 2016 American National Elections,” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 49 (4), pp. 649-53.

Campbell, 2016. “The Trial-Heat and Seats-in-Trouble Forecasts of the 2016 Presidential and Congressional Elections,” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 49 (4), pp. 664-68.

- Campbell, 2016. "Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Presidential Election Forecasts and the Fundamentals," *Sabato's Crystal Ball* website (9/22/16).
- Campbell, 2017. "A Recap of the 2016 Election Forecasts: Introduction" *PS: Political Science & Politics, forthcoming April 2017*.
- Campaign Finance Summary from Open Secrets, Center for Responsive Politics. 2016. "2016 Presidential Race," (Campaign Finance Report)  
<http://www.opensecrets.org/pres16>
- Gallup Poll. 2016. Favorables/Unfavorables of Candidates, Overall and Within the Candidate's Party (Oct. 8 to Nov. 8)

#### **WEEK 4. FEBRUARY 21 & 23**

What Voters Thought and What Mattered

Explaining the 2016 Presidential Election: What 2016 was about and What it was not about.

Values, Performance (combined as the Message) and the Candidates (the Messengers)

2016 in Historical Context: 2008 or Read My Lips?

The Aftermath of the Election:

The Electoral College, the FBI's Comey and Russian Hacking? Or, Fed-up with the Status Quo?

**Read:** Real Clear Politics. 2016. Means of Candidate Preferences (Data Series)

ABC News/Washington Post Poll. "2016 Election Tracking No. 10: Strong Enthusiasm Ebbs for Clinton; Trump is +1 in Vote Pref." November 1, 2016.

CBS News/New York Times Poll. 2016. "The 2016 Election: A Lead for Clinton with One Day to Go," November 2-6, 2016.

Fox News Poll. 2016. November 7, 2016.

Campbell, 2016. "So, Where Does This Race Stand? Underlying Dynamics Suggest the Climate Is Tough For a Status Quo Candidate," *New York Daily News*, November 3, 2016. <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/james-campbell-race-stand-article-1.2857045>

CNN. 2012 and 2016. National Exit Polls (and the National and State votes).

#### **WEEK 5. FEBRUARY 28 & MARCH 2**

Overview of a General Theory of Presidential Campaigns: The Theory of the Predictable Campaign,

Some Background in Social Science Methodology: Getting Beyond Opinion

The Journalistic and Conventional Political Science Views of Campaigns

The Context of Campaigns: Values and Performance

Why Some Doubt the Impact of Presidential Campaigns

**Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*. Introduction, chapter 1, 2, and 3.

#### **WEEK 6. MARCH 7 & 9**

The Stable Context of the Campaign:

Who Decides Their Vote Before the Campaign and Why?

The Partisan and Ideological Starting Point: Hyper-Competition

Polarization of the Public and the Parties

Perennial Issues and Familiar Candidates

**Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*, chapter 4

#### **WEEK 7. MARCH 14 & 16**

### **MIDTERM EXAM ON MARCH 16**

**NO CLASS MEETING ON MARCH 21 & 23: SPRING BREAK**

#### **WEEK 8. MARCH 28 & 30**

The Variable Context of the Campaign: Incumbency and the Economy

Presidential Incumbency

The Variable Context of the Campaign: The Presidential Incumbency Advantage

Is the Incumbency Advantage linked to the Incumbent Personally or to his Party?

The First Party-Term Advantage: An Eight Year Term?

**Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*, chapter 5

**WEEK 9. APRIL 4 & 6**

The Economic Context

- Are Voters Like Cash-registers? Is it Only Money that Matters?
  - Who Gets Credit or Takes the Blame for the Economy?
  - What's the Best Electoral Indicator of the Economy? Unemployment, Stocks, GDP?
  - How Much Growth do Voters Expect Before they Give Credit to the In-Party?
  - What Timing of Economic Growth is Important to the Election and Why?
- Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*, chapter 6

**WEEK 10. APRIL 11 & 13**

THE CAMPAIGN

- The Campaign Message: Giving Voters a Convincing Reason to Vote For You
- Campaign Messages: History and Themes
- Campaign Strategy: Some Rules
- How Does Partisanship affect Campaigns?
- Steer to the Center or to the Base?: Turnout, Swing Voters and Ideology

The Normal Course of the Campaign: Competitive Narrowing

- Is there a Momentum to Campaigns?
  - The Narrowing Effect of Campaigns
- Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*, chapter 7

**WEEK 11. APRIL 18 & 20**

The Nomination Campaign and Early Party Unity

- What Happens Within the Parties affects What Happens Between the Parties
- How do Party Conventions affect the Campaigns?
- Convention Bumps

**Read:** Buell and Sigelman, *Attack Politics*, chapters 1, 2 & 3

**WEEK 12. APRIL 25 & 27**

The Impact of Debates: How Much? How Durable? Under What Circumstances? And Why?

The Presidential Candidates: Backgrounds and Roles

**Read:** Buell and Sigelman, *Attack Politics*, chapters 4, 5 & 6

**WEEK 13. MAY 2 & 4**

Campaign Strategies and Negative Campaigning

The Impact of Presidential Campaigns

Do Campaigns Affect Turnout?

Do Campaigns Persuade or Reinforce Voters?

Evaluating Campaigns: How Much and How Often Do Campaigns Matter?

Two Views on Campaign Effects: Is the Glass 20% Full or 80% Empty?

**Read:** Buell and Sigelman, *Attack Politics*, chapters 7, 8 & 9

**WEEK 14. MAY 9 & 11 – PAPER DUE MAY 9**

Have Unsystematic Effects Decided Election Outcomes?

When Have Presidential Campaigns been Decisive?

Do Campaigns Improve Representation?

Who Should Be Served By Campaigns? Who Should Campaigns be Directed To?

Do Voters Learn from Campaigns?

Interpreting Campaigns: Do Elections Provide Mandates for Public Policy?

Campaigning and Governing: Is There a Disconnect?

Evaluating Campaigns: Should Campaigns Be Reformed? Are they too Long?

Can Campaigns be made more Substantive and More Accurate?

Should the Electoral College System be Abolished?

**Read:** Campbell, *The American Campaign*, chapter 8 and 9

**FINAL EXAMINATION, TBA**

