

## Course Outline

- I. **Introduction to Course**
  - A. What is this course about?
  - B. The calm before the storm: building up to the 2016 campaigns and elections (U.S. President, U.S. Senate, U.S. Rep., and state and local elections)
  - C. What we can learn by watching and analyzing campaigns and elections?
  - D. The best Internet political sites for analyzing campaigns and elections
  - E. A framework for understanding campaigns and elections
  - F. Evaluating campaigns and elections: sticking to the basics is what makes you a good political analyst, unlike many analysts on TV
  - G. A quick overview of some of the most basic things about electoral behavior
  - H. Summary and lessons to be learned
  
- II. **The Fundamentals of the American Electoral Process**
  - A. Who can run?
  - B. When are elections held and what is the nature of each kind of election?
  - C. Where should a candidate run for office?
  - D. Who can vote?
  - E. Who wins?
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
  
- III. **The History of American Campaigns and How They Have Changed**
  - A. The first campaign era: pre-democratic campaigns, 1788-1824
  - B. The second campaign era: mass mobilization campaigns, 1828-1892
  - C. The third campaign era: progressive era campaigns, 1896-1948
  - D. The fourth campaign era: candidate campaigns, 1952-?????
  - E. How are today's campaigns different from those in the past
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
  
- IV. **Explaining and Analyzing Recent Elections and Looking Toward 2016: A Brief Review**
  - A. The 1992 presidential election: Democrats take back control; the Perot factor
  - B. The 1994 congressional elections: the Republican sweep
  - C. The 1996 presidential election: Clinton recovers and crushes Dole
  - D. The 1998 congressional elections: Unexpected Democratic surprises
  - E. The 2000 presidential election: Gore wins popular vote, but . . .; Fl. recount
  - F. The 2002 congressional elections: Post 9/11 flag waving campaign connects
  - G. The 2004 presidential election: Bush wins reelection with bad indicators
  - H. The 2006 congressional elections: driven by Bush woes, Democrats win big
  - I. The 2008 presidential election: history made with first black to win presidency
  - J. The 2010 congressional elections: Tea Party born, but Republican woes ahead

- K. The 2012 presidential election: demographics reveal trend against Republicans
  - L. The 2014 congressional election: crushing defeat for Democrats
  - M. Active campaigning has already started for the 2016 elections
  - N. Missouri was the best bellwether state in the 20th century. What happened to it? Can it regain its bellwether status or at least its swing state status?
  - O. Summary and lessons to be learned
- V. **Making Our Elections Fair and Honest**
- A. A brief history of election corruption
  - B. Yes, in America we still have vote and voter fraud
  - C. Yes, in America we still have voter suppression
  - D. Yes, in America we still have problems counting the votes
  - E. Voting machines: new technologies have brought us new problems
  - F. Election Verification Exit Polls
  - G. Summary and lessons to be learned
- VI. **Campaign Financing**
- A. A very complicated, confusing, and changing subject
  - B. Rules for donors
  - C. Rules for spenders
  - D. Campaign financing rules and political strategies
  - E. *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010)
  - F. The continuing debate over campaign finance reform
  - G. Summary and lessons to be learned
- VII. **Modern Campaign Strategies**
- A. Campaign strategies vary greatly from local to presidential contests
  - B. How are campaign strategies designed?
  - C. Making strategic and tactical decisions
  - D. Campaign organizations from top to bottom
  - E. Summary and lessons to be learned
- VIII. **Voter Participation and Turnout**
- A. What are the different forms of electoral participation?
  - B. Who votes? Who doesn't? Why?
  - C. Voter turnout trends in the U.S.
  - D. Voter turnout: a comparative perspective
  - E. Are voters representative of nonvoters?
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
- IX. **Political Parties, Partisanship and Determinants of Vote Choice**
- A. The rise and fall of political parties: parties struggle to retain relevance
  - B. The Democratic and Republican parties at the federal and state levels
  - C. Partisan voting behavior and determinants of vote choice
  - D. Independent voters
  - E. Third party movements: Why third party candidates can't win the presidency,

- but can win on the state level
  - F. Packaging and selling candidates
  - G. Do campaigns matter? Yes and no, but mostly no. But it depends on the circumstances of the contest (e.g., level of contest, open seat?)
  - H. The changing character of party politics: the rise of polarization and the decline of civility and cooperative politics
  - I. The meaning of an election victory: elections have consequences, but do election victories give a candidate a mandate as so many candidates claim?
  - J. Summary and lessons to be learned
- X. **Social Characteristics of Partisans and Independents**
- A. Social composition of partisan groups
  - B. Social group analysis
  - C. Social cross-pressures
  - D. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XI. **Public Opinion and Ideology**
- A. Public opinion formation
  - B. Public opinion on issues
  - C. Impact on elections
  - D. Analyzing public opinion in the context of specific issues
  - E. Ideology and its significance
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XII. **Public Opinion Polling: Its Methods and Its Value**
- A. What are public opinion polls?
  - B. How are they conducted? Methodological challenges
  - C. What controversies plague public opinion polling today?
  - D. *In Defense of Public Opinion Polling*
  - E. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XIII. **Interest Group Politics**
- A. What are the different types of interest groups?
  - B. Why does the U.S. have so many interest groups?
  - C. The role of interest groups in campaigns
  - D. Interest group strategies
  - E. Evaluating the effectiveness of interest groups
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XIV. **The News Media and Their Role in Campaigns and Elections**
- A. Identifying the news media?
  - B. The free press: the government's very limited role in regulating the media
  - C. The business of news and the norm of objectivity: ratings and profits first
  - D. What gets covered and how?
  - E. How do the candidates and the news media interact?
  - F. The impact of media coverage of campaigns and elections on the citizenry

- G. Critiquing media coverage of candidates, campaigns, and elections
  - H. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XV. **Presidential Campaigns: An Overview**
- A. Goals of presidential campaigns
  - B. Strategies for winning enough delegates to win the nomination
  - C. National party conventions
  - D. Strategies for winning 270 electoral votes and thus the presidency
  - E. Swing state politics
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XVI. **Congressional Campaigns: An Overview**
- A. Who runs for Congress?
  - B. Rules and realities of congressional campaigns
  - C. Campaign organizations and funding
  - D. The primary election
  - E. The General election
  - F. Why incumbents have such an enormous advantage in congressional elections?
  - G. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XVII. **State and Local Campaigns**
- A. Local elections: rules, realities, and campaign strategies
  - B. State elections: rules, realities, and campaign strategies
  - C. The push toward professionalism
  - D. Activists in state and local elections
  - E. The paradox of state and local campaigns
  - F. Summary and lessons to be learned
- XVIII. **Concluding Thoughts**
- A. Campaigns, elections, and democratic values
  - B. How democratic are our elections when so many factors tend to undermine democratic processes (e.g., money; rigid two party system; restrictions on voter participation; interest group politics; vote/voter fraud; dirty advertising; election laws; media's obsession with "horserace" coverage; electoral college)
  - C. What can we do to make our campaigns and elections more democratic and just plain better?
  - D. What have you learned in this course?

### **Required Readings**

John Sides, Daron Shaw et al., *Campaigns and Elections*, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton and Co.), 2015.

Current articles, polls, etc. readings, mostly from the Internet. Many of these articles will be breaking stories pertaining to campaigns and elections, only hours old.

**NOTE:** Reading assignments will be made in class and "hand-out-readings" will be distributed or assigned on a timely basis. In this particular class, lectures will cover materials, especially very current articles and data sources, which will supplement significantly what is in the text, so class attendance is very important. The course outline reflects the general subject order, but it is not always possible to not "skip around" somewhat when trying to present complex material meaningfully, especially in an upcoming presidential and congressional election year when breaking topics need to be discussed and placed in context. We will devote considerable attention to breaking news stories pertaining to the upcoming elections. Also, course materials may often seem to be presented in a redundant way in the book and in my lectures. This is due to the nature of the material where similar topics are presented with slightly different twists/applications. If you are sincerely interested in politics, this is a fascinating course because it is filled with tidbits on what makes American voters and politicians tick.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend class since lectures and class participation are important. Lectures will cover numerous topics that are not covered in the book and students will be expected to participate in class discussions related to these topics. Students cannot miss more than six classes in the semester and get credit for the course. This does not mean that students should miss six classes, since this is a lot. Excused absences (e.g., illness, death in the family) are exempt.

### **Grading Policy**

Mid-Term	120 points
Student project	120 points
Attendance/Participation	40 points
<u>Final</u>	<u>120 points</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>400 points</b>

The numerical equivalents of letter grades are:

94-100 = A	91-93 = A-	88-90 = B+	82-87 = B	80-81 = B-
77-79 = C+	73-76 = C	70-72 = C-	65-69 = D	Below 65 = F

### **My contact information**

My phone numbers: 977-3036 (office); 977-3035 (department office); 963-0451 (home office --- call here only when very important)

Office, McGannon Hall, Room 135

Office Hours: Always immediately before and after class hours and by appointment or any time you can find me in my office. I also can be reached by phone at the above numbers.

### **Course/Learning Objectives**

Basically, I have a twofold objective in teaching this course. Firstly, I want students to learn a lot about the academic and practical field of campaigns and elections. Secondly, I want students to develop a critical understanding of campaigns and elections. That means I want students to learn to think in a conceptually scholarly way about campaigns, elections, and electoral behavior. That is, I want students to learn electoral behavior and then apply their knowledge in a critically insightful way to political campaigns and elections. I want them to be able to predict election outcomes based on their knowledge and insights into electoral behavior. This is the test of a good political analyst.

### **Modes of Assessment and Skills/Knowledge Being Assessed**

Students will be assessed on their ability to learn and retain course materials, as well as on their ability to think critically about the subject matter, through a midterm and a final, individual student projects, and their class participation. As the semester progresses students should improve in their ability to apply what they have learned about electoral behavior, campaigns, and elections and in their ability to think critically about voting behavior, campaigns, and elections, allowing them to make sound judgments on likely election outcomes. Students will be evaluated on their ability to apply what they have learned about electoral behavior to actual campaigns and elections in a sophisticated manner. In other words, students will be assessed in how well they develop as electoral behavior/campaign/election analysts..

### **In-Class Activities**

In-class activities will consist of standard lectures combined with a lot of class discussions on issues pertaining to campaigns, elections, and electoral behavior. Students will be expected to keep up with the reading assignments, including the assigned current articles from the Internet and other articles so that they can participate meaningfully in class discussions. Participation will count 40 points or 10% of a student's final grade in this course

You will be required to do a class project on something related to campaigns and elections. The project report should run about 10 pages and consist of not just description, but scholarly analysis. Toward the end of the semester students will present their findings in class. The project requirements will be explained fully in class.

### **Course evaluation**

During the last week of the semester, students will need to complete a course evaluation.

## **COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to me and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts & Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.

(See <http://www.slu.edu.colleges/AS/academichonesty.html>)

### **Students with Special Needs - Disability Services Academic Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student success Center, at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or 314-977-3438 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.