

CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

POLS 3037
Spring 2024

Classroom: Brewster D-309

Class time: Tues. & Thurs., 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.

Office hours: Tues. & Thurs., 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.,
or by appointment

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Campaigns and elections are the cornerstone of American democracy. In the absence of free and fair elections, there can be no government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Respect for popular rule is reflected in the fact that the United States has more elections for more officials for public offices than any other nation in the world. The purpose of this course is to examine the key issues, questions, and controversies that surround the study of campaigns and elections in the United States. Subjects include:

- (1) The rules that govern U.S. elections, including voting rights, the formal qualifications to run for office, campaign finance laws, the nomination process of the two major parties, the Electoral College, the single-member-plurality system, and ballot access for minor-party candidates.
- (2) The strategic decisions that confront candidates, consultants, and other campaign professionals, including the reasons behind running for public office; the use of positive, comparative, and negative advertising; and whether to mobilize partisans or persuade undecided voters.
- (3) The influence of the media in campaigns and elections, including how campaigns handle the press and public relations during times of scandal.
- (4) The organization of campaigns for federal, state, and local office, including the roles and responsibilities of paid professionals, volunteers, and assistance from outside groups.
- (5) Voting behavior (who votes and why, and how voters decide which candidates to cast ballots for), the advantages of incumbency and celebrity, and theories of mid-term congressional election outcomes (surge and decline, negative voting, and referendum theories).
- (6) Polling and forecasting elections, including the related topic of whether campaigns matter.

By the end of the course, you should be able to demonstrate factual, applied, and conceptual knowledge of the subjects covered in the course. I will expect you to be able to identify and define terms; interpret the significance of important events; apply political theories to hypothetical scenarios; compare and contrast political ideas and concepts; construct solutions to political problems; and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various different political arguments and perspectives. Please note that I will not share my partisan affiliation to anyone in the class and pledge to present both sides of every political argument as fairly as possible. My larger and ultimate learning objective in this course is to teach each of you *not* what to think, but rather how to think about issues concerning campaigns and elections.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course is designated as a *General Education* course for the social sciences (GE:SO). Courses in the Social Sciences introduce students to the study of the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of individuals and groups. Students learn to seek knowledge for its own sake as well as for its application. Courses provide students with the knowledge necessary to solve problems in the Social Sciences and in scholarly fields that apply the methods used in the Social Sciences. They introduce students to the theoretical, analytical, and methodological techniques and perspectives of Social Sciences that advance the understanding of individual and group behavior. Scholarly study in the Social Sciences provides students with the foundation for understanding real-world problems necessary for meaningful participation in society. Courses in the Social Sciences develop the intellectual abilities, knowledge, and skills that students need to become broadly informed, to participate in interdisciplinary scholarship, and to be successful in their professional specialization. *The following program learning outcomes define the Social Science Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Social Sciences requirements can:

- (1) Apply discipline specific knowledge in the social sciences to explain the key factors that shape social institutions, structures, and processes that shape human behavior and social interaction.
- (2) Explain how cultural and historical contexts influence individual behavior, society, or culture.
- (3) Apply discipline specific theories and modes of inquiry in the social sciences to analyze social contemporary behavioral or cultural issues.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Classes begin with a lecture on the topic listed in the course outline. You should come to class prepared to ask questions and to participate in class discussions. Keeping up with the assigned weekly readings and attending class regularly throughout the semester will allow for more informed classroom dialogue and for more interesting debates, as well as improve your ability to contribute to and learn from the class interactions. I also encourage everyone to follow current events. Doing so will broaden your interest in this course and help you better understand the importance of the material we cover. To incorporate visual learning in the classroom, and to help generate additional thought on the subjects covered in the course, I often show video material in class. This includes televised news footage of various historical events, documentaries, and political films. On occasion, I may select documentaries and films that have an “R” rating. Please see me if you have any moral, religious, political, or other objections to viewing documentaries or films with an “R” rating.

REQUIRED READINGS

The required readings in this course are: (1) John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, and Keena Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice, 2022 Election Update*, 4th ed. (W.W. Norton, 2023) and (2) selected readings on Canvas.

OPTIONAL READINGS

There are two optional reading in this course: (1) Stephen J. Wayne, *The Road to the White House 2024: The Politics of Presidential Elections*, 12th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024) and (2) Institute of Politics, Harvard Kennedy School, *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at 2020* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).

EVALUATION

Your final grade in the course will be based primarily on three exams. There is also an optional writing assignment (see the final page of the syllabus for details). Your grade on the optional writing assignment will replace your lowest exam grade. Class attendance and participation will factor into the calculation of your final grade as well. The weights assigned to your exams and class attendance are as follows:

- (1) Exam 1 on February 13 is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- (2) Exam 2 on March 26 is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- (3) Exam 3 on April 25 (11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) is worth 35% of your overall grade.
- (4) Class attendance is worth the remaining 15% of your overall grade.

* You have the option of choosing to submit a 12-page paper due on April 18. Your grade on this assignment will replace your lowest exam score.

Course averages will be converted to letter grades using the scale below:

Course Average	Grade	Course Average	Grade
93 and above =	A	73 to 76 =	C
90 to 92 =	A-	70 to 72 =	C-
87 to 89 =	B+	67 to 69 =	D+
83 to 86 =	B	63 to 66 =	D
80 to 82 =	B-	60 to 62 =	D-
77 to 79 =	C+	Below 60 =	F

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is an essential part of success in this course. There will be exam questions based specifically on the material that I discuss in my lectures and on the video material that I show in class. Coming to class also exposes you to questions from your classmates. This often helps in clarifying any challenging concepts from the course material. There is an attendance grade as well. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each lecture. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you are present in class. If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance. Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes that you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50; etc.). Students who are active participants during class discussions will receive a bonus point added to their overall course grade.

CLASSROOM RULES

I expect all students to observe some basic rules of courtesy and respect, which include the following: (1) arrive to class on time and do not leave before class is dismissed; (2) do not pack up your things early; (3) silence on your cell phones before class begins; (4) no laptop use during video screenings; (5) no earbuds, air-pods, or other listening devices; and (6) please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students' views, comments, and questions. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Failure to follow these rules will negatively affect your class attendance grade. For more extreme violations of classroom behavior, the ECU Faculty Manual (Part 5) states that "students who do not follow reasonable standards of behavior in the classroom or other academic setting may be removed from the course by the instructor following appropriate notice."

EXAM RULES AND POLICIES

Failure to be present for any of the scheduled exams will result in an automatic "0." On all exam dates, please come prepared with an exam book and a pen. If you cannot attend the exam, you must contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up exam only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss the exam because of an illness, you are still required to contact me before the exam. You must also present me with proper verification (see below).

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND VERIFICATION

I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery. If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with some form of verification no later than one week after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule. I ask that you please not schedule non-emergency medical appointments during our class time.

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

In the event of a health-related crisis, weather-related disruption, or campus emergency that would prevent us from meeting face-to-face, class may be moved to an online format for up to two weeks. I will provide details via e-mail and Canvas on exactly how we will proceed if something like that occurs. All necessary course materials, including my lectures (in Power Point slides), will be made available on Canvas. If you have poor internet access, please contact me within 48 hours of the announcement to work out a plan for you to receive the material for the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the cornerstone value of the intellectual community at East Carolina University. Academic integrity is required for all students to derive optimal benefits from their educational experience and their pursuit of knowledge. Violating the principle of academic integrity damages the reputation of the university and undermines its educational mission. ECU students are responsible for promoting academic integrity within the ECU community by upholding integrity in their own work and by reporting any suspected violation. A student knowing of circumstances in which an Academic Integrity Violation (AIV) may have occurred (or is likely to occur) should bring this knowledge to my attention. An AIV is defined as any activity that exhibits dishonesty in the educational process or that compromises the academic honor of the university. Examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

Cheating: Unauthorized aid or assistance or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work.

Plagiarism: Copying the language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and adopting the same as one's own original work.

Falsification/Fabrication: The statement of any untruth, either spoken or written, regarding any circumstances related to academic work. This includes any untrue statements made regarding a suspected Academic Integrity Violation.

Multiple Submission: The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit more than once without authorization from the faculty member who receives the later submission.

Violation Assistance: Knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else in an act that constitutes an Academic Integrity Violation.

Violation Attempts: Attempting any act that, if completed, would constitute an Academic Integrity Violation as defined herein.

Information about ECU's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part6section2.pdf>.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

I will allow advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2) on assignments in this course, but only if you obtain permission from me in advance. Unless given permission to use those tools, each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools. If permission is granted to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2), they must be properly documented and credited. Students should seek out the appropriate source (e.g., MLA, APA, etc.) and cite in the most correct format according to the style guide. Note, online style guides are being updated continually to include new sources such as ChatGPT. If a tool is used in an assignment, students must also include a brief (2-3 sentences) description of how they used the tool, in addition to citing the use of any tool used.

APPOINTMENTS

My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please see me after class or contact me by telephone or e-mail to schedule an appointment. I am also happy to have coffee with anyone after class who wishes to join me. Just ask.

E-MAIL

E-mail is a valuable tool for me to communicate announcements and information to the entire class. Please check your ECU e-mail regularly. E-mail is also a good way for you to contact me. Please feel free to use e-mail to set up one-on-one meetings with me if my office hours conflict with your schedule. If you have specific questions about the course material, I am happy to answer them through e-mail; however, I encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you are having general difficulty with your understanding of the course material. Please do not use e-mail to request information already listed in the syllabus, such as an exam date or the weight assigned to a specific exam.

INFORMATION ABOUT UNIVERSITY CLOSINGS

If you have questions about a possible school closing due to severe weather or other reasons, please call the University Emergency Telephone Number at 252-328-0062 or visit the ECU emergency alert website (<http://www.ecu.edu/alert>). In the event the university has not canceled classes, but you commute to campus from a considerable distance and believe driving conditions may be hazardous, please contact me and I will consider excusing your absence.

DISABILITY SERVICES

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138. For additional information, please review ECU's policy on accommodation requests at <https://accessibility.ecu.edu/students/dss-guidelines/#AccommodationRequests> or call 252-737-1016. Additional DSS student resources can be found at <https://accessibility.ecu.edu/students>.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Overview of the American Electoral Process

January 9, 2024. * Class will be held virtually due to weather conditions * Please see the course page on Canvas for the introductory video of this class.

January 11, 2024. Qualifications to run for office and voting rights

- Required reading for Week 1: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 2

Week 2. The Presidential Nomination Process

January 16, 2024. The historic role of political parties in the presidential nomination process

January 18, 2024. How 1968 changed the presidential nomination process

- Required reading for Week 2: Canvas: “Nominating Presidents”
- Required reading for Week 2: Canvas: “The Party Decides”
- Required reading for Week 2: Canvas: “The Limits of Party Influence in Pres. Nominations”
- Optional reading for Week 2: *Road to the White House*, chapters 1 and 4
- Video: *Assassination and Chaos: The Death of Robert Kennedy and the '68 Convention*

Week 3. Primary Elections and the Campaign for the Party Nomination

January 23, 2024. The invisible primary, the Iowa caucus, and the New Hampshire primary

January 25, 2024. Campaign strategies to win the nomination and the national party conventions

- Required reading for Week 3: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 9
- Optional reading for Week 3: *Road to the White House*, chapter 5
- Optional reading for Week 3: *Campaign for President*, chapters 1-3
- Video: *Trumped: Inside the Greatest Political Upset of All Time*

Week 4. Campaign Finance Laws

January 30, 2024. The presidential system of public finance

February 1, 2024. Federal campaign finance laws and outside money

- Required reading for Week 4: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 4
- Required reading for Week 4: Canvas: “Buying Elections?”
- Optional reading for Week 4: *Road to the White House*, chapter 2

Week 5. The Electoral College and the General Election Campaign

February 6, 2024. The rules of the Electoral College and the race to 270

February 8, 2024. Campaign strategies in the general election and presidential debates

- Required reading for Week 5: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 5
- Required reading for Week 5: Canvas: “The Electoral College” and “Game Changer?”
- Optional reading for Week 5: *Road to the White House*, chapters 6-7
- Optional reading for Week 5: *Campaign for President*, chapter 4
- Video: Selected video clips and campaign advertisements

Week 6. Exam #1 / Minor Party Candidates

February 13, 2024. Exam #1 (covers material in weeks 1-5)

February 15, 2024. The challenges of running as a minor party candidate

- Required reading for Week 6: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 6
- Required reading for Week 6: Canvas: “The Case for a Multiparty System”
- Required reading for Week 6: Canvas: “In Defense of the Two-Party System”
- Video: *An Unreasonable Man*

Week 7. The Mass Media and Social Media

February 20, 2024. Media coverage of campaigns

February 22, 2024. Twitter and free media

- Required reading for Week 7: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 8
- Required reading for Week 7: Canvas: “Campaign Media in the American Mind”
- Required reading for Week 7: Canvas: “Free Media and Twitter in the 2016 Presidential Election”
- Optional reading for Week 7: *Road to the White House*, chapter 8
- Video: *Journeys with George*

Week 8. The Professionalization of Campaigns, Volunteers, and Outside Groups

February 27, 2024. Roles and responsibilities of the campaign team

February 29, 2024. Interest groups and endorsements

- Required reading for Week 8: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapters 7 and 10
- Required reading for Week 8: Canvas: “Organizing a Campaign”
- Required reading for Week 8: “The Campaign Team and Volunteer Organization”
- Video: *Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore?*

Week 9 (March 5 and March 7). Spring Break

Week 10. The Politics of Congressional Redistricting / State and Local Campaigns

March 12, 2024. Gerrymandering and court rulings on redistricting

March 14, 2024. Running for state and local office

- Required reading for Week 10: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapter 11
- Required reading for Week 10: Canvas: “Redistricting Reform”
- Video: *Street Fight*

Week 11. Voter Participation and Behavior

March 19, 2024. U.S. voter turnout compared to voter turnout in other nations

March 21, 2024. Influences on why and how people vote

- Required reading for Week 11: *Campaigns and Elections*, chapters 12-13
- Video: Selected video clips

Week 12. Exam #2 / Election Theories

March 26, 2024. Exam #2 (covers material in weeks 6-11)

March 28, 2024. Election theories

- Required reading for Week 12: Canvas: “Median Voter Theorem”
- Required reading for Week 12: Canvas: “Surge and Decline”
- Required reading for Week 12: Canvas: “Presidential Popularity and Negative Voting”
- Required reading for Week 12: Canvas: “Why Some Incumbent Candidates Lose”
- Video: Selected video clips

Week 13. Polling

April 2, 2024. How polls are conducted

April 4, 2024. How to evaluate good polls from bad polls

- Required reading for Week 13: Canvas: “Analyzing and Interpreting Polls”
- Video: Selected video clips

Week 14. Forecasting Elections

April 9, 2024. Punditry versus forecasting

April 11, 2024. Do campaigns matter?

- Required reading for Week 14: Canvas: “Are You Smarter Than a Television Pundit?”
- Required reading for Week 14: Canvas: “Economic Pessimism and Political Punishment”
- Required reading for Week 14: Canvas: “How Do Campaigns Matter?”
- Video: Selected video clips

Week 15. Voting Systems and Balloting Methods / Election Reform

April 16, 2024. Ranked choice voting, ballot design, and election security

April 18, 2024. Election reform proposals / **Optional 12-page paper is due**

- Required reading for Week 15: Canvas: “Voting Equipment” and “Election Administration”
- Required reading for Week 15: Canvas: “Election Reform”
- Video: Selected video clips

Week 16. Exam #3

April 25, 2024. Your final exam (Exam #3) is scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. It is a cumulative exam that will cover all material from weeks 1-15.

12-PAGE PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election stunned nearly all political experts. What factors did most experts believe would prevent Trump from winning the Republican nomination? How did Trump prove those experts wrong? Why did Trump win the Republican presidential nomination in 2016? After Trump won the Republican presidential nomination, why were most political observers still convinced that Trump would lose the general election against Hillary Clinton? What factors did most experts believe would prevent Trump from winning the general election? How did Trump prove those experts wrong? Why did Trump ultimately win the White House in 2016? Four years later, Trump lost re-election to Joe Biden. How and why was Biden able to defeat Trump in 2020? Is Biden likely or unlikely to win re-election in 2024? Please defend your position using information covered in the course readings and lectures. I expect all papers to utilize outside material, including election statistics, polling data, and any relevant research on campaigns and elections from academic sources. An "A" paper will be based on how well you defend your arguments with supporting materials. The final paper is due on April 18. No late paper submissions will be accepted.

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Tips for Preparing the Paper:

- Your arguments as well as any factual claims made in the paper need to be supported by outside academic sources. The best outside sources are academic books and journal articles (e.g., *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, etc.). To earn a grade higher than a D, your paper should include a minimum of five different academic sources.
- Please note that any papers without citations are guilty of plagiarism. These papers will receive an **automatic "F"** and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- ALL PAPERS SHOULD FOLLOW THE APSA STYLE MANUAL FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE.
- All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in Times New Roman font (please use a 12-point font size). Headings, sub-headings, and page numbers also should be included.
- A well-written paper requires a thesis or an argument. You should state your thesis in the beginning or introduction of the paper. Readers should have a good idea of what the entire paper will show by the end of the second page or earlier.
- The introduction should tell the reader what exactly you are going to say in the paper. The introduction also should arouse the interest of the reader.
- The body of the paper should provide evidence that convinces the reader of your central argument. Citations from books, articles, and other sources are necessary to make your argument as convincing as possible.
- The conclusion should summarize your major arguments and consider any implications related to your thesis. It should also tie together your central points in a coherent manner.