

Political Science 302
CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS
Fall 2014

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 3:00-4:00; and by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the role of elections in the American political system. We will explore elections—what candidates do to get elected and how voters decide for whom to vote—for both president and Congress. We will also examine the role of gender in elections, electoral systems, the polarized electorate, and proposals for improving our democracy. Given the present political context, there will be special focus on elections for Congress. This course is **not** intended to provide guidance on how to run an election campaign.

Readings

Campaigns & Elections (2012 Election Update edition) by John Sides et al.
The Politics of Congressional Elections, 8th edition, by Gary Jacobson
On-line course reserves via NCSU Library (denoted by*)
The New York Times and *The Washington Post* on-line

Requirements and Grading

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- Midterm 20%
- Final Exam 25%
- Paper Assignment #1 22.5%
- Paper Assignments #2 22.5%
- Participation 10%

Class Participation

Class participation is an *integral* part of the class. At minimum, this means good attendance. Students are also expected to be attentive during lectures and to ask questions and contribute comments to class discussions. *You should come to each class having read the required assignment and prepared to discuss and comment upon the issues raised by the readings.* It is also your responsibility to remain abreast of current events in American politics, especially as they apply to the contemporary election season. If you want to receive an A for participation, you need to 1) have excellent attendance; 2) contribute regularly to class discussions, and; 3) demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and current events—including doing so in in-class writing assignments.

Assignments

Paper #1: Election Reform

Propose and defend a reform to the electoral system—e.g., to the Electoral College, the redistricting process, campaign finance, voter registration, primaries, or any other aspect of American campaigns and elections (if you are unsure about your idea, ask me). Why is this reform needed? How would it be implemented? What are the potential benefits as well as negatives of the reform? How likely is it that this reform could successfully take place? <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS302/paper1.htm>. **7 pages maximum. Due October 28.**

Paper #2: Congressional Election Analysis

Choose a 2014 race for U.S. Congress, from a state *other than North Carolina*. The race should have been competitive, i.e., the winner received no more than 55% of the vote. Analyze why the race turned out as it did. Who won and why? Was there an incumbent or was it an open-seat race—how did this affect the outcome? What impact did the demographic and ideological make-up of the constituents have? How would you characterize the media coverage of this race? How did national political factors affect this Congressional race? You are responsible for the full details on the assignment available at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS302/paper2.htm>. [No more than 3 papers for any single Senate race—first come, first served]

7 Pages Maximum. Due November 25.

General Information: Policies regarding all paper assignments can be found at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS302/PaperGuidelines.htm>. You are expected to read these guidelines before submitting your paper.

Course Webpage

The webpage for this course is located at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS302>. This webpage is an important resource for this class. It will contain archived lecture outlines, important links to additional resources for the paper assignments, and important class announcements.

Late Policy

All paper assignments are due at the **beginning** of the class period on the day they are due. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day late. **If you miss an exam, you will receive a failing grade unless you have provided a valid excuse beforehand or you have an emergency situation.**

Class Email list

On occasion, announcements will be made through email messages. The University has an official email address on file for each of you. It is your responsibility to see to it that you receive email from this account.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete their assignments with due regard to academic integrity. In order to do so they should familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the student code of conduct (Sections 7-13). By signing all work submitted on paper, or by identifying themselves in work submitted electronically, students affirm that they neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. Collaboration on assignments among students may only occur when explicitly authorized by an instructor.

In particular the Department of Political Science takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism is “the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.” Students found guilty of academic misconduct will at a minimum receive a 0 for the assignment and have their conduct reported to the office of student affairs. Depending on the severity of the infraction, it is possible that you will automatically fail the course.

Disability

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653

Schedule of Topics and Assigned Readings

August 21	Course Introduction
August 26 (no class August 28)	Thinking like a Political Scientist about Campaigns & Elections Noel, "10 Things Political Scientists know that you don't"* Mooney, "Politics wrecks your ability to do math"* Mooney, "The Science of why we don't believe science"* Keohane, "How facts backfire"
September 2	The Electoral Context Jacobson, chapter 2 Sides, chapters 1 – 2
September 4 – 9	Voter Participation Sides et al., chapter 11 Hanmer, "Turnout in the 2012 Elections"* Hasen, "Voter Suppression's New Pretext"* Feeney, "Election Expert Richard Hasen"* Stamper, "In Defense of Voter ID"*
September 11 – 16	Congressional Campaigns Sides et al., chapter 9 Jacobson, chapters 3 – 4 Vogel, "The New Normal"*
September 18 – 23	Congressional Elections Sides et al., Chapter 9 (review) Jacobson, Chapters 5-6 (skim 185-230) Goldstein et al., "Even the geeks are polarized"* Kraushaar, "The most divided congress ever"* Issenberg, "How the Democrats can avoid going down"*
September 25 – Oct 2	Financing Political Campaigns Sides et al., Chapter 4 Elliot, "The Campaign Finance free-for-all"* Lessig, "What's so bad about a SuperPAC?"* Edsall, "Dark Money Politics"*
October 7	Midterm Exam
October 9	Fall Break
October 14 – 21	Presidential Nomination Campaigns Sides et al., Chapters 1 & 8 Patterson, <i>Out of Order</i> , chapter 1* Marx, "How to Understand the Invisible Primary"*

October 23 – 28	Presidential General Election Campaigns Sides et al., Chapter 5 Liptak, “Vanishing Electoral Battleground”* Fairvote, “Presidential Election Tracker”* Issenberg, Obama Does it Better”* Sides, “Four Reasons...”*
October 30 – Nov 4	Mass Media and Election coverage Sides et al. Chapter 7 Pew, “Winning the Media Campaign”* Sherman, “Citizen Ailes”* Patterson, <i>Out of Order</i> , chapter 2*
November 6	2014 Election Retrospective Set aside time to read election coverage before class
November 11 – 13	Vote Choice Part I: Social Groups and Partisanship Sides et al., Chapter 12 Gelman, “ <i>Red State, Blue State...</i> ” chapter 2* Sides, “Three Myths about Independent Voters”* Yglesias, “The Case for Partisanship”* Brownstein, “Millennials, Baby Boomers...”* Brownstein, “Bad Bet...”*
November 18	Vote Choice Part II: Candidates and Issues Sides et al., Chapter 12 Sides, “The 2012 Election was good for Political Science”* Sides and Vavreck, “ <i>The Gamble</i> , chapter 7”*
November 20	Guest speaker: WRAL’s Mark Binker
November 25	Race, Gender, and Campaigns Ambinder, “Race Over?”* Sides, “Does Racial Prejudice Hurt Black Candidates?”* Lawless and Fox, “Why are women still not running for office?”* Smith and Paul, “No Place for a Woman...”*
November 27	Thanksgiving
December 2	Reforming Elections/Towards the Future Sides et al., chapter 13 Jacobson, Chapter 7
December 11, 1:00pm	FINAL EXAM