

POL 341: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS IN A DIGITAL AGE

MWF 11 am – 12:05 pm

Colt 120

Fall 2014

Dr.Linda M. Beail

Office: 116 Colt Hall, 849-2408

Email: lbeail@pointloma.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1-4 pm; Wednesdays 1:15-2:45 pm; and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to help you understand and analyze the American electoral process from the perspective of parties, candidates, campaign professionals, the media and voters. Through readings, documentary films, group projects and class discussions, you will become familiar with the structure of American presidential elections, the history and evolution of the political party system, recent trends in partisanship and vote choice, basic techniques of political advertising, and the role of the news media, popular culture, and social media in the electoral process.

Course Requirements:

There are a variety of assignments and activities required for successful completion of this course. The most basic, but most important, is attendance and participation in all class sessions. This class is a seminar and as such, its success depends heavily upon the quality of your reading, thinking and discussion. Much of what you learn in this course will be as a result of thoughtful and energetic interaction with your peers. Therefore it is in your own best interest to come to class well prepared each day. As an added incentive, attendance and participation (including possible quizzes on the readings and discussion of daily news stories on the 2014 elections) will be worth 10% of your final grade in this course. Please also note the university's drop policy: if you miss more than 10% (4 meetings) during the semester, you **may be dropped** from the course for nonattendance. If there are extenuating circumstances that arise during the semester (such as a serious extended illness), please let the instructor know as soon as possible. Obstacles that can be overcome early on may be impossible to address after the fact, and it is your responsibility to be in class and to complete all assignments on time.

Components of your grade include:

Midterm exam one	20%
Midterm exam two	20%
Attendance, participation and quizzes	10%
Streb review/electoral reform paper	15%
Electoral strategy project	25%
Campaign volunteer work & analysis (minimum 12 hours)	10%

Please note the exam and due dates listed on this syllabus. Please see the instructor ahead of time if you have a problem meeting any of these deadlines, as no make-up exams will be given. Late papers will be docked 10% for each calendar day beyond the deadline.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- Situate this year's national elections in the context of U.S. elections historically, particularly in regard to the modern period post-WW2.
- Explain the changes in partisan alignment over the past half century, and how this affects the GOTV and electoral college strategies of each party.
- Analyze the changes in media coverage of politics since the 1960s, and explain how voters find and use political information via news, entertainment, and social media.
- Predict and evaluate the success of this year's presidential and congressional campaigns.
- Be able to plan a campaign strategy for the future, including voter targeting, fundraising & campaign finance, policy message, and media strategy.
- Be able to create an original political advertisement.
- Analyze possible changes and reforms to make the American electoral system function better, and make a persuasive argument for one specific election reform.
- Write and communicate more clearly, persuasively and insightfully.

Course policies:

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with all of these policies. Please be aware that I take any sort of academic dishonesty very seriously: **Academic dishonesty in any form, including cheating and plagiarism, are grounds for failing the course and disciplinary action by the dean.**

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Because of the changing standards of English usage, language that refers appropriately to both men and women inclusively should be used whenever possible. Some simple guidelines include replacing "man" or "mankind" with "humanity," "humankind," "persons," or "people." "He," "him" and "his"--when not referring to an actual male person - should be avoided by alternate sentence constructions or replaced with "he or she," "him or her," or "hers or his." Gender specific terms may be replaced by their current alternatives: for example, "Congressman" has been correctly replaced by "Congressperson" or "member of Congress," etc.

IN-CLASS EXPECTATIONS

While coming to this class will hopefully be an enjoyable experience, it is not like attending a movie, viewing a sporting event, or watching television; your respectful behavior and engaged attention is expected at all times. Class time is precious. It is our opportunity to interact, discuss, and create knowledge together. It is not a passive experience, but one that you should be ready to participate actively in.

In that spirit, here are some basic expectations for class time: Please be on time to class each day. Cell phones should be turned off during class time, and no electronic devices (including laptop computers, smart phones or iPads) may be used to surf the web, check email, text, network on Instagram/Facebook/Twitter/etc., play games, or engage in other multi-tasking activities during class; this is distracting to your classmates and the instructor. Please do not leave the room (for a drink, to use the restroom, etc.) unless it is absolutely necessary; no one is allowed to leave the classroom for ANY reason whatsoever during exam periods. My expectation is that we will all strive to treat one another with respect, kindness and professionalism, which includes listening carefully and responding thoughtfully and with grace to the thoughts and opinions of our colleagues. These behaviors will lead to a more fruitful learning environment for all of us.

Texts:

The New York Times (2014 election coverage)

Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, Brad T. Gomez, David W. Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2012 Elections*, CQ Press, 2014, ISBN 978-1-4522-4045-9.

Matthew Streb, *Rethinking American Electoral Democracy*, 2nd ed. (2011), Routledge, ISBN 978-0415882026.

Jeffrey Jones, *Entertaining Politics*, 2nd ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, ISBN 978-0-7425-6528-9.

Linda Beail and Rhonda Longworth, *Framing Sarah Palin*, Routledge, 2012, ISBN 978-0415893367.

Course Outline (subject to revision as the semester – and campaign – unfolds!):

September 3: Introduction

September 5: Evolution of American Electoral System: Past and Present

Jill Lepore, "Rock, Paper, Scissors: How We Used To Vote," *The New Yorker*, October 13, 2008 at

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/10/13/081013fa_fact_lepore

[Change and Continuity Introduction](#)

September 8: Nominating Process: Presidential primaries

Change and Continuity chapter 1

Recommended: Roger Simon, "Relentless," <http://www.politico.com/relentless/>

September 10: Presidential Elections

Change and Continuity chapter 2

September 12: *Change and Continuity* chapter 3

September 15: Who Votes? Turnout and participation

Change and Continuity chapter 4

- September 17:** Documentary in class: *So Goes the Nation* (2006)
- September 19:** **Voter ID Laws**
Readings TBA
- September 22:** **Social Identities and the Vote**
Change and Continuity chapter 5
- September 24:** **Gender and Race Gap**
- September 26:** **Religion and Politics**
Smidt, *Disappearing God Gap* (excerpt)
With God on Our Side
- September 29:** **Candidates and Issues: Prospective Voting**
Change and Continuity chapter 6
- October 1:** **Retrospective Voting**
Change and Continuity chapter 7
- October 3:** **Political Partisanship**
Change and Continuity chapter 8
- October 6:** **MIDTERM EXAM ONE**
- October 8:** **Congressional Campaigns and Elections**
Change and Continuity chapter 9
- October 10:** *Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington?* (documentary)
- October 13:** *Change and Continuity* chapter 10
- October 15:** **Redistricting**
Streb chapter 7
- October 17:** **Campaign Finance**
Streb chapter 10
News and data at <http://www.opensecrets.org/>
- October 20:** **Voter Targeting and Mobilization**
Dennis Johnson, *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century* chapter 7
- October 22:** **Polling and Public Opinion**
Readings TBA
- October 24:** **Fall Break – No Class**

- October 27-29: Mediated Elections: Political Ads**
Evaluating ads: <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2012/07/23-campaign-ads>
Frontline documentary online, *The Persuaders*
- October 31: Communicating with Voters: New Media**
Dennis Johnson, *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century* chapter 2
- November 3: Framing and Narrative in Campaigns: Political Cognition & Popular Culture**
Beail and Longworth chapter 1
- November 5: Partisan Narratives**
Beail and Longworth chapters 2-3
- November 7: Who Won? Assessing and Explaining 2012 Election Results**
- November 10: Gendered Narratives**
Beail and Longworth chapters 4-7
- November 12: MIDTERM EXAM TWO**
- November 14: Electoral Strategy Workgroups Meet – In Class**
- November 17: Entertaining Politics? News, Comedy, Democracy**
Jones chapters 1, 2, 3
Campaign Volunteering Reflections due by Nov.17 at beginning of class
- November 19:** Jones 4,5,6 (read one); Jones 8-9
- November 21:** Jones10-11
- November 24: Electoral Strategy Workgroups Meet – In Class**
- November 26-28: Thanksgiving Break – No Class**
- December 1: Rethinking American Elections**
Streb chapter 1 -2
- December 3:** Streb chapters 3-4
Uncounted documentary
- December 5:** Streb ch. 5-6
- December 8:** Streb chapters 8-9
- December 10:** Streb ch. 10-11

*****Electoral Reform Paper Due*****

December 12: Electoral Strategy Workgroup Meetings

******FINAL EXAM – CAMPAIGN PRESENTATIONS: FRIDAY DECEMBER 19th, 10:30 am-1 pm ******