

The Media and Advertising in American Politics

Winter 2013

Professor Brooks

(Last Updated: 15 Nov 2012)

Course Description:

This seminar explores the relationships between campaign advertising, the mass media, and political deliberation. We will examine the advertising strategies politicians use to win campaigns, the strategies they use to keep their seats of power once in office, how these efforts are evaluated by the media, and how the entire campaign communication process affects the role of the public in democracy. A course-length political advertising and media simulation in which students will work to successfully communicate campaign messages serves to provide students with a hands-on learning opportunity and a unique culminating experience.

Note that there are no prerequisites for this course. Gov 3 can be helpful, but it is not required if you have a general understanding of American elections and are willing to do some background reading at the start of the class.

This course will focus on helping you to achieve the following outcomes:

COGNITIVE OUTCOMES

- To better understand the capacities of the American electorate and to be able to better evaluate the degree to which those capacities are compatible with the requirements of democracy
- To evaluate how advertising affects voters in terms of persuasion, education, voter efficacy, and turnout
- To analyze the components of advertising and the choices that are made in creating ads
- To consider the role and power of emotion in political advertising
- To evaluate why negative advertising is so common, and consider when it is might be more versus less effective
- To better comprehend the power to persuade by creating your own ads and evaluating those created by others
- To understand the power of music, sound effects, and visual imagery in conveying a message
- To better understand the dynamics of recent campaigns and candidate choices by voters
- To evaluate the changing nature of campaign finance and the role of independent groups (including Super PACs) and implications for contemporary elections and governance

- To gain an understanding of the biggest challenges facing the media today
- To comprehend the promise and limitations of the new media in reporting on campaigns
- To evaluate the ideal and actual role of political consultants in democracy
- To consider the implication of the exportation of American styles of campaigning abroad
- To evaluate the changes on the horizon for the media and advertising moving forward
- To grapple with the degree to which the process of campaigning for office affects the process of governing between elections.

APPLIED OUTCOMES

- To improve your capacity to work with groups to complete high-quality work (something that you are likely to do repeatedly in your post-college careers)
- To learn how to write stronger papers for classes in the social sciences (note: I will offer an optional class session on the topic to help you in this and other classes)
- To be able to better evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and implications of published academic research
- To gain proficiency in using technology like iMovie to persuade people in non-written form
- To gain greater comfort in regularly contributing to the class dialogue in a seminar setting
- To obtain insight into a range of different professions, including business/marketing, political consulting, polling, being a candidate for office, etc.
- To actively consider media source quality and content choices every time you read a news story (and hopefully be inspired to read news stories more often)
- To more critically assess the campaign tactics used by campaigns as you make your voting decisions throughout your lives

Core Books to Purchase:

(Note: This topic requires constant updating for the readings in order to stay current. As such, most of the readings are article-based rather than book based, and most are placed on Blackboard. There are no books to purchase for this class)

Other Readings:

“BB”: A “BB” on the syllabus means check Blackboard, under the “Readings” section. The article may be posted there, or there may be a link or other directions for how to access the material. Please note that many of the files posted on Blackboard are large and will take a long time to download and print out (save a tree – read them online or print double-sided!)

Note: This is a rapidly evolving topic so I reserve the right to add more readings to the syllabus once the quarter is in progress. If a new reading is added, an announcement will be posted on Blackboard to that effect.

Other Notes on Readings:

General Newspaper Reading: Reading a good daily national newspaper every day while you are taking this course. It will help you in all of your government classes, and this course is not exception. You will not be “tested” on it, per se, but regular readership of a good national paper always becomes invariably becomes crystal clear to your professors through the quality of your class participation. It is also likely to help you on several of your assignments. Some recommendations for a good daily paper include the **New York Times** or **The Wall Street Journal**.

Other Assignments/Readings: The political environment changes every day and, as such, small assignments, additional news article readings, and/or attendance at local political events may be occasionally required as part of the course, and may not be reflected ahead of time on this syllabus. Such assignments will factor into your participation grade.

X-Hours:

This course typically meets in the 11 time period, which is **11:15-12:20 MWF**. The **X-hour is Tues 12:00-12:50** and will be used occasionally for a make-up lecture. We will not use the X-hour every week, but please keep your X-hour available for this class as we may need to use it on occasion for scheduled reasons (see syllabus) or unscheduled reasons (illness, class speaker availability, etc.).

Office Hours:

My office hours are on **Tuesday 10:30-12:45**. I have scheduled my office hours to be sure that that at least part of the office hours do not overlap with other classes, so that everyone will be able to attend. For office hours, just come by during the office hour periods at **231 Silsby Hall**. You do not need to sign up ahead of time and you do not need to email me that you are coming.

I like to get to know each student in my classes, so I would like for you to come to office hours at least once fairly early on in the term to touch base, and ideally more than that as questions, concerns, or ideas arise.

Course Pace:

This syllabus is designed to show you which readings need to be completed before the class meeting in question, unless otherwise stated. Failure to do so will affect your participation grade. You are expected to participate actively and intelligently during class discussions in a seminar, and you cannot do so without completing the readings on time.

Course Policies:

Please read the “General Course Policies” handout which will be given out on the first day of class and will also be posted on Blackboard. I feel that clarity on the front end prevents confusion and miscommunication later on in a class; as such, that document describes my general expectations and policies for the course. After reading that document, please let me know if you have any questions.

I would especially like to highlight the need for you to **be at class right when it starts and to check Blackboard announcements several times per week**. Those are two ways that I regularly communicate to everyone in the class. Students who miss the first few minutes of class and/or who do not check Blackboard announcements often end up missing critical information without realizing it.

Course Grade Components:

1. **30% = Class participation**

- The class participation portion of your grade includes the quantity and quality of your in-class, non-simulation contributions to the discussion and work on some smaller in class assignments during the term. Participation related to the simulation is counted as part of your simulation grade.
- A core requirement of seminar participation is that you regularly integrate key ideas from the readings into the class discussion.
- Participation in in-class activities and short assignments you might occasionally do before or during class (watching ads, looking at candidate websites, etc.) also contributes to this component of your grade. I also sometimes use in-class writing exercises with guided prompts to allow students time at the start of a class to get people thinking about the readings and for me to get a general sense of each student's immersion in the readings. This is all part of participating in the class.
- Note that you must be in class to participate, so poor attendance will inherently affect this component of your grade. Note also that chronic late arrival to class may take a toll on this part of your grade for similar reasons.

2. **25% = Campaign Simulation** (10% for the Group Grade, 10% for the grade for "Owned Projects" including two worksheets/guided papers, and 5% is for simulation participation,)

- You will be splitting up into teams in order to successfully frame your side of a campaign or analyze it as a member of the media. This will consist of a variety of different assignments (memos, creating radio ads, TV ad storyboards, newspaper ads, email communications, press releases, etc.) produced by your group at different points throughout the quarter.
- You need to work together as a group to coordinate strategy for this effort, and to react by the efforts of the other group. You will be graded as a group for part of your grade and as an individual for the "owned" assignments and your simulation wrap up.
- Your entire group needs to be ready with well-considered answers regarding any of the strategies you select throughout the simulation
- Note that the simulation does not involve papers, per se, but it does involve filling out two detailed worksheets which are each the equivalent of a (guided) paper. Your grade depends a good deal on your analysis in these worksheets and your ability to tie the simulation work into the material from class discussions and from the course readings.

3. **45% = Final Paper**

- A paper (6,000 word max) on an assigned topic which is designed to bring together many aspects of the class. This is not a research paper, although depending on the topic, it might require some background news searching & reading. The primary goal of this paper is to leverage the readings, class discussions, and your ideas from the seminar to convincingly address the assigned question. It will be due during finals period.

Course Syllabus – Media & Ads Seminar –Professor Brooks

(Last Updated: **15 Nov 2012**)

Week #1: Considering the American public and U.S. Elections

Mon, Jan 7 – Introduction to the Course

Wed, Jan 9 – Considering the American Public

[Note: You would normally need to complete the readings before a class meeting; however, because students are often still shopping for classes at this point, I understand that you may not complete these readings until afterwards.]

- [BB] Michael X. **Delli Carpini**. **1999**. “In Search of the Informed Citizen: What Americans Know about Democracy and Why it Matters,” a paper presented at a 1999 conference on “The Transformation of Civic Life,” sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts.
- [BB] Thomas **Patterson** . **2006**. Chapter on “Voter Competence,” in Stephen **Craig**,ed., **2006** *The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice*, 2006 (focus on **pp. 54-57**).

Fri, Jan 11 – Considering the American Public (cont.)

- [BB] “What the voters say: the 2012 U.S. Election panel decides.” *The Independent* (UK). November 6, **2012**.
- [BB – OPTIONAL BACKGROUND / REVIEW] Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Henneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, 2010. “Elections” in *American Government: Power and Purpose. Core Eleventh Edition*. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

Week #2: Targeting the Public

Mon, Jan 14 – Fundraising vs. Turnout vs. Persuasion .

- [BB] Rebecca **Berg**. August 17, **2012**. “Few Voters are Truly Up for Grabs, Research Shows,” *The New York Times*, Section A.
- [BB] Doyle **McManus**. October 21, **2012**. “Applying the ‘ground game’,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Part A.
- [BB] Christi **Parsons** & Kathleen **Hennessey**. November 14, **2012**. “Obama’s math geeks raised the odds; Analytics correctly predicted voting patterns. It may have changed the Game,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Section A8.
- [BB] Donald P. **Green** and Alan S. **Gerber**. **2008**. “What Works, What Doesn’t, and What’s Next,” in *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. Washington D.C.: Brookings.
- [BB] Dennis **Johnson**. **2010**. “Fundraising,” Ch. 4 in *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century: A Whole New Ballgame?* New York, New York: Routledge.

★ Mon, APR 2: SELECT TEAMS (and candidates) for policy simulation.

Wed, Jan 16 – Targeting, Microtargeting, Nanotargeting .

- [BB] Dennis **Johnson**. **2010**. “Voter Identification, Contact, and Mobilization,” Ch. 7 in *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century: A Whole New Ballgame?* New York, New York: Routledge.
- [BB] Travis **Ridout**, Michael **Franz**, Kenneth M. **Goldstein**, and William J. **Feltus**. **2012**. “Separation by Television Program: Understanding the Targeting of Political Advertising in Presidential Elections.” *Political Communication* 29(1). (Focus, in particular, on pp. 1-4 and 19-20)
- [BB] Jim **Rutenberg**. November 13, **2012**. “Secret of the Obama Victory? Rerun Watchers, for One Thing.” *The New York Times*, A14.
- [BB] Jenna **Wortham**. October 8, **2012**. “Winning Social Media Votes.” *The New York Times*: B1.

Fri, Jan 18 – AD WARS! - Creating an Ad .

- Do a Google search to pull up bad campaign ads (i.e., something like worst campaign ads 2012) and watch at least 10 of them.
- Watch at least 20 ads from the 2008 campaigns (presidential or congressional). I recommend the Stanford Political Communication Lab (<http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/>) Start to get a sense of what works and what doesn’t.

(Read ahead – aim to finish Geer -- you have quite a bit of reading for next week)

SPEAKER: Fri, APR 13: Susan Simon on the technical side of ad production.

Week #3: Political Advertising (Negativity and Emotionality)

Mon, Jan 21 – **no class** (MLK Day)

Tues, Jan 22 – **x- hour** - Negativity in Political Ads .

- [BB] John **Geer**. 2006. Excerpts from his book, “In Defense of Negativity : Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns.” (Focus on Ch 1, Ch 2, Ch 7.)
- [BB] Lau, **Sigelman**, and **Rovner**. 2008. “The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: A Meta-Analytic Reassessment. *The Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1176-1209. (NOTE: Understand the basic concept of meta-analysis, and the bottom line findings for each of the dependent variables they examined).
- [BB] **Jackson**, Robert A., **Mondak**, Jeffrey J, and **Hickfeldt**, Robert. 2009. “Examining the Possible Corrosive Impact of Negative Advertising on Citizens’ Attitudes toward Politics.” *Political Research Quarterly* 62: 55-69.

Wed, Jan 23 – Emotionality in Political Ads .

- [BB] Ted **Brader**. 2005. “Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49:2, pp. 388-405.
- [BB] Nicholas A. **Valentino**, Ted **Brader**, Eric W. **Groenendyk**, Krysha **Gregorowicz**, and Vincent L. **Hutchings**. 2011. “Election Night’s Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation.” *Journal of Politics* 73(1).
- [BB] Sharon **Begley**. December 24, 2007. “The Roots of Fear: The evolutionary primacy of the brain’s fear circuitry makes it more powerful than reasoning circuits.” *Newsweek*.

★ **DUE Wed, Jan 23: Strategy memo due by 10:00 pm (via email)**
Have an outline of your first ad & have collected some images to use for it.

Fri, Jan 25 – AD WARS! – Crafting a Message .

- [BB] Katherine **Tate**. 2012. Review of “Race Appeal: How Candidates invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns,” By Charlton D. McIlwain and Stephen M. Caliendo. *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3).
- [BB] Kathy **Chen**. October 26, 2000. “Perfect Pitch: Campaigns Seek Votes Of Women With Female Ad Voice-Overs.” *The Wall Street Journal*.
- [BB] Glenn **Justice**. October 31, 2004 “In Final Days, Attacks Are in the Mail and Below the Radar.” *New York Times*, Section 1.

SPEAKER: Wed, APR 18: Paul Wilson, Republican Political Consultant,
WilsonGrand Communication.
(<http://www.wilsongrand.com/wgchome/Welcome.html>)

Week #4: Political Advertising (Lies & Efficacy)

Mon, Jan 28 – Lies, Half-Truths, and Motivated Reasoning

- [BB] Brendan **Nyhan** and Jason **Reifler**. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32.
- [LINK] "Smearing Tammy Baldwin in Wisconsin Senate Race" at Factcheck.org. (<http://factcheck.org/2012/10/smearing-tammy-baldwin-in-wisconsin-senate-race/>)
- [LINK] "Romney, Obama Court Moms, Distort Facts" (<http://factcheck.org/2012/09/romney-obama-court-moms-distort-facts/>)
- [LINK] Read FactCheck.org, "Whoppers of 2012, Final Edition" (<http://factcheck.org/2012/10/whoppers-of-2012-final-edition/>) and poke around the rest of the website and/or on other fact-checking websites.

Wed, Jan 30 – Do Political Ads Work?

- [BB] Michael John **Burton** & Daniel M. **Shea**. 2010. "Strategic Communications," in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.
- [BB] Michael **Franz** & Travis **Ridout**. 2007: "Does Political Advertising Persuade?" *Political Behavior* 29.
- [BB] Dona-Gene **Mitchell**. 2012. "It's About Time: The Lifespan of Information Effects in a Multiweek Campaign," *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2). (Note: Focus especially on intro, theory, and conclusion)
- [BB] Donald P. **Green** and Alan S. **Gerber**. 2008. "Using Mass Media to Mobilize Voters," in *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. Washington D.C.: Brookings.

Fri, Feb 1 – AD WARS! – Ad #1 & critique/discussion

- [BB] Jeremy **Peters**. December 26, 2011. "Modernizing Attack Ads By Using Old Videos," *The New York Times*, A12.
- [BB] Melissa **Bell**. October 16, 2011. "Politicians Paying to get your vote." *The Washington Post*.
- [BB - OPTIONAL] Ben Wallace-Wells. April 1, 2007. "Obama's Narrator," *The New York Times*.

★ DUE Fri, Feb 1 - Ad #1

Week #5: Campaign Finance + Independent Group Advertising

Mon, Feb 4 – Campaign Finance + Independent Group Advertising.

- [BB] HANDOUT on campaign finance
- [BB] David B. **Magelby**. 2011. "Campaign Finance: Adapting to a Changing Regulatory Environment", Chapter 2 of Stephen K. Medvic (ed), *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. New York: Routledge.
- [BB] Deborah Jordan **Brooks** and Michael **Murov**, 2012. "The Accountability Paradox: Political Advertisements, Sponsorship, and Campaign Reform." *American Politics Research*.
- [LINK] Go to factcheck.org. Read & watch "'Soft' on Rape? Nonsense" (<http://factcheck.org/2012/09/soft-on-rape-nonsense/>).
- [LINK] "mailers idlead on 'Obamacare' Opt-Out Amendment" from Factcheck.org (<http://www.factcheck.org/2012/08/mailers-mislead-on-obamacare-opt-out-amendment/>)
- **MINI-ASSIGNMENT:** Go onto Lexis Nexis and search for articles published in the last year or so on Super PACs / independent groups / 527 groups. Read at least 10 news articles on the topic and come to class prepared to talk about media coverage of the issue.

Wed, Feb 6 – AD WARS! – Ad #2 .

[CHECK BLACKBOARD / This is a constantly changing topic & I am likely to add new readings)

★ **DUE Wed, Feb 6: Ad #2**

Fri, Feb 8 – no class (Carnival)

Week #6: Traditional Media Coverage of Campaigns

Mon, Feb 11 – The Media - Considering News Bias

- [BB] Max **McCombs**, R. Lance **Holbert**, Spiro **Kiousis**, and Wayne **Wanta**. 2011. "Reporting the News," Chapter 2, in *The News and Public Opinion: Media Effects on Civic Life*. Polity Press: Cambridge, U.K.
- [BB] **Druckman**, James and Michael **Parkin**. 2005. "The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters." *The Journal of Politics* 67(4): 1030-1049.
- [BB] Jennifer **Jerit** and Jason **Barabas**. 2012. "Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment." *Journal of Politics* 74.

Wed, Feb 13 – The Media - Coverage Choices and Implications

- [BB] Larry J. **Sabato**. 2011, "Open Season: How the News Media Cover Presidential Campaigns," in *Media Power and Politics*, ed. Doris Graber. CQ Press: Washington, D.C.
- [BB] Thomas **Patterson**. 2011, "The Miscalculation," in *Media Power and Politics*, ed. Doris Graber. CQ Press: Washington, D.C.
- [BB] Daryl **West**, *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2008*. Ch. 4 ("Media Coverage of Ads").
- [BB] Michael John **Burton** & Daniel M. **Shea**. 2010. "Earned Media," in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.

Fri, Feb 15 – AD WARS! -- Ad #3 & critique/discussion

★ DUE Fri, Feb 15: Ad #3

Week #7: The New Media and Election Coverage – *Promise and Challenges*

Mon, Feb 18 – New media coverage of elections .

- [BB] Dorris **Graber**. 2009. *Mass Media and American Politics, Eighth Edition*, **Ch. 8**, “Elections in the Internet Age.” Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- [BB] Diana **Owen**. 2011. “Media: The Complex Interplay of Old and New Forms?”, Chapter 9 of Stephen K. Medvic (ed), *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. New York: Routledge.

[CHECK BLACKBOARD – often new readings on this topic]

Wed, Feb 20 – Satire & Election Coverage .

- [BB] Heather **LaMarre**, Kristen **Landreville**, and Michael **Beam**. 2009. “The Irony of Satire: Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What You Want to See in *The Colbert Report*.” *International Journal of Press/Politics* 14(2)

[CHECK BLACKBOARD – often new readings on this topic]

Fri, Feb 22 – AD WARS! -- **Ad #4** & critique/discussion .

[Read ahead – there are a number of key readings for next week]



DUE Fri, Feb 22: Last simulation assignment (radio ad/ Ad #4) due
The campaign is official over!

Week #8: Revisiting Voter Knowledge & Engagement

Mon, Feb 25 – Voter Knowledge – TVs, Newspapers, and Distractions ..

- [BB] Jennier **Jerit**, Jason **Barabas**, and Toby **Bolsen**. **2006**. “Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50:2.
- [BB] Marcus **Prior**. **2005**. “News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout,” *American Journal of Political Science* 49, 3.
- [BB] Diana C. **Mutz** and Lori **Young**. **2011**. “Communication and Public Opinion,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75 (5).

Wed, Feb 27 – Voter Engagement .

- [BB] **Freedman**, Franz, & **Goldstein**. **2004**. “Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4).
- [BB] Martin **Gilens**, Lynn **Vavreck**, and Martin **Cohen**, **2007**, “The Mass Media and the Public’s Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000,” *The Journal of Politics* 69(4).

Fri, Mar 1 – AD WARS! - Final Simulation Analysis .



DUE Fri Mar 1 (in class): Final campaign analysis worksheet is due.

SPEAKER: Wed, Mar 1: Peter Fenn, a Democratic consultant
with Fenn Communications Group
<http://www.fenn-group.com/>

Week #9: Exporting American Political Campaigning

Mon, Mar 4 – Our Brand is Crisis

- [BB] Press packet on the documentary “Our Brand is Crisis”

Tues, Mar 5 – x-hour - 1:00-1:50 – Our Brand is Crisis

- [BB] Sam **Garrett**, Paul S. **Herrnson**, and James A. **Thurber**. 2006. “Perspectives on Campaign Ethics,” in *The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice*, ed. Stephen Craig. CQ Press.

Wed, Mar 6 -- Exporting American Political Campaigning

- [BB] Michael **Coleman**. November 2007. “Dirty Campaigning Becoming a Major U.S. Export,” *Campaigns and Elections Magazine*
- [BB] Christopher **Wlezien**. 2010. “Election Campaigns,” in *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in the 21st Century* edited by Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Fri, Mar 8 – Considering the Implications While Looking Forward

- [BB] Darrell **West**. 2009. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2008*. Ch. 10 (“Advertising in Democratic Elections”)
- [BB] Todd **Donovan** and Shaun **Bowler**. 2011. “Election Reform: What is Expected, and What Results?”, Chapter 14 of Stephen K. Medvic (ed), *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. New York: Routledge.

➡ Paper topics will be given out after the last class

➡ Your **final paper** will be due on **March 13 by 11:00 am**
The final paper is due at or before the deadline via hard copy and email.
See handout on the paper topic for details.