

Politics 363—Campaigns and Elections
Cornell College
Block 3 (2018 – 2019)

Instructor

Dr. Chris Kromphardt
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office: South Hall 304
office hours: 2:30 – at least 3:00 p.m., or by email appointment

Room and Meeting Times

South Hall 302
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (MWF)
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (TuTh)

Course Description and Learning Objectives

The catalog's description for POL 363 is as follows: "Examination of the electoral process in the U.S. This course also addresses in depth the factors that contribute to voting behaviors of citizens examined from the point of view of both citizens and campaigns and how these aspects contribute to electoral success or failure." Students will use tools of social-scientific inquiry to think critically about questions of representation and political participation in the American context. In particular, we will evaluate how the rules and structure of elections interact with campaign strategy, the broader political environment, and voter preferences to explain election outcomes.

Students who successfully complete the coursework for POL 363 will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Can identify sources, development, purposes, and functions of influential electoral rules.
- Can demonstrate knowledge of how specific incentives shape the behavior of a variety of actors with a stake in the outcome of elections, including candidates, voters, and the media.
- Can relate the events and outcomes of elections to broader questions of representation.
- Can model an empirical approach to analyzing evidence about political phenomena through oral and written communication.

This course meets the Knowledge Educational Priority and Objective (EPO) by integrating and applying knowledge from a focused area of study, that of American campaigns and elections, and by broadening knowledge for general education in other courses, especially the social sciences. It meets the Inquiry and Reasoning EPOs by modeling best social-science practices for evaluating and reasoning about contemporary questions from evidence. Finally, it meets the Communication and Citizenship EPOs through its emphasis on class discussion and group collaboration.

Prerequisites

POL 172 or POL 262 (i.e., American Politics)

Readings and Resources

Students should stay abreast of current events, which will often provide fodder for discussion and further application of course material. I recommend seeking out news from a variety of sources,

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including those that you may not consult otherwise. We will discuss good practices for being a discerning consumer of information.

Moodle

I post course materials on Moodle, including the syllabus, assignments, and presentations (after they have been given in class).

Required texts

Issenberg, Sasha. 2013. *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*. New York: Broadway Books.

Sides, John et al. 2018. *Campaigns and Elections*, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton.

Grading and Graded Material

Grading scale

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale. Letter grades will be assessed on the following scale: A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (59 and below).

Participation

Participation consists of attending class and asking and answering questions. I will keep a daily tally of participation, with a maximum of three points available per day. Students who earn 30 participation points will receive full credit; partial credit will be awarded as a proportion of participation points earned. Participation is worth 10% of the overall grade.

Candidate profile

Students will be assigned to a candidate in a significant race this election cycle. Each student will be responsible for keeping abreast of daily developments in the candidate's race. We will start most class periods with a round-up in which students will provide updates to their classmates on the state of the campaigns. On the day before Election Day, students will be called upon to predict the outcome of their races. The candidate profile is worth 5% of the overall grade.

Experience essays

Students will submit two 1000-word essays in which they reflect on planned out-of-class experiences, including a trip to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Election Day. Essays must be typed and turned in to the instructor in hard-copy form no more than 2 class days after completion of the event. Each essay is worth 5% of the overall grade.

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Discussion Leadership

Students will serve as discussion leaders twice for scholarly articles listed on the calendar. Discussion leaders must email the instructor at least two open-ended questions before the beginning of class that they are prepared to pose to their classmates in order to stimulate substantive conversation. Each turn as leader is worth 5% of the overall grade. Note: Leader assignments will be made by the end of Week 1.

Exams

There are two closed-book exams containing multiple-choice and short-answer questions. An exhaustive list of potential short-answer questions will be distributed before each exam, and class time will be allocated to fielding questions. Exams will be worth 20% (student's highest scoring exam) and 15% (student's lowest scoring exam).

Research design

Students will submit a paper and give a presentation in which they outline a plan for conducting an empirical study of voter persuasion or mobilization, including presenting a causal question, reviewing literature, and identifying an appropriate data source for testing a theoretically driven hypothesis. A 450-word proposal is due via Moodle before noon on Sunday, October 28th. The final paper is due via Moodle before noon on Sunday, November 11. Presentations summarizing key components of the research design will be given in class on Day 18. The proposal is worth 5% of the overall grade, the research design is worth 20%, and the presentation is worth 5%.

Policies

Cell phones and laptops

Use of cell phones in the classroom is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in loss of participation points for the day. Use of laptops is permitted, but discouraged as a tool for taking notes.

Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Disabilities

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due

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to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>

Other Accommodations

If you have any other needs for accommodation, please let me know and we can make necessary arrangements.

Calendar

Day 1

- No reading assignments; Introductions; Course Preliminaries; Game; Film in the afternoon

Day 2—Introduction to Political Campaigns in America

- Read Chs. 2-3 in Sides et al.

Day 3—Political Parties

- Read Ch. 6 in Sides et al.
- Read Abramowitz and Webster. 2016. “The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st century.” *Electoral Studies* 41: 12-22

Day 4—Presidential Campaigns

- Read Ch. 9 in Sides et al.
- Read Gomez et al. 2007. “The Republicans Should Pray for Rain: Weather, Turnout, and Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections.” *Journal of Politics* 69(3): 649-663

Day 5—Presidential Campaigns

- Field trip to Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, IA

Day 6—Congressional Campaigns

- Read Ch. 10 in Sides et al.
- Read Ansolabehere et al. 2000. “Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage.” *American Journal of Political Science* 44(1): 17-34.

Day 7—Campaign Strategy

- Experience essay #1 due
- Read Ch. 5 in Sides et al.
- Read Prologue, Ch. 1 in *The Victory Lab*.

Day 8—Campaign Strategy

- Read Chs. 2-7 in *The Victory Lab*.

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Day 9—Campaign Strategy

- Read Chs. 8-10, Epilogue in *The Victory Lab*.
 - Optional listening: “A History of Political Data (Part 4 – Trump)” *What’s The Point?* podcast

Day 10—Exam #1

Day 11—Voter Participation

- Read Ch. 12 in Sides et al.
- Read Richman et al. 2014. “Do non-citizens vote in U.S. elections?” *Electoral Studies* 36: 149-157.
 - Optional reading: Koerth-Baker, “The Tangled Story Behind Trump’s False Claims Of Voter Fraud” fivethirtyeight.com.

Day 12—Election Day

Day 13—Voter Choice

- Read Ch. 13 in Sides et al.
- Read Lau and Redlawsk. 2001. “Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making.” *American Journal of Political Science* 45(4): 951-971.

Day 14—Campaign Media

- Experience essay #2 due
- Read Ch. 8 in Sides et al.
- Read Prior. 2005. “News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.

Day 15—Campaign Finance

- Read Ch. 4 in Lowi et al.
- Read Ansolabehere et al. 2003. “Why is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105-130.

Day 16—Interest Groups

- Read Ch. 7 in Sides et al.

Day 17—Exam #2

Day 18—Research Design Presentations