

POSC XXX: Campaigns and Elections

Department of Political Science

Instructor: Nick Jenkins

Fall 2020

Office Location: Sproul Hall 2228

Classroom: CHASS 1020

Office Hours: W: 4-5pm; TH: 1:30-3:30pm

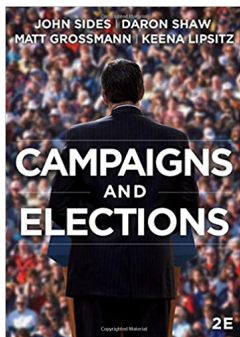
Class Times: MW: 9-10:15am

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Course Description

If voters always vote for members of their political party, then why do campaigns matter? What strategies do candidates use to win elections? Do voters only make vote choices based on party ID or do other factors matter as well? In the course, we will learn the answers to each of these questions with a campaign simulation that puts you in the middle of a presidential race. The class will be divided into candidates and their teams, the media, and voters - each playing an integral role in the race to win the presidency.

Required Materials



This course is primarily organized around the campaign simulation activity and all the material that we learn will be used to help you have a successful election. To teach you the information you need to know, we will be using [Campaigns and Elections \(Second Edition\)](#). I spent some time reading reviews of different textbooks on campaigns and elections and picked the one that had the best combination of the highest ratings, lowest cost, and the essential information about campaigns and elections that you will need to succeed in the simulation. I selected the second edition, but you

can also use the first edition [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#) or the third edition [here](#). This textbook, and its other editions, covers the fundamental aspects of campaigns and election strategy. We will use almost every chapter and it costs less than \$10 for a used copy on Amazon.

Course Promises

In this course, I will make the following promises to you. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Describe the primary and general election campaign processes.
2. Evaluate campaign strategies and opportunities for influence as a political strategist/interest group representative would.
3. Use polling to improve campaign strategies and predict election results.
4. Identify which aspects of campaigns have the largest effect of voter's decisions.

Course Expectations

This course will only fulfill these promises if you promise the following in return:

1. **To attend class.** I have designed this class for the readings and lectures to complement one another. As a result, attending lecture will be an essential component for your to develop a mastery of the course material.
2. **To read the assigned materials.** Similar to the lectures, the readings will provide additional details on each topic that may not be covered in lecture. They will also give you an opportunity to practice applying your knowledge of American government to understand real world decisions that have been made.
3. **To be attentive and participate in class.** Participation does not only mean speaking aloud in class. Students should participate by actively following class discussions and engaging with lecture activities.
4. **To complete the required assignments in a timely fashion.** The assignments in this course are designed for you, and me, to measure your progress on meeting the course promises. Each assignment will give you practice at mastering these promises and I will give feedback to help guide you in your journey. Providing feedback is time consuming, however, so you will get the most useful feedback, and therefore the most use out of each assignment, only if you turn in your work on time.

Assignments and Evaluation

Because writing is an essential component of nearly all career paths (and learning to write well is hard!) we will have several short writing assignments in the course. These assignments are designed to help you become a better writer, to get you to think more carefully about how governments work, to get you to think more carefully about how political decisions are made, and how to use evidence to support an argument. Below is a list of the writing assignments that we will complete in the course and their requirements.

1. **The Campaign Trail Simulation Game:** To prepare for the campaign simulation game and learn about election strategy, you will need to complete the [The Campaign Trail Game](#). In this game, you will choose a candidate to represent and make a series of decisions to win your candidate the presidency. When you finish, take a screenshot of your results and submit it on iLearn. Click here to get your results and screen the page that opens:

Final Results: [Game Link](#) (use link to view this result on its own page)

If your candidate wins on the “normal” difficulty, you will receive full credit. If they lose, you will receive 80%. If your candidate wins on the “hard” difficulty you will receive 2 points extra credit. **This is due on September 23rd.**

2. **Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam will include a series of multiple choice, and short answer questions. **The midterm will be held on November 2nd**
3. **Campaign Simulation:** This class is designed to teach you about how campaigns work, strategies that candidates use to win, and how voters make decisions. The best way to accomplish this is to have you experience a campaign first-hand, so that is what we are going to do.

The class will be divided into three groups: the candidate teams, the media, and the voters. Each group will have unique assignments that will simulation a mini presidential election. The success of this simulation will depend on the participation of all members of the class. Here are the assignments for each group:

Candidate Teams: If you are a member of a candidate team, your goal will be to run a successful presidential campaign that wins your candidate the election. Each candidates team will consist of four positions: a candidate, a campaign chairperson, a press secretary, and a public relations officer. You will work together as a team to develop a campaign platform, hold town hall meetings with voters, and have meetings with the press. In addition to working together to win the election, here are the requirements for each position:

- **Candidate:** the candidate will need to:
 - (a) **Campaign Platform and Strategy Memo:** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your campaign team addressing (1) the issues that your campaign will focus on, (2) what kind of advertising strategy you want to use, and (3) which voters you want to focus on. **This is due on October 13th.**
 - (b) Deliver a **6 minute speech announcing your candidacy** to the press. Here are some examples for you and your team to reference: [Pete Buttigieg's announcement speech](#) and [Jeb Bush's announcement speech](#). Your speech should address what you and your team believe will win the most voters. **This is due on October 19th.**
 - (c) **Participate in a debate with your opponent** where you will give a 5 minutes of opening remarks, make 2 minute responses to questions from the moderator and rebut your opponent, then answer questions from the audience. You will have time to prepare for this event in class with your team. **This is due on December 9th.**
- **Campaign Chairperson:** the chairperson will need to:
 - (a) **Campaign Platform and Strategy Advising Memo:** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate advising them on (1) what issues you believe they should focus on and why, (2) what you think your opponent's campaign strategy will be, (3) how your candidate can combat your opponent's strategies, and (4) how you suggest your candidate makes themselves unique so that voters have a "clear choice." **This is due on October 9th.**
 - (b) **Town Hall Performance Memo:** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate following their first town hall meeting to advise them on how you might make your campaign more appealing to voters. You might suggest taking a new position on certain issues, a new campaign message, better criticisms of your opponent's issue positions, etc. **This is due on December 2nd.**
- **Press Secretary:** the press secretary will need to:
 - (a) **Press Event Feedback Memo.** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate on their performance during the press event. You will need to (1) identify areas where your candidate had a strong performance, (2) areas where your candidate could improve, and (3) how popular you think your candidates issue positions are. **This is due on November 13th.**
 - (b) **Town Hall Event Preparation Memo.** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate preparing them for the town hall event with voters. Your memo will need to address (1) what issues you think your candidate will be questioned about, (2) how your candidate should respond to

questions about your opponent, and (3) what issues your candidate should try to emphasize. **This is Due on November 18th.**

- **Public Relations Advisor:** the public relations advisor will need to:

- (a) **Press Event Preparation Memo.** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate preparing them for the press event. Your memo will need to address (1) what issues you think your candidate will be questioned about, (2) how your candidate should respond to questions about your opponent, and (3) what issues your candidate should try to emphasize. **This is due on November 3rd.**
- (b) **Debate Preparation Memo:** Write a 1- 2 page professional single spaced memo (example [here](#)) to your team's candidate preparing them for the debate. Your memo will need to address (1) what issues you think your candidate should prepare for, (2) what your opponent's debate strategies and issue positions will be, (3) how best to counter your opponent, and (4) what debate strategy your candidate should pursue. **This is due on December 9th.**

All members of the candidate team will automatically receive an "A" on the campaign simulation assignment if your candidate wins.

The Media: As a member of the media, you will choose a name for your newspaper and report on as many of each candidate's campaign activities as you can by writing summaries of the events for voters. Here is a list of assignments you will need to complete:

- (a) **Report on a Candidate's Campaign Announcement:** In 150-300 words, write a story on a candidate's campaign launch event. Your story will need to include (1) the candidate's background, (2) their campaign issues and their positions on those issues, and (3) what party they are from. **This is due on October 17th.**
- (b) **Report on a Candidate's Press Event:** In 150-300 words, write a story on a candidate's event with the press (that's you!). Your story will need to include (1) what you think the most important questions that were asked and how the candidate responded to them, (2) what issues the candidate focused on, (3) what comments the candidate made about their opponent, and (4) anything else that you think would be important for voters to read about. **This is due on November 13th.**
- (c) **Report on a Candidate's Town Hall Event:** In 150-300 words, write a story on a candidate's town hall event. Your story should include (1) what you think the most important questions that were asked and how the candidate responded to them, (2)

what issues the candidate focused on, (3) what comments the candidate made about their opponent, and (4) anything else that you think would be important for voters to read about. You may also try to interview voters on what they thought about the event.

This is Due on December 2nd.

- (d) **Report on the Final Presidential Debate:** In 150-250 words, write a story briefly summarizing the presidential debate and make a prediction on who you think will win.

This is Due on December 11th.

- (e) **Public Opinion Poll:** Midway through the quarter you will need to create a list of 5 to 7 questions to gauge how voters feel about each candidate and their campaigns. Create your poll with [Google Forms](#). On polling day, you will have time to complete the survey with voters. **This is due on November 30th.**

- (f) **Prepare Questions for the Press Event:** You will need to prepare a list of 10 questions to ask a candidate during the press event. **This is due on November 11th.**

Any member of the media that correctly predicts the winner of the election will automatically receive an “A” on the campaign simulation assignment.

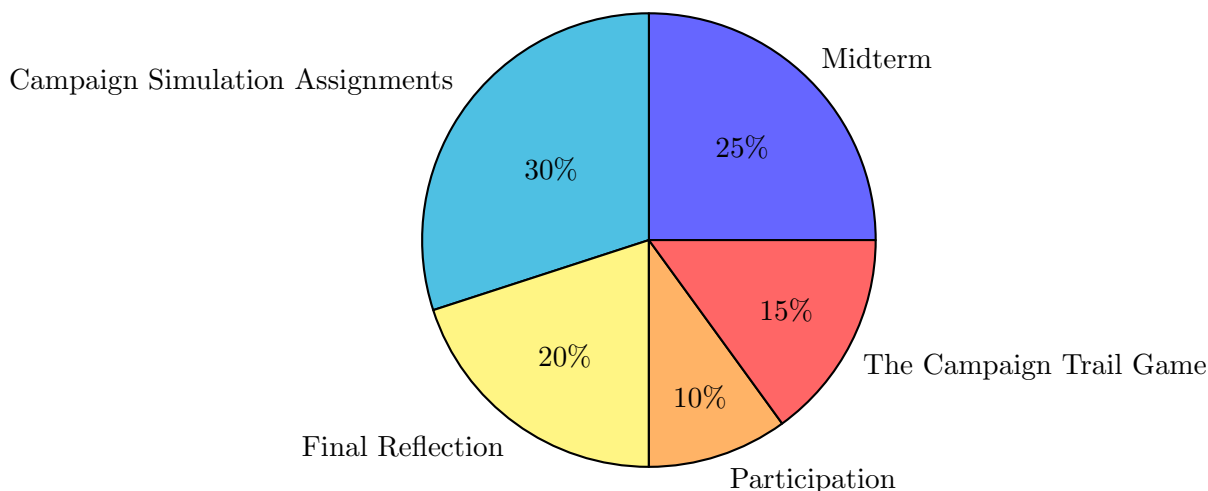
Voters: If you are a voter, your goal will be to attend campaign and press events, read all media stories, and ultimately decide who you think the best candidate is. Here is a list of assignments you will need to complete:

- (a) **Participate in Opinion Polls:** On polling day, you will need to complete all polls that you are approached by the media about. **This is due on November 30th.**
- (b) **Prepare Questions for Town Hall Event:** You will need to prepare a list of at least 7 questions for the candidate that you intend to see during the town hall. **This is due on November 18th.**
- (c) **Preparation for the Debate:** To prepare for the final debate, you will need to write a 1-2 page single spaced paper listing at least 5 questions for each candidate and explain why you think each question is important. What answers do you expect to hear? Will your questions help you decide who to vote for? Will your questions deter other from voting for the candidate? These are some things you might include in your paper. **This is due on December 9th.**
- (d) **Cast Your Ballot and Explain Your Vote Choice:** Write a 1 page single spaced paper explaining who you voted for and why. Were there certain aspects of their campaign that stood out to you? Did you like how they handled questions or the issues that they prioritized? What was it about this candidate that made you vote for them? **This is due on December 13th.**

4. **Final Reflection Paper:** The final will be a **4-5 page double-spaced paper** reflecting on the campaign simulation activity. Here are the questions that your paper will need to address:

- Which candidate had the most successful campaign strategy and why?
- What aspects of the losing candidate's campaign(s) contributed to their loss?
- How would you improve the strategy that the losing candidate used?
- Which aspects of the campaign do you think are the most important for winning voters (events, issue positions, communication strategies, etc.)?
- What are the most important factors that each candidate would need to consider, that they didn't do in class, if they were to actually enter a race for political office? **This is due on December 16th.**

These assignments will constitute your grade in the course and the weight of each of assignment are as follows:



The letter grades will be assigned according to these percentages:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|----|--------|----|--------|----|--------|---|-------|
| A+ | 97-100% | B+ | 87-89% | C+ | 77-79% | D+ | 67-69% | F | 0-59% |
| A | 93-96% | B | 83-86% | C | 73-76% | D | 63-66% | | |
| A- | 90-92% | B- | 80-82% | C- | 70-72% | D- | 60-62% | | |

Classroom Decorum and Academic Discourse

For everyone to have the best possible learning experience, we will strive to create a classroom environment that supports respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas. As part

of learning, it is essential to discuss topics with individual who have different viewpoints than your own and the only way we can better understand one another is if we can carry on a collegial discussion of the topic. Remember, the goal is to become better critical thinkers. To do so we must learn to listen to others and articulate our views in respectful ways. As such, the following principles will guide our discussions:

- Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
- Bring light, not heat;
- Reasonable minds can differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;
- Because constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is not just encouraged, it is expected;
- No ideas are immune from scrutiny and debate;
- You will not be graded on your opinions;
- Arguments and evidence should be judged *independently* of who offers such arguments and evidence.

Additionally, to build a classroom environment that maximizes everyone's ability to master the course material please be mindful to not distract your fellow learners with your phone, tablet, or computer. It's perfectly fine if you would like to use these devices to take notes during class, but don't use them to distract yourself or your peers! Similarly, if you come late (or must leave early) please to enter/depart the classroom in the least disruptive manner possible. This includes sitting near the door if you anticipate leaving early or taking a seat as near to the door as possible if you arrive late.

Academic Honesty

I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own. If you plagiarize any material from outside sources for your written work or presentation in this course, or on the final exam, **it will result in a failure of the entire course.** There are no exceptions to this, and no second chances. Please refer to the university's [Academic Integrity Policies & Procedures](#) if you have questions about these standards.

Special Accommodations

If you need particular accommodations to help you succeed in mastering this course's material, please contact the [Student Disability Resource Center](#) on campus in Costo Hall 125 to get a personalized accommodation plan.

Course Outline

This syllabus is a working document. I reserve the right to make changes to the assigned readings (additions or deletions) or to the order of topics we cover as I deem necessary. Lecture topics and readings may need to be adjusted to accommodate simulation activities. Announcements regarding schedule changes will be made in class, in discussion sections, or on iLearn.

Also note that this schedule lists the topics of discussion for each class. To master the course material, you should finish each meeting's readings before we discuss them in class. This schedule also indicates which course promise(s) each class contributes to. They are listed as **CP** followed by the specific promise's number (listed above).

Tentative Schedule:

| MONDAY | WEDNESDAY |
|---|---|
| Aug 31st 1 CP 4 Course Introduction; Deciding Teams; Preparing for the campaign trail! Simulation Activity: Public Opinion Poll | Sep 2nd 2 CP 1 & 2 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 1: The fundamentals of campaigns and developing strategy. |
| 7th Labor Day - No Class :(| 9th 3 CP 1 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 2 Pages 20-41: Who is eligible to run? When do I vote? |
| 14th 4 CP 1 & 2 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 2 Pages 41-52: Who can vote? What leads to victory? | 16th 5 CP 1, 2 & 4 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 5 Pages 120-143: Examining modern campaign strategies. |

| MONDAY | | WEDNESDAY | |
|---|----|---|----|
| 21st | 6 | 23rd | 7 |
| CP 1 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 5 Pages 143-152: What are the key roles on a campaign team? | | CP 1 & 4 Campaign Trail Game Results Due Campaigns and Elections Ch. 8 Pages 202-224: Who are the media and what do they do? | |
| 28th | 8 | 30th | 9 |
| CP 1 & 4 Campaigns and Elections Ch. 8 Pages 224-236: Candidate interactions with the media; How does the media affect voters? | | CP 1 Campaigns and Elections Ch 9 Pages 236-252: The goals and process of the presidential campaign. | |
| Oct 5th | 10 | 7th | 11 |
| CP 1, 2 & 4 Simulation Activity: Candidate teams meet to discuss platform, strategy, and announcement speech. Campaigns and Elections Ch 9 Pages 252-274: Details on the main event - the general election | | CP 2 & 4 Chairperson Platform and Strategy Advising Memo due Oct. 9h. Campaigns and Elections Ch 13 Pages 366-382: What influences vote choice? Do campaigns actually make a difference? | |
| 12th | 12 | 14th | 13 |
| CP 2 & 4 Candidate Campaign Platform and Strategy Memo Due Oct. 13th Campaigns and Elections Ch 13 Pages 382-396: How do campaigns change behavior? | | CP 2 Simulation Activity: Candidate team reviews candidate's campaign strategy memo and plans for announcement of candidacy. Campaigns and Elections Ch. 4 Pages 82-103: Do you know that there are rules for campaign spending and donors? | |

| MONDAY | WEDNESDAY |
|---|--|
| 19th 14 CP 1 & 2 Candidate Delivers Campaign Announcement Speech Simulation Activity: Candidates Deliver Campaign Announcement Speeches, Media Reports, Voters Attend Campaigns and Elections Ch. 4 Pages 103-120: Strategically navigating campaign finance regulations. | 21st 15 CP 1 Media Stories on Campaign Launch Events Due Oct. 17th. Campaigns and Elections Ch 6 Pages 152-169: Are parties required? Why only two parties? |
| 26th 16 CP 1, 2 & 4 Simulation Activity: Voters and campaigns read media stories from campaign launch events. Candidate teams and the media prepare for press event. | 28th 17 CP 1, 2 & 4 Campaigns and Elections Ch 6 Pages 169-178: What do parties do to win? How have parties changed and has polarization gotten worse? |
| Nov 2nd 18 CP 1, 2 & 4 MIDTERM EXAM | 4th 19 CP 2 Public Relations Advisor's Press Event Prep. Memos Due Nov. 8th Campaigns and Elections Ch 7 Pages 178-192: Parties and voters aren't the only two groups interested in elections! |
| 9th 20 CP 2 Media Questions for Press Event Due. Simulation Activity: Press Event Campaigns and Elections Ch 7 Pages 192-202: How do interest groups influence elections? | 11th 21 CP 1 & 4 Media Stories on Press Event Due Oct. 13th Press Secretary Press Event Report Due Nov. 13th. Campaigns and Elections Ch 10 Pages 274-286: Running for Congress and getting funding |

| MONDAY | WEDNESDAY |
|--|---|
| 16th 22 CP 1 & 4 Simulation Activity: Candidate teams and voter read media stories. Voters prepare questions for town hall. Candidate teams prepare for town hall event. Campaigns and Elections Ch 10 Pages 286-302: Congressional election process; why do incumbents almost always win? | 18th 23 CP 1, 2 & 4 Press Secretary Town Hall Prep Memo Due Voter Questions for Town Hall Due Simulation Activity: Town Hall Event Campaigns and Elections Ch 11 Pages 302-319: Local and state elections rules and strategies. |
| 23rd Thanksgiving! - No Class :(| 25th Thanksgiving! - No Class :(|
| 30th 24 CP 1, 2 & 3 Media Public Opinion Polls Due Simulation Activity: Media Conducts Opinion Poll of Candidates Campaigns and Elections Ch 11 Pages 319-330: How does professionalization affect elections at the state and local levels? | <div>Dec 2nd</div> 25 CP 3 Campaign Chairman Town Hall Performance Memo Due Media Stories on Town Hall Due Simulation Activity: Candidate teams review polls and prep for debate. Voters prep. debate questions. |
| 7th 26 Catch-up Day. | 9th 27 CP 1, 2, 3, & 4 Candidate Remarks Prepared and Ready for Debate Press Secretary Debate Prep. Memo Due Voters Debate Questions Prepared and Memo Due Media Stories on Presidential Debate Due Dec. 11th Voters Vote Choice Memo Due Dec. 13th Simulation Activity: Presidential Debate |
| 14th 28 | 16th 29 CP 1, 2, 3, & 4 Final Reflection Paper Due |

