

# *campaigns & elections*

PSCI 3021.001  
SPRING 2019  
MUENZINGER E431  
M/W/F 11:00 – 11:50 A.M.

DR. JENNIFER WOLAK  
242 KETCHUM  
wolakj@colorado.edu  
OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAYS 1-3 P.M.  
& BY APPOINTMENT

Elections are at the center of American politics. For citizens, campaigns are a time of heightened political interest and involvement, and an opportunity to convey their preferences to politicians. For political parties and interest groups, it is a time to gain new political influence (or lose it). Journalists are called upon to translate information about the campaign to the electorate, and politicians must market their policy platforms both to the electorate and other political elites.

In this course, we will explore how campaigns are practiced in the United States. We will consider why people run for office and how political parties, interest groups, and electoral rules influence how campaigns play out. Next, we will explore the content of campaigns – the positions candidates take, the effects of political contexts and campaign events, how campaign messages are conveyed to citizens, and how this all influences election outcomes. Finally, we will consider the effects of campaigns on citizens – what they learn, how they evaluate candidates, what animates their participation, and how they choose which candidates to vote for.

## *Canvas is your friend*

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class at [canvas.colorado.edu](http://canvas.colorado.edu). This syllabus will be posted there, as well as links to assignments and other exciting material.

## *reading material*

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, the readings include a set of journal articles and book chapters, which can be accessed via the course website.

## *expectations*

You are encouraged to be an active participant in class! Please feel free to raise questions at any point during class, including matters of clarification, theoretical points, or topics to address in class discussion. You should also keep in touch by e-mail or by visiting office hours if you have any questions about course expectations or the material covered in class.

You are also expected to maintain proper classroom etiquette. This includes respecting the opinions of others even if you disagree, not talking out of turn, putting away newspapers and crossword puzzles during lecture, turning off the ringer on cell phones before class, and not disrupting the class if arriving late.

## ***requirements***

In addition to the readings, you will be responsible for the following:

### **PARTICIPATION, SHORT ASSIGNMENTS, AND QUIZZES** (*worth 25% of your final grade*)

Because class attendance is an important prerequisite for participating in discussions and in-class activities, attendance will be taken each class session. Absences will lower your participation grade. We will also have several in-class activities that contribute to this portion of your grade, and many weeks we will have short quizzes on the readings. We will have a few short homework assignments as well.

### **THREE ESSAYS** (*each worth 10% of your final grade*)

Over the course of the semester, several paper topics will be provided. Some of these essay prompts will ask you to engage with debates raised in the readings. Others will ask you to apply class lessons to real-world campaigns. Others will invite you to suggest ways to reform electoral institutions. You will be asked to write essays in response to three of these assignments over the course of the semester. Paper guidelines will be detailed in separate handouts.

### **THREE EXAMS** (*each worth 15% of your final grade*)

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam.

## ***special accommodations***

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You can contact the Disability Services office for more information at [disabilityservices.colorado.edu](http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu).

## ***some important comments on academic integrity***

- Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me or refer to the University Honor Code at [honorcode.colorado.edu](http://honorcode.colorado.edu). Additional information about avoiding plagiarism, citation style, and writing in political science is also posted on the course website. Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council for additional non-academic sanctions.
- All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

# *campaigns & elections class schedule*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

**Monday, January 14 – Friday, January 18**

*The landscape of elections in the United States*

## CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

**Wednesday, January 23 – Friday, January 25**

*U.S. elections in historical perspective, in comparative perspective*

- Streb, Matthew J. 2015. *Rethinking American Electoral Democracy*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 3.
- King, Anthony. 1997. "Running Scared." *Atlantic Monthly* 279:41-61.

## CANDIDATE SELECTION

**Monday, January 28 – Friday, February 1**

*Who runs for office? Gender and political ambition. Young people's interest in entering politics.*

- Carnes, Nicholas. 2016. "Why Are There So Few Working-Class People in Political Office? Evidence from State Legislatures." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4:84-109.
- Karpowitz, Christopher F., J. Quin Monson, and Jessica Robinson Preece. 2017. "How to Elect More Women: Gender and Candidate Success in a Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 61:927-943.
- Shames, Shauna L. 2017. *Out of the Running: Why Millennials Reject Political Careers and Why It Matters*. New York University Press. Chapter 3.

## ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS

**Monday, February 4 – Friday, February 8**

*Electoral design. Who benefits from election rules? Redistricting. The Electoral College.*

- Trounstein, Jessica, and Melody E. Valdin. 2008. "The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity." *American Journal of Political Science* 52:554-569.
- Bullock, III, Charles S. 2010. *Redistricting: The Most Political Activity in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Chapter 5.
- Dahl, Robert A. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 4.

## ELECTORAL REFORM

**Monday, February 11 – Wednesday, February 13**

*The design of elections. What does it take to reform elections?*

- Donovan, Todd, and Shaun Bowler. "Election Reform: What is Expected, and What Results?" In Stephen K. Medvic, ed., *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. New York: Routledge.

**Friday, February 15: Exam 1**

## POLITICAL PARTIES

**Monday, February 18 – Friday, February 22**

*The role of political parties in candidate selection, how political parties influence elections.*

- Hassell, Hans J. G. 2016. "Party Control of Party Primaries: Party Influence in Nominations for the US Senate." *Journal of Politics* 78:75-87.
- Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2016. "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49:701-708.

## THE ROLE OF MONEY AND CAMPAIGN CONTEXTS

**Monday, February 25 – Friday, March 1**

*The role of money in politics. When does campaign spending matter? Incumbency and competition.*

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. DeFigueiredo, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17:105-130.
- Kalla, Joshua L., and David Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 60:545-558.
- Jacobson, Gary. 2006. "Measuring Campaign Spending Effects in U.S. House Elections." In Henry E. Brady and Richard Johnston, eds., *Capturing Campaign Effects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND CANDIDATE COMMUNICATION

**Monday, March 4 – Friday, March 8**

*Issue selection, voter targeting, campaign agendas*

- Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3.
- Macdonald, Stuart E., George Rabinowitz, and Holly Brasher. 2003. "Policy Issues and Electoral Democracy." In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, eds. *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- West, Darrell M. 2018. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2016*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapters 3 and 4.

## CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

**Monday, March 11 – Friday, March 15**

*Candidate advertising strategy, effects of campaign ads*

- Freedman, Paul, Michael Franz and Kenneth Goldstein. 2004. "Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship." *American Journal of Political Science* 48:723-741.
- Brader, Ted. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49:388-405.

## MEDIA COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS

**Monday, March 18 – Wednesday, March 20**

*The goals of the press in election coverage, evaluating the quality of media coverage of campaigns*

- Patterson, Thomas E. 2016. "News Coverage of the 2016 General Election: How the Press Failed the Voters." Report for the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy.

**Friday, March 22:** Exam 2

**Monday, March 25 – Friday, March 29:** Spring break – class does not meet.

## THE TIMELINE OF CAMPAIGNS

**Monday, April 1 – Friday, April 5**

*Campaign events, debates, conventions, speeches, appearances*

- Stimson, James A. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.
- Gelman, Andrew, and Gary King. 1993. "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes Are So Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23:409-451.

## CAMPAIGN EFFECTS

**Monday, April 8 – Friday, April 12**

*The effects of campaigns on citizens. Election forecasting.*

- Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't." *The Forum* 8(3):1-19.
- Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, And Daron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-Lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 105: 135–50.
- Hersh, Eitan D. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.

## VOTE CHOICE

**Monday, April 15 – Friday, April 19**

*How do people choose how to vote? Assessing the quality of voters' choices.*

- Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 1997. "Voting Correctly." *American Political Science Review* 91:585-598.
- Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5.

## VOTER TURNOUT

**Monday, April 22 – Friday, April 26**

*Why do people turn out to vote? What would increase voter turnout?*

- Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 91:1-14.
- Nickerson, David W. 2015. "Do Voter Registration Drives Increase Participation? For Whom and When?" *The Journal of Politics* 77: 88-101.
- Burden, Barry C., David T. Canon, Kenneth R. Mayer, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2014. "Election Laws, Mobilization, and Turnout: The Unanticipated Consequences of Election Reform." *American Journal of Political Science* 58:95-109.

## CAMPAIGN PROMISES AND POLICY OUTCOMES

**Monday, April 29 – Wednesday, May 1**

*Do elections matter? How elections connect public preferences with policy outcomes.*

- Sulkin, Tracy. 2009. "Campaign Appeals and Legislative Action." *Journal of Politics* 71:1093-110.

**Sunday, May 5:** Final exam (1:30 – 4 p.m.)