

Pols 318

Campaigns & Elections

Spring 2012
M/W/F 2:00 - 2:50
1224 Faner Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30 - 2:00
Wednesday 11:30 - 1:30
By appointment

1 Course Description

This course describes, explains, and evaluates election campaigns in the American context. The course will challenge you to consider some of the following issues: Do we have free, fair, and open elections? How do voters make decisions? Do they make good decisions? What—if any—impact do political campaigns have on electoral outcomes? Do elections matter? In other words, what would happen if we held an election and nobody came? Would anyone really notice a difference in government? To facilitate an understanding of these issues, you will learn a theoretical and analytic approach to politics. This entails identifying and explaining the occurring patterns of voting and campaigning uncovered by political scientists. The lessons you learn will be used to understand the unfolding electoral cycle

2 Course Objectives

1. Familiarize students with the important institutions and behaviors in American electoral politics.
2. Learn how to evaluate and apply political concepts to contemporary politics.
3. Explain events in the 2012 electoral cycle.

Attendance	100 points	<i>Daily</i>
Participation	100 points	<i>Daily</i>
Talking Points	200 points	<i>Weekly</i>
Paper 1	200 points	<i>February 17</i>
Paper 2	200 points	<i>March 23</i>
Paper 3	200 points	<i>May 4</i>

3 Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

3.1 Overview

There are **5** requirements for this class: daily participation & attendance, talking points, and three writing assignments. The relative weight assigned to these requirements is below.

3.2 Attendance & Participation

Learning is an active exercise and you will not succeed in this class unless you participate frequently and effectively. This class is primarily run as a seminar in which students summarize and react to assigned material. Toward that end, I will grade both your attendance and participation in this class. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester and points will be assigned on a percentage basis. Participation is my subjective assessment of your citizenship in the class. I will assign 100 course points on the basis of attendance and another 100 for participation, making this 20% of your final course grade.

3.3 Talking Points

You are required to submit talking point assignments **ten times** over the course of the semester. You will have fifteen weeks in which it is possible to turn in talking point assignments, but only submit assignments ten times. Talking points must be posted on the Desire2Learn (Desire2Learn) coursepage no later than 12:00 p.m. on the Monday of the week in which we will discuss the reading. For each assignment you submit, there should be **two talking points**. These should be either 1) a critical thought about the weekly reading or 2) an analysis of a current event that either confirms or disconfirms an argument from the weekly reading. To receive credit for a talking point, it must be clearly written and refer to a specific part of the reading (with appropriate page references). Talking points that are longer than 100 words will not be accepted, nor will I accept talking points that arrive late. Credit for talking points will be assigned on four criteria: 1) completion, 2) quality of writing, 3) quality of your argument, and 4) ability to provoke class interest. Each talking point assignment is worth 20 points; talking point assignments make up **20%** of your overall class grade.

3.4 Paper #1—Literature Review

Your first research paper is a review of the scientific literature on a specific election topic. Choose one of the topics below and read the “classic” paper listed next to it. After you have done that, identify 5-7 recently published research papers that cite the classic reading. Once the professor approves your list, your task is to read these papers and write a 4-5 pages summarizing the findings, arguments, and usefulness for explaining electoral politics. More specific instructions will be posted on the D2L site. The paper is due at the end of class on **February 17** and is worth **200** points towards your final grade.

- Political Participation—Huckfeldt & Sprague, “Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization.”
- Money in Elections—Jacobson, “The Effect of Campaign Spending in Congressional Elections.”
- Media—Bartels, “Messages Received”
- Advertising—Ansolabehere et al., “Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?”
- Race—Gay, “The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation.”
- Gender—Box-Steffensmeier et al., “The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap.”
- Campaign Strategy—Shaw, “Messages Behind the Madness.”

3.5 Paper #2—Case Study

Your second paper is a 4-5 page case study of one elections selected from the list below. Your task in this paper is to write a detailed description of what happened in your election, explain the eventual outcome, and offer a conclusion about whether your explanation supports or challenges the material in the textbook. The basis of this paper will be a combination of your class readings and at least 10 newspaper/magazine articles. More specific instructions will be posted on the D2L site. The paper is due at the end of class on **March 23** and is worth **200** points towards your final grade.

- 2010 Massachusetts Senatorial Election
- 2008 Democratic Primary Process
- 2006 Connecticut 4th House Election
- 2010 Illinois Gubernatorial Election

3.6 Paper #3—Applied Political Science

The third paper is a memorandum written to one of the national party committee chairmen (Debbie Wasserman at the DNC or Reince Priebus at the RNC) that proposes a campaign strategy for their presidential candidate. Your research for this paper should draw on available information about candidate fundraising, issue profiles, opposition research, public opinion polls, and the strategic landscape. Drawing on this data and class knowledge, write a 4-5 page memorandum that outlines a strategy for your candidate. This should include specific voters that should be targeted, issues that can be used to target them, and how you think to best target them. Your memo should also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, including recommendations on how to use that to your candidates potential. Importantly, your analysis needs to demonstrate a systematic understanding of campaigns and elections that is based on course material. The paper is due at the end of class on **May 4** and is worth **200** points towards your final grade.

3.7 Grading Scale

Grades are based on the following scale:

1000 to 900	A
899 to 800	B
799 to 700	C
699 to 600	D
Below 600	F

4 Class Policies

4.1 Absences

You are expected to attend every class session. Students arriving after attendance is taken will be considered absent for the day. If you must miss class for some reason, you can receive an excused absence by contacting me **IN ADVANCE**. I reserve the right to see documentation for your absence or to decide what constitutes a reasonable excuse. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed.

4.2 Missed Assignments

All assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned unless the instructor indicates otherwise. Any assignments that are not turned in on time will lose half a letter grade for each day they are late. Any assignment that is more than 48 hours late will not be accepted.

4.3 Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Any student engaging in academic misconduct will receive an F in the course and will be reported to the Dean for further disciplinary action outlined in the university code of student conduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, you should examine the university policy and/or ask the instructor prior to turning in any assignment. It is YOUR responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policy.

4.4 Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam, turning in a paper, or going to class, you should contact Professor McClurg as soon as possible. The best way to contact me is via email (mcclurg@siu.edu). If you do not hear back from me within a reasonable amount of time, you may call me. Students contacting me PRIOR to missing an assignment receive greater leniency. Examples of excuses that have NOT been accepted in the past include the following: oversleeping, taking too much medication, incarceration, and having a (minor) cold.

4.5 Grading Policies & Standards

Graded assignments are returned as promptly as possible. When students receive an exam or assignment back, they must wait at least two days until asking the instructor to review the grade. If a student wants a re-grade, s/he must submit a single-spaced, one paragraph note explaining why the original grade is inappropriate. All assignments submitted for a re-grade can go up or down.

4.6 SIU's Emergency Response Plan

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

4.7 Disability Policy

It is the policy of this university and this professor to help disabled individuals succeed in the classroom. The student is responsible for notifying the professor and the university of any special problems or needs as soon as possible. The professor and university are responsible for doing whatever they can within university policy to accommodate that student. It is in your best interest to notify the professor and university **immediately** so that arrangements can be made as soon as possible. For more information, please contact Kathleen Plesko at Disabled Student Services or go to the DSS homepage. <http://www.siu.edu/dss>

4.8 Policy Acknowledgment

In order to be eligible for a grade in this class, a student must read and sign the form on the last page of this syllabus. After signing that “Acknowledgment of the Terms and Policies” form you must turn it in to the instructor. You will not receive any credit in the course until this form has been turned in. (That means, for example, that if you turn it in after your first paper is due, then your score on the assignment is a zero.) A word to the wise - students who do not turn this form in immediately are unlikely to remember later on, so get it done!

5 Reading Assignments

Because this class emphasizes participation and discussion, it is crucial that you obtain the book and read it carefully. In addition to the book listed below, there will be some supplemental materials available on the D2L website.

- Morton, Rebecca B. *Analyzing Elections*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

6 Course Schedule & Reading Assignments

Week 1. Introducton to Course

- January 18. No reading.
- January 20. Chapter 1

Week 2. Voter Turnout

- January 23. Chapter 2.
- January 25. Talking Points (TP2)
- January 27. Library

Week 3. Mobilization

- January 30. Chapter 3.

- February 1. TP3
- February 3. Social media in elections; Current events

Week 4. Ideological Positions

- February 6. Chapter 4.
- February 8. TP4
- February 10. Republican and Democratic candidates

Week 5. Polarization or Valence?

- February 13. Chapter 5.
- February 15. TP5
- February 17. Visit from David Yepsen, **Paper #1 Due**

Week 6. Campaign Financing

- February 20. Chapter 6.
- February 22. TP6
- February 24. OpenSecrets.Com, *Priceless*

Week 7. Influence of Money in Elections

- February 27. Chapter 7.
- February 29. TP7
- March 2. Current events; Sheila Simon

Week 8. Media

- March 5. Chapter 8.
- March 7. TP8
- March 9. Colbert Bump; current events

Week 9. Spring Break

- March 12. **No class.**
- March 14. **No class.**
- March 16. **No class.**

Week 10. Trustees or Delegates?

- March 19. Chapter 9.
- March 21. TP9

- March 23. State of the economy; **Paper #2 Due**

Week 11. Public Opinion

- March 26. Chapter 10.
- March 28. TP10
- March 30. Candidate polling; current events

Week 12. Congressional Elections

- April 2. Chapter 11.
- April 4. TP11
- April 6. Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball

Week 13. Presidential Primaries

- April 9. Chapter 12.
- April 11. TP13
- April 13. Current events

Week 14. Presidential Elections

- April 16. Chapter 13.
- April 18. TP13
- April 20. *Bush's Brain*

Week 15. Challengers

- April 23. Chapter 14.
- April 25. TP14
- April 27. Video on Ron Paul?; current events

Week 16. Minority Voters

- April 30. Chapter 15.
- May 2. TP15
- May 4. Presidential predictions; **Paper #3 Due**

Policy Acknowledgment

I, _____ (print your name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the following information about Political Science 318 “Campaigns and Election.” I understand that this information and these policies apply to me in the context of this course. I also understand that this syllabus represents a plan for the semester and that the instructor reserves the right to change the requirements, policies, and schedule of topics for the course as deemed necessary.

- ___ Instructor Office Hours
- ___ Instructor Email
- ___ Course Goals
- ___ Course Requirements
- ___ Attendance Policy
- ___ Missed Assignment Policy
- ___ Problems / Emergency Policy
- ___ Grading Policy Standards
- ___ Disability Policy
- ___ Reading Assignments

_____ (signature and date)