THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Government 381L
38908
Professor Daron Shaw
Fall 2011

MEETING PLACE: BATTS 1.104              MEETING TIME: TH 6:30-9:30
OFFICE: BATTS 4.146                    PHONE: 232-7275
EMAIL: dshaw@austin.utexas.edu         OFFICE HOURS: T, TH 1:30-3:00

Overview

This course has two objectives. The first is to introduce you to the literature and controversies that animate our understanding of American elections and political campaigns. In this sense, the format of the class will be fairly typical; weekly reading assignments will serve as the basis for critical inquiries into a range of issues. The second objective is to teach you what it means to do empirical research in this area. Most of us can readily identify the short-comings of the political science we read, but far fewer can pose interesting alternatives, formulate testable hypotheses and research designs, acquire pertinent data and carry out convincing tests and analyses. This course aims at focusing your abilities and talents on these endeavors as well as bringing you up to speed on the literature.

Course Format

Class meetings will run approximately two hours and forty-five minutes, with a 15-minute break about an hour and forty minutes into class. The first portion of class will be devoted to a consideration of the week’s assigned readings. (A typical week consists of 250 pages of reading. Some weeks will be less and some will be more). You are required to do all of the readings for a given week. Students from the course will sign up to give 20-minute presentations of the materials for a given week and lead the class in a discussion of those readings. These presentations will be graded and everyone in the course will be responsible for a set of readings at some point during the semester (you could be asked to do more, depending on the number of students enrolled).

The last hour of class meetings will be devoted to students’ research projects for the course. Initially, this hour will be geared towards development and design issues. As the semester wears on, students will present weekly (or bi-weekly) progress reports and the class will serve as a sounding board for more specific research questions. Attendance of all sections is expected and can affect your grade through the presentation/participation component of evaluation.
**Evaluation**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

**Class Assignments**
1. Weekly Overviews of the Readings 20%
2. Discussion Leader Presentations 20%

**Research Paper**
3. Proposal 5% (Due October 13)
4. Draft 15% (Due November 17)
5. Final Draft 40% (Due December 8)

Grades for all assignments will be on a 0-100 scale. Grades will be determined based on your weighted average on this scale (93-100 is an A, 90-92 is an A-, 87-89 is a B+, 83-86 is a B, etc.). You must complete all of the assignments to pass. The nature of the proposal and paper will be discussed later. The due dates listed below are firm, though I am willing to discuss accommodations for compelling reasons. I reserve the right to determine what is “compelling”. Needless to say, all work must be original and your own. Collaboration is not an option for the papers, though you may wish to consult with others on the readings and on your presentations.

You may choose your “discussion” week by signing up on the sheet posted outside my office.

**Other Matters**

Research into campaigns, voting behavior, and elections has traditionally relied heavily on statistical analyses of surveys, experiments, and/or election results. This will be obvious in your readings. It is not imperative that you have a strong statistical background to take this course. Furthermore, you are not required to conduct a research inquiry that uses survey or ballot data. However, these are the forms of evidence and analysis that mark the field. If you choose to specialize in this area, expect to be asked to back your arguments with “hard” data. This does not necessarily mean polls or voting data, though these are certainly the most accessible and accepted forms of “hard” data. For those of you who are just getting started, I’d be happy to help you become familiar with the most common data sets (NES, the Annenberg rolling cross sectional survey, GSS, etc.).
Readings


Students will have to purchase these texts online. All readings are available either in the assigned text books or through JSTOR (which you can access through any UT computer).

POLICY & PROCEDURES

✓ It is distracting and discourteous to arrive late or leave during the lecture. I would discourage you from making a habit out of it.
✓ There will be one break during the class, so food, beverage and restroom necessities should be (mostly) taken care of prior to class.
✓ Please turn off all cell phones and pagers prior to entering the classroom.
✓ You are permitted to use your laptops to take notes.
✓ You are not permitted to transmit, copy, or otherwise distribute lecture material without my expressed written consent.
✓ At a more general level, please show respect for the classroom environment.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any disabled student may request appropriate academic accommodations from the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259).

http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/

DISHONESTY

Incidents of cheating, plagiarism, and general academic dishonesty will be treated as per university guidelines. Please note the Honor Code of the University:

http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html

OTHER RESOURCES

There are a number of web sites that will be useful for this course.

2. Texas Legislative Council (http://www.tlc.state.tx.us)
4. National Election Study (http://www.umich.edu/~nes/)
5. Roper Center for Public Opinion (http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/)
6. JSTOR site for academic journal articles (http://www.jstor.org)
8. Pollster.com (http://www.pollster.com)
9. RealClear Politics (http://www.realclearpolitics.com)
10. OpenSecrets (http://www.opensecrets.org)
11. FollowtheMoney.org (http://www.followthemoney.org)
13. The Living Room Candidate (http://www.livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php)
15. Vanishing Voter Project (http://www.vanishingvoter.org)
17. MonkeyCage (http://themonkeycage.org/)
## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 Sept. 1</td>
<td>OUT</td>
<td>“Heilemann and Halperin, “Game Change.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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  Shaw, “The Race to 270,” ch. 3.  
  Vavreck, “The Message Matters.”  
| Oct. 20    | OUT                                            |                                                                           |
  Iyengar and Ansolabehere, “Going Negative.”  
  Shaw, “The Race to 270,” ch. 4-5.  
| Nov. 3     | Radio, Direct Mail, Telephones, Face-to-Face, Online and Social Media Outreach | “Campaign Craft,” pp. 171-76, ch. 10.  
  Gerber and Green, “Get Out the Vote.”  
| Nov. 10    | The News Media                                 | Patterson, “Out of Order.”  
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