

THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO - DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
UCDC CONSORTIUM ELECTIVE

Professor: Ken Goldstein

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Class: 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm Thursday

Office Hours: 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm Thursday, Friday 12pm to 1pm, and by appointment

Office: Room 331

Anyone who hopes to pursue a career in politics – or just be a good citizen – should be familiar with some basics about the electorate and the mechanics of election campaigns. Also, although energy, hard work, creativity, and political instinct cannot be taught, there are specific technical skills that are crucial in modern campaigns. These include knowledge of the fundamental factors that drive elections and public opinion as well familiarity with survey research, statistical analysis, and media buying.

This class will teach you how to understand the fundamental factors that drive elections in America and to learn some of the skills employed by political professionals. Your assignments will require you to apply the lessons of this class to real time events. We will take special advantage of the fact that this class is taking place after the 2016 and 2018 elections. We will use recent results from 2016 and 2018 to illustrate major concepts and will look forward to the 2020 presidential primaries and general election. We are in a data and information rich environment.

The goal in this class is to go beyond the spin and hyperbole of many election commentators about a particular contest. The goal is to help you understand how voters decide and how strategists persuade and to give you some of the technical skills to get an interesting job with a campaign. This class will combine the insights of campaign professionals with insight from the study of previous campaigns and scholarly research. It will combine theory, practice, and exploration, taking the insights of political scientists and political practitioners and rolling them into one.

READINGS

The readings in this class will come from refereed academic journals as well as media and non-scholarly accounts of campaigns and elections. Most of the journal readings are available on JSTOR (jstor.org) and the other readings are widely available on the web. I will send along copies of additional readings by e-mail. Also, you should not take this class unless you are deeply interested in American politics and keep up with it on a daily basis. I typically read *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* every morning. I also check in with Real Clear Politics polling summaries to keep up to date on current polling information and subscribe to the Axios and Politico morning news digests.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The assignments represent the sort of work product that campaign strategists must do or must prove they can do to get a job in the first place. I will outline the assignments and expectations in more detail in class and in written instructions.

Win Number Exercise (10 points) due February 7.

Survey Weighting Exercise (10 points) due February 14 .

In-Class Mid-Term Exam – Analytical “Job” Exam (30 Points) February 21.

2018 Elections Analysis (20 points) due March 21.

Final Case Study (30 points) Using a hypothetical case you will create a strategic media plan for a public policy issue in a special election. Although the focus of the assignment will be on the particulars of media buying, you will need to bring in information from many different topics from the class and use the analytical tools that have been outlined in lecture and readings. You will do this project in two phases. There will be many more details to follow. The first stage will be due April 3 and the second stage on April 18.

TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1

2016 and 2018 Election Review

Week 2

Party Identification and the Nature of the Times

- Bartels, Larry M., and John Zaller. 2001. “Presidential Vote Models: A Recount.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 34: 8-20. **JSTOR**
- “Forecasting the 2016 American National Elections.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* / October 2016. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/7E2243DBE3892687CE2F1D28B7D08856/S1049096516001591a.pdf/introduction.pdf>
- <http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2012/08/22/159588275/are-independents-just-partisans-in-disguise>
- Achen, Chris and Larry Bartels. 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/23/opinion/campaign-stops/do-sanders-supporters-favor-his-policies.html?_r=1

Week 3

Voter Turnout, Mobilization, and the Changing Face of the American Electorate

- McDonald, Michael P., and Samuel L. Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter." *American Political Science Review*, 95: 963-974. **JSTOR**
- Gerber, Alan and Donald Green 2000. "The Effects of Personal Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout." *APSR Science Review*, 94: 653-663. **JSTOR**
- Frey, William, Ruy Teixeira, and Robert Griffin. "States of Change." <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2016/02/25-states-of-change-frey/SOC2016report.pdf?la=en>
- Cohn, Nate. "There are More White Voters than People Think." http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/10/upshot/there-are-more-white-voters-than-people-think-thats-good-news-for-trump.html?_r=0
- Goldstein, Ken. 2015. "The Real Math Behind Hillary Clinton's Candidacy." http://wowway.net/news/read/category/Politics/article/bloomberg_news-the_real_math_behind_hillary_clintons_candidacy-tca
- Carp, Alex. 2017. *New York Magazine*. "Can the Democrats Still Count on a Demographic Advantage." <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/03/can-the-democrats-still-count-on-a-demographic-advantage.html>

Week 4

Putting it Together – Share and Performance

- Vavreck, Lynn. 2014. "The Myth of Swing Voters in Midterm Elections," NYT.com, The Upshot, April 22, 2014.
- Enten, Harry. 2014a. "Mid-Term Election Turnout Isn't So Different from Presidential Year Turnout," 538.com, May 7, 2014.
- Chapters 2 and 3 of *Inside Campaigns*. To be provided.

Week 5

Survey Research Fundamentals

- Literary Digest Article from 1936 - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5168/>
- Trochim, William M. "Probability Sampling" *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2nd Edition. <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampprob.php>
- Coverage Error in Internet Surveys - <http://www.pewresearch.org/2015/09/22/coverage-error-in-internet-surveys/>
- Cliff Zukin, "What's the Matter with Polling?" http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/opinion/sunday/whats-the-matter-with-polling.html?_r=0
- AAPOR. "An Evaluation of 2016 Election Polls." <http://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Reports/An-Evaluation-of-2016-Election-Polls-in-the-U-S.aspx> - Executive Summary

Week 6

Primaries

- Putnam, Josh. 2015. "Everything you need to know about how the presidential primary works" *Monkey Cage* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/12/everything-you-need-to-know-about-how-the-presidential-primary-works>
- Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* vol. 10, no. 3 (2012) 571-597. **JSTOR**
- Masket, Seth. 2014 (July 7). "How Can We Fix the Broken Primary Election System?" *PS Magazine*. **JSTOR**

Week 7 - MID-TERM EXAM

Week 8

Message Research, Message Development, and Message Testing

- Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science*, 36: 579-616. **JSTOR**
- Ryan Lizza, "How to Beat Hillary Clinton." <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-to-beat-hillary-clinton>
- Brett DiResta, "User Guide to the Dark Arts of Politics." <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/07/opinion/campaign-stops/a-users-guide-to-the-dark-art-of-politics.html>

Week 9

Campaign Effects – Persuasion and Separation

- Zaller, John. 1996. "The Myth of a Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited Idea." In Mutz, Sniderman and Brody, *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. **COPY OF TO BE PROVIDED**
- Wilner, Elizabeth and Ken Goldstein. 2012. "Network Anchors for Romney." *Columbia Journalism Review*. http://www.cjr.org/swing_states_project/romney_ads_brokaw_couric.php?page=all

Week 10

Media Strategy and Buying - Television

- Seeyle, Katherine Q. 2004. "How to Sell a Candidate to a Porsche-Driving, Leno-Loving, Nascar Fan." *The New York Times* December 6.
- Peters, Jeremy, "For GOP Ads, CSI but Not Letterman." *NYT* January 29, 2012.
- Ruttenberg, Jim, "Obama Data System Targeted TV Viewers." <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/us/politics/obama-data-system-targeted-tv-viewers-for-support.html?ref=politics>

Week 11

Media Strategy and Buying - Digital

- Readings TBA

Week 12

Campaign Law

- Readings TBA

Spring Break

Week 13

Media Buying Case Review

Campaign Jobs Round Table

Week 14

Media Buying Case Presentations

COURSE POLICIES

Make-up, Late, and Incomplete Work. No make-up assignments will be permitted except in case of documented emergency and emergency health issues. Late assignments will be docked a letter grade per day late without prior approval or appropriate documentation. Incompletes will only be assigned for compelling reasons to those students who have completed at least two-thirds of the required course work at a passing level. Requests must be made in writing on the official request forms.

Academic Integrity

Do not claim someone else's work as your own – this is plagiarism. Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity. Such violations will result automatically in course failure.