

THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
SPRING 2018 UCDC CONSORTIUM ELECTIVE

Professor: Ken Goldstein

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Class: 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm Tuesday

Office Hours: 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm Tuesday, Friday 12pm to 2 pm, and by appointment

Office: Room 331

Even though we have experienced an election in 2016 where the rules supposedly did not apply, 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, research design, statistical analysis, and paid media.

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. Many of 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 a presidential election campaign and that we are in a data rich environment. We will also look forward to the coming 2018 mid-terms.

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.

It is acceptable, desirable even, to give and receive assistance to complete assignments. The rules of acknowledging assistance apply in this class as they do in the professional world: give credit where credit is due. Do not claim someone else's work as your own – this is plagiarism (see below). Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity. Such violations will result automatically in course failure.

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. There are a slew of sites available to follow politics and political news. I typically read *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* every morning. I also check in with Pollster.com 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 expectations in more detail.

Mid-Term Exam – Analytical “Job” Exam (35 Points) February 20.

Analytical Column (25 Points) You will conduct and write up a quantitative (2-3 pages) analysis of the sort that you would be asked to do in real time if you were working for a campaign as a data analyst or, in the news media, as a data reporter. Due on March 20.

Final Case Study (40 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 part of this project as individuals and part in a group. There will be many more details to follow. The individual component is due April 6 and the group part on April 17.

TOPICS AND READINGS

JANUARY 9

Class Overview and 2016 Election Briefing

JANUARY 16

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
- Pew Research Center, 2017. "Partisan Identification Is 'Sticky,' but About 10% Switched Parties Over the Past Year." <http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/17/partisan-identification-is-sticky-but-about-10-switched-parties-over-the-past-year/>

JANUARY 23

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>

JANUARY 30

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.
- Goldstein, Ken, Matt Dallek and Joel Rivlin. 2014. “Even the Geeks are Polarized: The Dispute over the Real Driver in American Elections.” *The Forum*. Volume 12, Issue 2 (July 2014) - <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/for.2014.12.issue-2/for-2014-5006/for-2014-5006.xml>

FEBRUARY 6

Survey Research Fundamentals Part 1

- 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/samprob.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

FEBRUARY 13

Survey Research Fundamentals Part 2

- <http://www.politico.com/blogs/burns-haberman/2012/11/romney-pollsters-firm-explains-149372.html>
- <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2340/likely-voters-registered-poll-samples>
- https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/31/upshot/a-2016-review-why-key-state-polls-were-wrong-about-trump.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fupshot&action=click&contentCollection=upshot®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=5&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0

FEBRUARY 20

MID-TERM EXAM

FEBRUARY 27

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

MARCH 6

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>
- <http://www.npr.org/2012/05/14/152683320/the-job-dig-up-dirt-on-politicians?ps=cprs>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brett-c-di-resta/opposition-research_b_1395448.html

MARCH 13

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.
- Rutenber, 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>
- <http://adage.com/article/campaign-trail/hot-medium-election-cycle-local-cable/237482/>

MARCH 20

Media Strategy and Buying - Digital

- Readings TBA

MARCH 27

SPRING BREAK

APRIL 3

Video Production Workshop

- Readings TBA

APRIL 10

Campaign Finance and Political Law

- Michael M. Franz. 2013. "[Interest Groups in Electoral Politics: 2012 in Context](#)" The Forum. Volume 10, Issue 4, Pages 62–79, February.
- La Raja, Raymond J. 2013. [Why Super PACs: How the American Party System Outgrew the Campaign Finance System](#), *The Forum*.
- Farrar-Myers, Victoria A. & Skinner, Richard. 2013. [Super PACs and the 2012 Elections](#), The Forum. Volume 10, Issue 4, Pages 105–118, February..

APRIL 17

Final Presentations