**POLITICAL SCIENCE 422**

**Political Campaigns and Elections**

**Fall 2016**

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Shafer

Class Meets: Does not meet

Room: Online Only

Office Hours: contact me via email

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**Course Description from Undergraduate Catalog**:

Nature of campaigns and elections in the American political process.

**Nature of the Course:**

In a democracy, elections serve as the vital link between the people and those who govern them.

During a campaign, candidates are forced to defend their performance in office and proposals for the future. Voters also pass judgment on the performance of office-holders—and on how much they like their ideas for the future.

The purpose of this course is to examine the key issues, questions, and controversies that surround the study of campaigns and elections in the United States. Emphasis will be placed on electoral structures and institutions; changes in process and outcomes over time; and the determinants of vote choice.

Even though most scholars consider the 2016 Presidential Election quite different than previous contemporary Presidential Elections, it is still important to spend a good bit of time concentrating on the historical development of American elections, focusing particularly on the latter half of the twentieth century as a time of dramatic change. Students will also have the opportunity to study and assess the 2016 Congressional Elections

**Program-level learning objectives that the course supports:**

*Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate ability to:*

1. Understand the reasons why individuals choose to participate or not to participate in the American political process.
2. Understand the basic set up of the United States electoral system and how it influences outcomes.
3. Understand the interactions among candidates, media, and voters in the context of political campaigns.
4. Become knowledgeable consumers of political information generally and campaign information specifically.

**University/College/Departmental Curricular Requirements Met:** This course satisfies the upper-level requirement for the Political Science Major & Minor.

**Required Text:**

John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, and Keena Lipsitz. 2015. Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice. 2nd Edition. W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0393938524 (***SSGL***)

Candice J. Nelson, James A. Thurber. 2013. Campaigns and Elections American Style. 4th edition. Westview Press. ISBN 978-0-8133-4835-3 (***NT***)

Stephen C. Craig & David B. Hill. 2010. The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice. 2nd edition. CQ Press. ISBN 978-16049266368 (***CH***)

\*Additional Readings will be assigned throughout the semester. The readings will be available on Blackboard under the Course Material tab. These readings will be indicated in your syllabus with **(BB)** listednext to the title.

**Required instructional technology:**

Knowledge of Blackboard Instructional System.

**Student Assessment and Evaluation Methods:** Points Given Per Assignment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Discussion Posts/Videos  | 100 (10 x 10 points each) |
| News Response Papers | 50 (5 x 10 points each) |
| Paper #1  | 50 |
| Paper #2  | 100 |
| Paper #3 | 100 |

**Attendance and Participation: You will not be successful in this class unless you keep up. There are weekly reading assignments in your textbooks and other assigned readings (posted on Blackboard) plus weekly Blog Posts on Blackboard.**

**Discussion Postings/Videos:**

Each week there will be a set of questions for discussion that will be administered through Blackboard. All students will be graded for their contribution to the discussion board. You must answer all the questions assigned as well as addressing at least one part of another student’s post. Hint: A posting of “I agree” won’t provide you any points. Comments are to be civil, although you are welcome to disagree. Our class is intended to be a safe, intellectually stimulating, collaborative space for learning, where we respect each other’s thoughts and process, and everyone’s voice and experiences are important.

You have until Sunday midnight of the assignment week to post your answer. You are not allowed to gain points by going back to earlier weeks. You can earn a maximum of 100 points on these weekly postings. Therefore, you **DO NOT** have to post every week but you must post at least 10 weeks throughout the semester to receive full credit.

**Papers:**

For all papers, you should turn in the **double-spaced** text in **12-point font** along with **1-inch margins** all around. There must be citations given within the paper and references at the end. Any commonly accepted citation style for papers (for example, APA or MLA) may be used.

Response Papers: (5 papers – 1-2 pages each) – See due dates in calendar below

It should come as no surprise in an elections class that you are expected to keep up with political news/events. You are expected to follow the news closely and write 5 response papers on the **Presidential** **Election**. For the first two response papers, you may choose the topic. The next two papers will be in response to the debates. The final response paper will be your Presidential Election prediction. You must write a short 1-2 page (double-spaced) response where you relate the paper to the themes and topics you are learning in this course. You are free to read (in print or online) any paper(s) of your choosing, with one limitation: You need to choose a news source that includes frequent coverage of national politics – site source/copy link at the end of response papers.

Paper #1 – 3-4 pages long – Due Sept. 18th

Visit the website opensecrets.org. Look up the political donors from your hometown’s zip code (or Knoxville, if you prefer) for the 2016 election cycle. Which types of recipients (i.e., candidates, parties, outside groups) and which specific recipients received the most money? Which received the least? Were Democrats or Republicans the primary beneficiaries of money from your hometown? Were any of the recipients from out of state? Why do you think the donor gave to an out-of-state candidate? Did any other donations strike you as unusual? Why? What’s your best explanation for why the persons made the particular donations? Can you draw any conclusions about the political leanings of your hometown on the basis of examining such information?

Paper #2 – 6-8 pages long – Due Oct. 30th

The objective of this assignment is to conduct a pre-election assessment of the factors that are expected to affect the outcome of a particular **Congressional** election. What are the strategies and choices that the campaigns are making during the weeks and months before Election Day?

Paper #3 – 4-6 pages long – Due Dec. 1st

The objective of this assignment is to conduct a post-election assessment of the factors that affected the outcome of the election you wrote about for paper #2. The campaigns planned their strategies and made choices over the course of the election. What were the strategies and choices that explain why the winning candidate won?

\* More Information on research paper will be posted on Blackboard

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A  | 93 – 100%  |
| A -  | 90 – 92%  |
| B +  | 87 – 89%  |
| B  | 83 – 86%  |
| B -  | 80 – 82%  |
| C +  | 77 – 79%  |
| C  | 73 – 76%  |
| C -  | 70 – 72%  |
| D +  | 67 – 69%  |
| D  | 63 – 66%  |
| D -  | 60 – 62%  |
| F  | Less than 60%  |

**COURSE CALENDAR**

*Week of:*

Aug 17 Introduction

* SSGL – Chap. 1
* CH – Chap. 1
* Noel - “Ten Things Political Scientists Know That You Don’t.” **(BB)**
* Take Political Compass Survey - <http://www.politicalcompass.org/>

Aug 22 The American Electoral Process

* SSGL – Chap. 2
* CH – Chap. 2
* Let’s Vote – Chapter 2 **(BB)**

***Response Paper #1 – Due Aug. 28th***

Aug 29 The Transformation of American Campaigns

* SSGL – Chap. 3
* NT – Chap. 1 & Chap. 3
* CH– Chap. 11

Sep 5 Financing Campaigns

* SSGL – Chap. 4
* NT – Chap. 4
* CH – Chap. 5

***Response Paper #2 – Due Sept. 11th***

Sep 12 Modern Campaign Strategies

* SSGL – Chap. 5
* NT –Chap. 8
* CH – Chap. 8

**PAPER #1 DUE – SEPTEMBER 18TH**

Sep 19 Political Parties and Interest Groups

* SSGL – Chap. 6 & Chap.7
* CH – Chap. 10

Sep 26 Media (Part 1)

* SSGL – Chap. 8
* NT – Chap. 6 & Chap. 7

**Presidential Debate #1 (Monday 9/26)**

***Response Paper #3 – Due Oct. 2nd - Debate #1***

Oct 3 Media (Part 2)

* CH – Chap. 6 & Chap. 7

**Vice Presidential Debate (Tuesday 10/4)**

**Presidential Debate #2 (Sunday 10/9)**

Oct 10 Presidential Campaigns

* SSGL – Chap. 9
* NT – Chap. 13
* Sigelman and Wahlbeck - The Veepstakes - Strategic Choice in Presidential Running Mate Selection **(BB)**

***Response Paper #4 – Due Oct 16 – Vice Presidential Debate or Presidential Debate #2***

Oct 17 Congressional Campaigns

* SSGL – Chap. 10
* Change and Continuity – Ch. 11 **(BB)**
* Draper - The US 2014 Midterm Elections and their Aftermath **(BB)**
* CH– Chap. 12

**Presidential Debate #3 (Oct 19th)**

Oct 24 State and Local Campaigns

* SSGL – Chap. 11
* Let’s Vote – Chap. 10 **(BB)**
* CH – Chap. 9

**PAPER #2 DUE – OCTOBER 30TH**

Oct 31 Voter Participation

* SSGL – Chap. 12
* NT – Chap. 9 & Chap. 11
* CH – Chap. 4

***Response Paper #5 Due Nov. 6th – Presidential Pre-Election Prediction***

Nov 7 Voter Choice

* SSGL – Chap. 13
* NT – Chap. 10
* CH – Chap. 3
* How campaigns amass your personal information to deliver tailored ads <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digital-campaign/>

**Election Day - Tue November 8th**

Nov 14 Democracy in Action or a Broken System?

* SSGL – Chap. 14
* NT – Chap. 12 & Chap. 14
* CH – Chap. 13

**PAPER #3 DUE – DECEMBER 1ST**

**Academic Integrity**

All rules concerning academic honesty as set out in the current edition of *Hilltopics* will be enforced. Particular attention should be paid to the section on plagiarism. Students are reminded of their obligation to abide by the UTK Honor Code: “An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.”

**Disabilities that Constrain Learning**

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to document their eligibility for services. ODS will work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**The Student’s Role in Improving Teaching and Learning through Course Assessment**

At UT, it is our collective responsibility to improve the state of teaching and learning. During the semester, you may be requested to assess aspects of this course either during class or at the completion of the class. You are encouraged to respond to these various forms of assessment as a means of continuing to improve the quality of the UT learning experience.

**University Civility Statement**

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

**Communication of Announcements:**

Announcements will be sent via e-mail to students’ official UTK e-mail addresses and/or posted on Blackboard. Reminder: Students are responsible for monitoring their UTK e-mail account and the course Blackboard site.

**Alteration of this Syllabus:**

The instructor reserves the right to revise, alter and/or amend this syllabus, as necessary. Students will be notified by email and/or Blackboard of any such revisions, alterations and/or amendments.