

POS 3444 – 81194
Parties, Campaigns and Elections (Fall 2012)
Tuesday and Thursday 4:30pm – 5:45pm
Building 51, Room 1209

Dr. Michael Binder

Office Hours: 11:00am to 1:30pm Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment

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Objectives:

This course focuses on the key aspect of American democracy: elections, and the campaigns and parties that flow from them. We will focus on the current 2012 presidential election, but will spend time learning about other federal, state and local races as well. At the end of this course you will (hopefully) have a better understanding of the electoral process and its setting within our democracy.

Learning Outcomes:

Communication

- Possess the skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively, make persuasive academic arguments and convey information essential to the discipline in an orderly and understandable manner.

Content

- Understand the various forms of structure in government and relate specific governmental forms to political and policy outcomes.
- Understand the role of public policy, the policy-making process, the political and environmental factors which affect its development and its effects on political events, actors, and institutions.
- Understand the general types of political behaviors and the factors that cause them and relate those behaviors to specific political actions and outcomes.

Critical Thinking

- Be able to effectively apply critical thinking and problem solving skills to political issues.
- Understand and be able to use normative and empirical analysis tools in the study of political science.

Respect Others

- Demonstrate civic knowledge and engagement.

Required Texts:

Medvic, Stephen K. 2011. *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. New York: Routledge. **(Referred to as Directions)**

Traugott, Michael W., and Paul J. Lavrakas. 2012. *The Voter's Guide to Election Polls*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **(Referred to as Guide)**

Wayne, Stephen J. 2012. *The Road to the White House 2012*, 9th Edition. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, (**Referred to as Road**)

Course Resources:

Course resources such as the syllabus, assignments, selected readings, etc. are available on Blackboard. Not all functions of Blackboard will be used for the course, but Blackboard is an essential communication tool that is used extensively in this course.

Attendance:

Attendance is taken regularly and accounts for 15 points of the final course grade.

Exams:

During the semester there will be two exams, each worth 50 points. The second exam is cumulative, though it will focus more on the second half of the semester. Make-up exams will only be given if the student notifies the professor PRIOR to the exam and provides *documented evidence* of a valid University approved excuse, i.e. illness, death in the immediate family, University sponsored event, etc. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor and arrange for a make-up exam.

Campaign Project:

Pick a group and pick a US Senate race from the states listed below, groups and states will be selected in class on September 18th. You (as a group) will make a brief (approximately 5 minute) presentation and short written paper (5-10 pages) on October 25th updating the class on your race: who are the candidates, what are the key issues, how are their respective campaigns doing at enacting their strategy, what do the polls look like, and what is your prediction. Not all group members have to speak; how you divide the workload is up to you.

For your final project (presentation due November 27th or 29th, final paper due December 6th) you (as a group) will write a detailed summary (no longer than 20 pages) of the race. You should include a summary of the states' recent political history, political histories of the candidates, politics of the Senate primaries, description of the key issues, timeline of any important events during the campaign, details about the candidate's strategies for shaping their message, getting their message out and mobilizing their supporters. For the concluding section of the paper/presentation, rewrite history. Tell us what the losing candidate could have/should have done to reverse their fortunes and send themselves to DC in January. Spend several pages (at least) on this point and be specific with your recommendations. This is the most important piece of this project. It shows your ability to think creatively and apply the lessons learned from this course.

States to choose from:

Nevada, Montana, New Mexico, Missouri, Wisconsin, Virginia, Massachusetts, Florida, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio

Places to start your research:

http://www.rollcall.com/politics/2012_race_rating_map.html

<http://cookpolitical.com/races/senate/ratings.php>
Candidate websites
State newspaper websites
UNF Library – Political Science section of website
That thing called the ‘internet’

Calling Center:

You are required to do one evening of telephone surveys for the Public Opinion Research Laboratory. Public opinion plays a vital role in the democratic process, and experiencing firsthand how public opinion gets measured provides an understanding of the process that goes beyond the classroom. Attending the training session and completing one evening (4:30pm – 9:00pm) of calling successfully (between October 1st and 6th) will earn you 15 points.

Exit Poll:

We will be conducting an exit poll on Election Day. Having you, the student, engaged in the design, administration, and postelection analysis of an exit poll can be an excellent experiential learning activity. Exit polls are a “perfect teaching tool” because they provide you with a cooperative (rather than competitive) learning experience; help you better connect theory, methodology, and course substance; and allow you to move outside of the classroom by branching out into the community. In order to earn the full 15 points you must submit one question for the exit poll by August 30th, attend the training workshop (in class November 1st) and successfully complete one 3 ½ hour session of polling on Election Day at the polling station you are assigned. The timeslots are as follows: 6:45am – 10:15am, 9:45am – 1:15pm, 12:45pm – 4:15pm, 3:45pm – 7:00pm and the polling stations will be determined at a later date. Attending the training session and completing your assigned session successfully will earn you 15 points.

Exit Poll Questions:

You are required to submit a survey question by August 30th for the exit poll that will be conducted on Election Day, that will be worth up to 5 points.

Late Assignments

Assignments completed outside of class (i.e. Survey Question and Campaign Paper) must be handed in at the beginning of class. Assignments turned in after class has begun or later in the day will be considered late. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS**. You will earn a grade of zero for all late assignments. If you suspect you may have difficulty getting an assignment in on a certain date, please feel free to turn it in early.

Plagiarism/Cheating/Academic Integrity:

During exams, all phones must be turned off and put away. If I see a cell phone, I have to assume that you are using it to cheat. As such, you will ***fail the course*** and be subject to all appropriate disciplinary action as laid out in the university’s misconduct policies.

Blackboard includes a tool called “Safe Assign.” This is a plagiarism checking device you may use for this course. If you submit a draft to Safe Assign and find that you have plagiarized, please come see me for assistance. You will not be penalized for plagiarism in a draft. You **will** be penalized for plagiarism in a final assignment. Please note that Safe Assign is a limited tool; it does not find all forms of plagiarism. You remain responsible for any form of plagiarism found in your final assignment, even if you have used Safe Assign.

Because students have the opportunity to learn about, check for, and avoid plagiarism prior to turning in the final paper, I have to assume any plagiarism I find in final papers is intentional. ***There are no “second chances.” The same is true for other violations of academic integrity.*** That you “didn’t mean to” or “didn’t know” are not excuses for plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity. I am available to assist you; please see me if you have any questions about avoiding plagiarism *before* turning in your final papers!

In addition, all sources of reference from which students take quotations, major theories or concepts must be properly cited. Submitting plagiarized work or any other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and such actions will result in ***failure of the course*** and potentially expulsion from the University. The University’s policy on plagiarism can be found at http://www.unf.edu/registrar/forms/misconduct_policy.pdf.

	Course Grade	Due Date
Attendance	15	Everyday
Exit Poll Question	5	August 30 th
Calling Center	15	October 1 st – 6 th
Exit Poll	15	Election Day November 6 th
Exam I	50	September 20 th
Exam II	50	October 30 th
Campaign Project	<u>50</u>	December 6 th 3:00pm
Total Points	200	

Grade Scale:

185 – 200 = A	165 – 172 = B	139 – 152 = C
179 – 184 = A-	159 – 164 = B-	119 – 138 = D
173 – 178 = B+	153 – 158 = C+	118 or less = F

Tentative Course Outline: (Subject to Change at Instructor’s Discretion)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u> <u>Due by date shown below</u>
8/21	Introduction & Overviews	
8/23	Polls and Surveys	Guide 1 & 2 Hillygus (2011) on BB
8/28	Writing Questions	Guide 6 Asking Questions Chapters 4 & 12 on BB

8/30	Use and Reporting of Poll Data Sampling <i>Questions Due</i>	Guide 3, 4 & 5
9/4	Local Elections w Kara Tucker Neptune Beach Councilwoman	Donovan, Mooney and Smith Chapter 3 on BB
9/6	NO CLASS Evaluation of Polls	Guide 8, 9 & 10
9/11	Karen Morian (Grn) FL HD 12 Methods of Contact	Guide 7, Directions 3 Hersh & Schaffner (2012) on BB
9/13	Rick Hartley (R) Committeeman Senate Elections	Burden and Wichowsky on BB Fridkin and Kenney (2011) on BB
9/18	<i>Group and State Selection Review</i>	
9/20	Exam I	
9/25	History of the Presidential Election	Road 1 Directions 1
9/27	Call Center Training	Intro to Survey Research Chapter 7 on BB
10/2	Calling Center	
10/4	Calling Center	
10/9	Campaign Finance “super PACS”	Road 2 Directions 2
10/11	Political Environment	Road 3 Directions 6
10/16	The Nominations	Road 4, 5 & 6
10/18	The Campaign	Road 7 Directions 4 & 12
10/23	Media Claire Simms First Coast News	Road 8 Directions 5 & 9
10/25	<i>Senate Updates & Predictions</i>	

Review

10/30

Exam II

11/1

Exit Poll Training

TBD on Blackboard

(11/2 Deadline for Complete Withdrawal)

11/6

**Election Day
Exit Polling**

11/8

Data, Data, Data

11/13

The Race is Over

Road 9
Directions 11

11/15

Changes

Road 10
Directions 14

11/20

NO CLASS
Meet with your Group

11/22

THANKSGIVING

11/27

Campaigns Revisited Presentations
Groups 1-4

11/29

Campaigns Revisited Presentations
Groups 5-8

12/6

Final Exam Date
Papers Due by 3:00pm Building 51/Room 2108