PLSC 2415: Campaigns and Elections
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Lyons
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Office: Sturm Hall, Room 473
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-12:00, and by appointment
Time: 12:00-1:50 PM
Location: Sturm Hall, Room 281

In a democratic political system, the transition of power between leaders is done through elections. As such, understanding elections, and the campaigns that come with them is a necessary component for understanding our political system. In this class we will focus on campaigns and election in the United States.

The focus of this class will be to consider the role that elections play in U.S. politics, how the actions of political actors influence outcomes, and how citizens interact with and influence the campaign and election. Campaigns and elections are often the focal point of politics as the citizen sees them, but as we will come to discuss, there is often a disconnect between the campaign and election that we see on TV and that which we have come to understand through empirical research. We will explore these disconnects, looking at the political campaign and election that social science research shows us, and discuss the implications for our democracy.

Books:

Grading:
Your grade for this class is comprised of the following components:

Attendance/Participation (15%)- Being present in class and participating regularly is essential for success in this class. It is important that you share your ideas and ask any questions that you may have. Doing so will result in better understanding of the course material and subsequently, higher grades.

Discussion Leadership (5%)- You will be required for leading discussion for a small portion of one day with several of your classmates. You will be assigned a day of the term where you and 2-3 classmates will be responsible for leading discussion on the days materials. You will need to write 5 well thought out discussion questions about the readings for the day. I need to have these emailed to me by 5 PM the night before the class you have signed up for, and have a hard copy turned in at the beginning of class. You will be graded on the quality of discussion that is generated and the preparation that was done.

Midterm Exam (20%)- Exam will be on October 7th.

Final Exam (20%)- Exam will be on November 18th.
Final Paper (35%)- You will be writing a final paper for this class. The paper will be from 10-12 pages long, double spaced. The details will be distributed to the class shortly. The paper will be due on November 6th.

Paper Presentation (5%)- An important part of the learning endeavor is sharing your ideas and what you have learned. As such, you will be making a presentation to the class of the paper that you wrote. Presentation should be roughly 5 minutes in length and will be assessed on the both the content and delivery. Visual aids of some kind are suggested though not required. **If you miss your allotted time to present for any reason, you will have a one letter grade deduction and will be required to give your presentation to me during the final exam time for this class.**

Final Grades will be based on the following distribution, though please note that I reserve the right to curve point totals should I decide that is necessary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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</tbody>
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A: Designates student performance of an extraordinarily high level, indicates a comprehensive understanding of course material, and reflects original insight and thought.

B: Designates student performance of a high level, indicates a thorough understanding of course material, and reflects solid insight and well-considered thought.

C: Designates student performance that completely fulfills the basic requirements of the course, indicates a basic understanding of course material, and reflects basic insights and a surface-level understanding of concepts.

D: Designates student performance that mostly fulfills the basic requirements of the course, indicates a basic or weak understanding of course material, and reflects poor, basic, or weak insights and a poor understanding of concepts.

F: Designates student performance that fails to fulfill the basic requirements of the course, indicates a weak or inaccurate understanding of course material, and reflects poor or misinformed insights and a lack of understanding of concepts.

Administrative Policies
Late Work: Late assignments will not be accepted.

E-Mail and Web Communication: An email list has been setup to contact you with class updates, additional readings, and questions you might consider while reading. It is critical that you regularly check your DU email account and Canvass for updates. Students will be held accountable for assignments and syllabus changes communicated via email. I will always give you reasonable notice for any changes or additions to the syllabus.

The Classroom Environment: Tardiness, early departures, ringing phones, etc. detract from the learning environment. Therefore, I ask that students arrive on time and remain in class for the duration of the period. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices when you enter the classroom. While the use of a computer for note-taking is certainly encouraged, web surfing, text-messaging, emailing, etc. not only reduces your engagement and comprehension of the material during class, but is highly distracting for the students around you. Please do not participate in these activities during class.

Academic Integrity: I take issues of academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work is expected to be original, and not previously or simultaneously turned in for credit in another course. All forms of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course.

Disability Services: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please contact me about this during the first week of the class so that I can prepare to make accommodations ahead of time.

Religious Accommodations: University policy grants students excused absences from class or other organized activities or observance of religious holy days, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. Faculty are asked to be responsive to requests when students contact them in advance to request such an excused absence. Students are responsible for completing assignments given during their absence, but should be given an opportunity to make up work missed because of religious observance. Once a student has registered for a class, the student is expected to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts with holy days and to notify the instructor by the end of the first week of classes of any conflicts that may require an absence (including any required additional preparation/travel time). The student is also expected to remind the faculty member in advance of the missed class, and to make arrangements in advance (with the faculty member) to make up any missed work or in-class material within a reasonable amount of time.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.
Schedule

Week 1: Introduction, Miscellaneous, Electoral Rules


Readings: None.

9/11: Electoral Rules and Outcomes – Median voter, redistricting, electoral college, etc.

Readings: Sides et al. Chapter 2

Week 2: Candidates and Voters


9/18: Voters – How do voters decide?


Week 3: Voters continued, Parties, and Interest Groups

9/23: Voters continued.

Readings: Sides et al. Chapter 12

9/25: Parties and Interest Groups – The role of outside pressures in the electoral process.


Week 4: The Media and Campaign Advertising

9/30: The Media – How the media transfers messages and alters voters.


10/2: Campaign Advertising – Ads and their effects on voters and election outcomes.


Week 5: Midterm and the Economy

10/7: Midterm Exam

10/9: The Economy and Other National Factors


Week 6: Financing Campaigns and Mobilization Effects

10/14: Campaign Finance/Effects of Money


Sides et al. Chapter 4

10/16: Campaign Effects – Turnout and Mobilization


Sides et al. Chapter 11

**Week 7: Persuasion Effects, Exploring Strategy**

10/21: Campaign Effects - Persuasion


10/23: Campaign Strategy


**Week 8: Campaigns Differences Across Federal Levels**

10/28: Presidential Campaigns, Congressional Campaigns

Readings: Sides et al. Chapters 8 and 9

10/30: State and Local Campaigns

Readings: Sides et al. 280

**Week 9: Civil Rights – Discrimination**


11/6:  Election Recap, Democratic Implications, Exam Review


**Research Papers Due (in class)!**

**Week 10: Paper Presentations**

11/11: Paper Presentations
11/13: Paper Presentations

Final Exam: 11/18, 12:00-1:50 PM in Sturm Hall, Room 281