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**POLI 328: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL 2016**

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PROFESSOR: Dr. Gibbs Knotts, 114 Wentworth (Room 203), 843-953-6792 (office), 828-399-0101 (cell), [knottshg@cofc.edu](mailto:knottshg@cofc.edu)

LOCATION AND MEETING TIME: Maybank 316, Tuesday and Thursday 9:25 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., and by appointment

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Campaigns and elections are important. Voting is the most common and visible way Americans participate in politics, and campaign rhetoric often affects what politicians do once they are in office. In this class, we will take a closer look at American campaigns and elections through the lens of political science. We will also focus on specific elections from the 2016 campaign season, and students will be asked to apply theoretical knowledge to the real world of politics in class discussions, assignments, examinations, and an election analysis research paper.

### **COURSE SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course will give students a better understanding of campaigns and elections. By the end of this course, students will:

- Identify and explain how electoral rules and procedures in the U.S. affect election outcomes
- Evaluate and critically analyze the U.S. electoral system with respect to theories related to political representation
- Compare and contrast theories of voting behavior
- Relate historical developments to contemporary political issues, debates and outcomes related to campaigns and elections in the U.S.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and writing skills related to campaigns and elections in the U.S.

### **DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course is also designed to help students meet the political science department's three learning outcomes:

- Knowledge: Students are able to identify and explain theories, institutions and

processes related to power, place and politics

- Skills: Students are able to critically analyze texts, communicate effectively, critically assess the views of others, defend their own views and apply appropriate methodological and theoretical approaches
- Engagement: Students demonstrate a habit of engagement with the world and an understanding of the value of civic participation, locally, nationally and globally

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

There are two required books for this course. The books are available at the university bookstore.

- John Sides and Lynn Vavreck, *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election*, (Princeton University Press, 2013)
- John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*, Second Edition (W.W. Norton, 2015)

In addition, there will be a number of required readings that will be available on OAKS.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### *Students with Special Needs or Circumstances*

1. Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged.
2. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.
3. This College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or me so that such accommodation may be arranged.

### *Academic Honesty*

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honorsystem/studenthandbook/index.php>

### *Late Work*

Late assignments will be penalized 5 points per day. In addition, students must contact me within 24 hours of a missed exam and present a legitimate reason for missing the exam. If a student does not contact me or if the reason is not legitimate, the student will automatically fail the exam and will not have an opportunity for a make-up test.

### *Center for Student Learning*

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at

<http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843)953-5635.

### *Writing Lab*

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

### *Course Evaluations*

All students should complete the online course evaluations for this course. We will allocate time in the computer lab on November 29 for students to complete the evaluations.

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

### *Grading Scale*

1. Midterm Examination 20%
2. Final Examination 25%
3. Research Paper Draft 5%
4. Research Paper 25%
5. Campaign Advertisement Video 10%
6. Attendance and Participation 10%
7. Lecture/Event Response 5%

Grades will be assigned based on the following.

A: 93-100, A-: 90-92, B+: 88-89, B: 83-87, B-: 80-82, C+: 78-79, C: 73-77, C-: 70-72, D+: 68-69, D: 63-67, D-: 60-62, F: 59 or below

### *Midterm Examination*

An in-class midterm examination will take place on October 11. The examination will include multiple choice questions, identification of key concepts, and essay questions.

### *Final Examination*

An in-class final examination will take place during the scheduled exam period, December 8, from 8:00-11:00 a.m. The final examination will be cumulative but will focus predominantly on material covered after the midterm examination. Like the midterm, the final examination will include multiple choice questions, identification of key concepts, and essay questions.

### *Research Paper*

Students will write a 10-12 page research paper analyzing a 2016 election results. You will have two options: analysis of a state-wide race in South Carolina (president or U.S. Senate contest) using county-level data or analysis of the presidential contest using

state-level data. The paper should have the following sections: Introduction, Candidate Profiles, Analysis of Campaign Strategy, Analysis of Election Results, and Conclusion. The research paper must include original analysis of county/state vote percentages using SPSS. We will spend three class periods (October 13, November 15, and November 29) in the computer lab (Addlestone Library 122) working with the SPSS. A draft of the paper is due November 15 and will constitute 5% of your final grade. I will provide feedback to you ASAP, and the final version of the paper should be uploaded in the OAKS Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on December 1. The final version will count 25% of your overall course grade. More details about the paper will be provided throughout the semester.

### *Campaign Advertisement Video*

You will be required to create a 30 second campaign advertisement video for a candidate who is running in 2016. The ad can be positive, making the case for your candidate, or negative, attacking your candidate's opponent. To make the video you should use video editing software, such as Splice, Windows Movie Maker, or iMovie. The videos will be shared in class on September 27 and count 10% of your final course grade.

### *Attendance and Participation*

Class attendance and participation represent 10% of your grade in this course. The easiest way to participate is to attend class. Therefore, roll will be taken in each class. Beyond attendance, students will be expected to have read the assigned readings prior to each class session and to come to class prepared to critically discuss the scheduled topics. In addition to the assigned readings, students are expected to stay informed about current political issues. Questions about political issues will be included on exams and informed students will be rewarded with higher participation grades.

### *Lecture/Event Responses*

Students are required to attend three lectures/events outside of class and to submit a half-page response to EACH event/lecture linking the topic to a class topic. The lectures/events (subject to instructor approval) will be announced in class. Response papers should be uploaded in OAKS and will count 5% of your grade.

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Reading assignments must be completed prior to class. Be sure to consider the key questions before class meetings. These are not the only questions to consider but are included to jump start your thinking on the topic. Reading assignments and topics may be changed and reorganized.

DATE	TOPIC, READINGS, AND KEY QUESTIONS
8/23	<p>Topic: Course Introduction</p> <p>Readings: None</p> <p>Key Questions: What are the expectations for this course? What books will be used? Where are the supplemental readings?</p>
8/25	<p>Topic: Explaining the 2012 Presidential Election</p> <p>Readings: The Gamble, Chapters 1-2</p> <p>Key Questions: Why did Sides and Vavreck select "The Gamble" as the book title? What is the "Moneyball" approach to understanding political campaigns? What role did partisan polarization play in the 2012 contest? What is a presidential forecasting model?</p>
8/30	<p>Topic: Explaining the 2012 Presidential Election Continued</p> <p>Readings: The Gamble, Chapters 3-4</p> <p>Key Questions: What is the dynamic process of discovery, scrutiny, and decline in primary politics? Why did Romney win the 2012 Republican nomination?</p>
9/1	<p>Topic: Explaining the 2012 Presidential Election Continued</p> <p>Readings: The Gamble, Chapters 5-6</p> <p>Key Questions: What is a gaffe and how did they affect the 2012 contest? What role did the "47 % video" have on the election? What do the authors mean when they talk about the campaign's dynamic equilibrium? Was Hurricane Sandy an important factor in the 2012 contest?</p>
9/6	<p>Topic: Explaining the 2012 Presidential Election Continued</p> <p>Readings: The Gamble, Chapters 7-8</p>

	<p>Key Questions: Why did Barack Obama win the 2012 election? What were some of the big picture implications of the 2012 election results?</p>
9/8	<p>Topic: Election Basics and the Value of Political Science</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapters 1-2; “Ten Thing Political Scientists Know that You Don’t”</p> <p>Key Questions: What is an election? Why are they important? How do they work? How can political science help people better understand elections?</p>
9/13	<p>Topic: Campaigns Over Time</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 3</p> <p>Key Questions: How have campaigns and elections evolved over the course of American history?</p>
9/15	<p>Topic: Fundraising and Campaign Finance</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 4</p> <p>Key Questions: What are the major Supreme Court decisions on campaign finance and how have they affected the political system? What role do independent groups play in influencing modern campaigns and elections?</p>
9/20	<p>Topic: Campaign Strategy</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 5</p> <p>Key Questions: What is the median voter theorem and why is it important? Do negative campaigns work?</p>
9/22	<p>Topic: Campaign Strategy Continued</p> <p>Readings: “Anatomy of a Narrow Victory;” “Nudge the Vote”</p> <p>Key Questions: What innovative strategies did the Romney campaign use to win the Iowa Caucus in 2012? What is experimental research and how has it been used by the Obama campaign?</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Tyler Jones, President and CEO at SPEAK Strategic</p>
9/27	<p>Topic: Presentation of Campaign Videos</p> <p>Readings: None</p>

	Note: Please be prepared to share and discuss your 30 second campaign videos with the class.
9/29	Topic: Political Parties and Interest Groups  Readings: Campaigns & Elections, Chapter 6-7  Key Questions: What role do political parties play in modern campaigns? How do interest groups influence campaigns and elections?
10/4	Topic: The Media  Readings: Campaigns & Elections, Chapter 8  Key Questions: How does the profit motive affect what gets covered by the media? How has “new media” changed modern campaigns and elections?  Guest Speaker: Robert Behre, Political Reporter for the <i>Post and Courier</i>
10/6	Topic: Midterm Exam Review  Readings: None
10/11	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
10/13	Computer Lab Session I: SPSS basics (Addlestone Library 122)  Readings: None
10/18	Topic: Presidential Campaigns  Readings: Campaigns & Elections, Chapter 9  Key Questions: Do you have any ideas for reforming the presidential nomination process in the United States? How does the Electoral College shape presidential campaign strategy?
10/20	Topic: Presidential Campaigns Continued  Readings: “Forecasting in a Polarized Era: The Time for Change Model and the 2012 Presidential Election,” “Toward Two-Party Competition in the South”  Key Questions: What factors are commonly used in forecasting models? Which southern states have the best prospects for genuine two-party competition?
10/25	Topic: Congressional Campaigns

	<p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections Chapter 10</p> <p>Key Questions: What does it take to run for Congress? What is the incumbency advantage and why does it play such an important role in congressional campaigns?</p>
10/27	<p>Topic: Congressional Campaigns Continued</p> <p>Readings: “The Year of the Outsider: Political Amateurs in the U.S. Congress,” “The Nationalization of Special Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives”</p> <p>Key Questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of political amateurs as congressional candidates? What is a special election, how often do they occur, and what factors explain special election outcomes?</p>
11/1	<p>Topic: State and Local Campaigns</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 11</p> <p>Key Questions: How do state and local campaigns differ from federal campaigns? What role do activists play in state and local campaigns?</p>
11/3	<p>Topic: State and Local Campaigns Continued and Election Preview</p> <p>Readings: “Why People Decide to Participate in State Politics”</p> <p>Key Questions: What are some of the explanations provided for participation at various levels of the U.S. political system?</p> <p>Guest Speaker: College of Charleston President Glenn McConnell</p>
<b>11/8</b>	<b>Election Day: No Class</b>
11/10	<p>Topic: Election Aftermath – What Happened?</p> <p>Readings: TBA</p> <p>Key Questions: What happened on Tuesday? Why did it happen? How will the results shape future political events?</p>
11/15	<p>Computer Lab Session II (Addlestone Library 122)</p> <p>Readings: None</p> <p><b>Draft of Research Paper Due in OAKS Dropbox, 11:59 p.m.</b></p>
11/17	<p>Topic: Voter Participation</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 12; “Location, Location,</p>

	<p>Location: Precinct Placement and the Costs of Voting”</p> <p>Key Questions: Why do people vote? What role do administrative decisions play on the decision whether or not to vote?</p>
11/22	<p>Topic: Voter Choice</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 13</p> <p>Key Questions: What role does partisan identification play in vote choice? Do campaigns really matter?</p>
<b>11/24</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break: No Class</b>
11/29	<p>Computer Lab Session III (Addlestone Library 122)</p> <p>Readings: None</p> <p>Note: A portion of class will be devoted to completing course evaluations.</p>
12/1	<p>Topic: Conclusions and Final Exam Review</p> <p>Readings: Campaigns &amp; Elections, Chapter 14</p> <p>Key Questions: How do political campaigns reflect U.S. democratic values? Do you have suggestions for reforming the current campaign and election system?</p> <p><b>Research Paper Due in OAKS Dropbox, 11:59 p.m.</b></p>
12/8	<b>Final Exam (8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)</b>