

GOVT 317: Campaigns and Elections

Fall Semester 2008
Tuesday and Thursday 8:40 - 9:55am
McGraw 165

Instructor

Peter Enns
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Office Hours: Tues. 10:00am–12:00pm; and by appointment

Teaching Assistant

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Overview

This course focuses on campaigns and elections in the United States. We will devote most of our attention to national elections, with particular attention to presidential elections. You will also learn about local elections, however, through a case study of a local election taking place near your home town. Throughout the semester, we will emphasize three aspects of elections: the voters, the campaign, and the rules of elections.

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain why voters (and non-voters) tend to make the political decisions they do.
- Compare and contrast competing theories on the influence of interest groups and advertising in campaigns.
- Describe the effects of election rules on citizens and politicians' behavior.
- Analyze a local election using the concepts learned in the class.

Texts

- *Controversies in Voting Behavior* (4th Edition). 2001. eds. Richard G. Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg
- *Interest Groups in American Campaigns* (2nd Edition). 2006. by Mark J. Rozell, Clyde Wilcox, and David Madland
- *The Write Stuff: Writing as a Performing and Political Art* by Thomas E. Cronin.
 - This short essay on writing, which can be accessed electronically by clicking on the link above or purchased for about \$3.00 on the web, provides an excellent and accessible set of writing recommendations.

The i-clicker

You are expected to purchase an i-clicker and bring it to class each day.

Office Hours

- Tues. 10:00am–12:00pm and by appointment
- You may sign up for office hours on the course [Google calendar](#).
- You may attend office hours *without* signing up ahead of time, but those dropping in will have to wait for anyone who has scheduled a time slot.
- Also note, the on-line office hours calendar ranges from 10:00am to 1:00pm, adding an extra hour.

Evaluation

Your performance in this class will be assessed by your class and section participation, two midterms and a final exam, and two papers. Class participation includes being on time and attending all classes and sections. Each component of your grade will be weighted as follows:

Participation	5%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	30%
Midterms	30%
Final Exam	20%

TA Sections

The course requirements include registering for and attending a TA discussion section each week. These sections provide an opportunity to discuss, clarify, and debate the week's material. Paper assignment requirements will also be discussed in section.

- **Section 1:** Fridays, 1:25-2:15pm in McGraw 125
- **Section 2:** Fridays, 2:30-3:20pm in McGraw 145

Attendance

I expect all students to be on time and to attend every class and every section. If you reach 3 unexcused class absences you must meet with me. Similarly, if you miss section 3 times without an academic excuse, you must meet with Liz. Three unexcused absences—from class or section—without a meeting will result in a participation grade of an F.

Papers

You will write two papers during the semester.

Paper 1, due on Tuesday, October 7, will be a prediction of who will win the presidential election and by how much.

Paper 2 will be based on a local election from your **home** voting district. For this paper, you need to select an election and begin collecting relevant articles, from a **local newspaper** as soon as possible. You will become an expert on this particular election and then write a paper, relating a major theme from the class to this local election. Although Paper 2 will be due the last day of class, you must begin following the election immediately.

Readings and Course Schedule

I have listed the assigned readings below. You can link to all readings in [blue](#). Readings followed by ^{BB} are available on blackboard and readings followed by ^{Handout} will be distributed in class prior to the due date. Complete the day's reading before coming to class. Also note, I may assign additional readings throughout the course.

1 Voters (and Non-Voters)

- Week 1
 - Th. 8/28: NO CLASS: American Political Science Association Conference in Boston

- Week 2
 - Tues. 9/2: Course Overview
 - Th. 9/4: The Right to Vote
 - * [Manza, Jeff and Christopher Uggen. 2004. “Punishment and Democracy: Disenfranchisement of Nonincarcerated Felons in the United States.”](#)
 - * [Gaziano, Todd F. 2001. “Election Reform.”](#) *Note: Especially read beginning at “State Efforts to Ensure That Only Eligible Voters Vote in Federal Elections.”*

- Week 3
 - Tues. 9/9: Turnout
 - * N & W Ch.2: “Why is Voter Turnout Low (And Why is it Declining)?”
 - * [McDonald, Michael P. 2004. “Every Eligible Voter Counts: Correctly Measuring American Turnout Rates.”](#)
 - Th. 9/11: Registration and Other Differences Across States
 - * N & W Ch.5: “Electoral Participation”
 - * [Voting: In Your Genes?](#)
 - * [Genetic Link Suggested in Voting Behavior](#)
 - * McGuire, William J. 1968. “The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change.” (p.161-163)^{Handout}

- Week 4
 - Tues. 9/16: Models of Vote Choice
 - * N & W Ch.10: “What Determines the Vote?”
 - * N & W Ch.12: “Multiple-Stage Explanation of Political Preferences”
 - Th. 9/18: Information Short Cuts
 - * N & W Ch.11: “National Economic Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections”
 - * N & W Ch.13: “The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation”

- Week 5

- Tues. 9/23: Issues and Voting

- * Bartels, Larry. 2006. “What’s the Matter with *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*”

- * Berger, Meredith, and Wheeler. 2008. “Contextual Priming: Where people vote affects how they vote.”

- Th. 9/25: Forecasting Presidential Elections

- * N & W Ch.8: “Voting Correctly”

- * Wolfers, Justin. 2007. “Best Bet for Next President: Prediction Markets.”^{BB}

- * Wlezien and Erikson. 2008. “Leading Economic Indicators, the Polls, and the Presidential Vote.”^{BB}

- Week 6

- Tues. 9/30: MIDTERM 1

2 Campaigns

- Th. 10/2: Do Campaigns Matter?

- * Campbell, James E. 2008. Ch.9 “How Campaigns Matter.”^{BB}

- * Gilens, Vavreck, and Cohen. 2007. “The Mass Media and the Public’s Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000.”^{BB}

- * Fowler, James H. 2008. “The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy.”

- Week 7

- Tues. 10/7: Organized Interests and Elections

- * Paper 1 Due

- * R,W,&M Ch.1 “Interest Groups in American Politics”

- * R,W,&M Ch.2 “Interest Groups and Political Parties”

- Th. 10/9: Campaign Finance

- * R,W,&M Ch.3 “Interest Groups and Candidates”

- * R,W,&M Ch.4 “Interest Groups and Voters”

- * R,W,&M Ch.5 “Evaluating the Role of Interest Groups”

- Week 8
 - Tues. 10/14: NO CLASS – Fall Break
 - Thurs. 10/16: Campaign Ads
 - * Geer, John G. 2006. Ch. 7 “Negativity, Democracy, and the Political System.”^{BB}
 - * Ansolabehere and Iyengar. 1995. Ch.5&6 “The Withdrawal of the Voter” and “The Spectacle”^{BB}
 - * Vintello, Paul. Aug.17, 2008. “How to Erase That Smea.”

- Week 9
 - Tues. 10/21: Emotion and Campaigns
 - * Brader, Ted. 2006. Ch.6&7. “Emotional Appeals in Campaign Ads” and “Hearts and Minds: Rethinking the Role of Emotion in Political Life.”^{BB}
 - Th. 10/23: Race and Elections
 - * Mendelberg, Tali. 2008. “Racial Priming Revived.”^{BB}
 - * Huber and Lapinski. 2008. “Testing the Implicit–Explicit Model of Racialized Political Communication.”
 - * Bai, Matt. Aug. 6, 2008. “Is Obama the End of Black Politics?”

- Week 10
 - Tues. 10/28: Gender and Elections
 - * Duerst-Lahti, Georgia. 2006. Ch.1 “Presidential Elections: Gendered Space and the Case of 2004.”^{BB}
 - * Kaufmann, Karen M. 2006. “The Gender Gap.”^{BB}
 - Th. 10/30: MIDTERM 2

3 The Rules of the Game

- Week 11
 - Tues. 10/4: The Electoral College
 - * Hoffman, Matthew M. 1996. [The Illegitimate President: Minority Vote Dilution and the Electoral College](#)
 - Th. 11/6: Mandates
 - * Grossback, Peterson, and Stimson. 2007. Ch.7. “Conclusion: A Mandate View of Normal American Politics.”^{BB}

- Week 12
 - Tues. 11/11: The 2000 Election
 - * Mebane, Walter R. 2004. “The Wrong Man in President! Overvotes in the 2000 Presidential Election in Florida.”^{BB}
 - * Imai, Kosuke and Gary King. 2004. “Did Illegal Overseas Absentee Ballots Decide the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election?”^{BB}
 - Th. 11/13: NO CLASS

- Week 13
 - Tues. 11/18: Redistricting
 - * [Levitt, Justin \(Brennan Center for Justice\)](#). “A Citizen’s Guide to Redistricting” (p.2-79)
 - Th. 11/20: Two Party System
 - * N&W. Ch.21,22,&23. “Party System Change.”

- Week 14
 - Tues. 11/25: What about Third Parties?
 - * Rapoport and Stone. 2005. Ch.7. “The Major-Party Bid for the Perot Constituency.”^{BB}
 - Th. 11/27: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving

- Week 15
 - Tues. 12/2: Proportional Representation in the United States
 - * Douglas, Amy J. 2002. Ch.5&6 “Electing More Women” and “Fair Representation for Racial and Ethnic Minorities.”^{BB}
 - Th. 12/4: Last Class
 - * Paper 2 Due
 - * Reading TBD

- FINAL EXAM: Thu, Dec. 11 — 9:00 - 11:30am

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity (<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work.

References

- Niemi, Richard G. & Herbert F. Weisberg. 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Rozell, Mark J., Clyde Wilcox & David Madland. 2006. *Interest Groups in American Campaigns*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.