

**PLS 205: Campaigns and Elections**  
**Dr. Lee Johnston**  
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**Fall 2008, Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-4:45pm**  
**Office Hours: 11-12 Tuesdays & Thursdays, Other Times By Appointment**

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to explore the factors that explain citizens' vote choices and the strategies used by candidates and their campaigns to win these votes. Additional consideration will be given to the structural factors influencing elections in the United States. This is an "American Politics" class, and examples and analyses in class discussion will focus predominantly on the electoral system of the United States. However, students are invited to explore foreign electoral systems and politics in this course for purposes of class discussion and research.

**Goals of the Course**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to understand many things about voting, campaigns, and elections in America:

- You will understand why some people choose to vote and others do not.
- You will be able to explain why the United States has a lower voter turnout than other industrial democracies.
- You will be able to compare and contrast different theories developed by political scientists to explain citizens' vote choices.
- You will understand how campaign messages are tailored to different segments of society.
- You will develop the analytic tools to critically assess media messages about candidates and their campaigns.
- You will understand the ways in which you can take a more active part in *doing* electoral politics, instead of just being a spectator or an isolated analyst.
- You will understand the influence that public opinion polling has on electoral politics.
- You will understand changes and trends in American elections.
- You will understand how campaigns and elections affect public policy and governance.
- You will be able to debate the major contemporary issues facing campaign and election reform.
- You will be able to discuss the merits and drawbacks of different proposed campaign reforms.

**Required Texts**

Maisel, L. Sandy. 2002. *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Post-Election Update). Rowman & Littlefield. Paperback. ISBN: 0-7425-1627-X

Wayne, Stephen J. 2001. *The Road to the White House 2000: The Politics of Presidential Elections*. (Post-Election Edition). Bedford/St. Martin's (Wadsworth). Paperback. ISBN: 0-312-39304-0

You are required to read from the above texts as part of your coursework. Handouts distributed in class will be required reading. Students need to follow current campaigns and elections in a national newspaper such as *The New York Times* or *The Los Angeles Times* (both are available for delivery with a student discount and are also available on-line.)

**Course Requirements**

There are three requirements for the course:

1. **Participation:** includes contributes to classroom discussion as well as attendance (do not be tardy or leave class early). In order to participate well in this class, you must pay close attention to assignments and deadlines (all of which are listed in this syllabus). You must complete all assigned readings prior to

coming to class. Attendance is a very important aspect of this class – you will not receive the full benefit of this course if you are not in class to learn from your peers and to offer your own analyses. Do not expect to get a good participation grade if you do not contribute to class discussion. To get credit for attending class, you must show up within 10 minutes of the start of class. If you are not in class within the first 10 minutes, you will be marked absent for the day. You will also be marked absent if you leave class early. You will be permitted two unexcused absences. An excused absence is an illness that prevents you from attending class, religious holiday or a death in the family. Do not scheduled meetings, banquet, employment, vacations, or work for other classes during our regular class meeting time. If you have any concerns regarding your ability to attend class on a regular basis, please consider dropping the class to make room for someone who can attend on a regular basis. Beyond your first two unexcused absences, your participation grade will be reduced by one third of a letter grade for every time you are marked absent. For example, if you earned a participation grade of a B+ and had four unexcused absences, you will be penalized two-thirds of a letter grade, and your final participation would be a B-. Similarly, if you had seven unexcused absences and you had earned an A- for your participation grade, you would be penalized for five-thirds of a letter grade, meaning that you would end up with a C for your final participation grade.

***Turn off all pagers, phones and other electronic devices prior to entering the classroom. If you have an electronic device that emits noise during class (even an audible “vibration”), you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent for that day – no excuses and no exceptions.***

2. **Examinations:** will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam will not be cumulative. Make-up exams are rarely given and only when a university-authorized excuse is provided. These excuses include illness, religious holiday, or a death in the family only. You will not be excused from an exam simply because you missed the prior class. Similarly, being scheduled to work during class time is not a valid excuse for a make-up exam. Any requests for a makeup exam must be made before the exam is given (call me). You will not be permitted to take a make-up exam if you do not request one before the exam is given. Make-up examinations will not include multiple choice questions. If you wear a hat with a brim on the day of an examination, you will be asked to remove it. If you have a disability that warrants additional consideration for examinations, please inform me so that I can accommodate you.
3. **Participation Project or Research Paper:** You will be required to undertake a Participation Project. You are to volunteer for campaign during the current election cycle. The duration of your participation is to run from September 5<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup> (Election Day), and you should volunteer for approximately four (4) hours per week. You may choose to volunteer for a candidate or for an issue campaign (i.e. a proposition). I will give you paperwork to complete so that I can monitor your progress with your supervisor. You will be required to present what you learned from your project to the class on November 26<sup>th</sup> (25% of Project grade) and to turn in a 2-3 page analysis of what you observed and learned (also due on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 75% of Project grade).

You will also be required to give a brief presentation of your findings to the class on November 26<sup>th</sup> (25% of the Research Paper grade, the paper is 75% of the Research Paper grade). Plagiarism is a *very serious* offense, and you should be familiar with this university’s policy and penalties for plagiarism.

### **Grading**

Participation	25%
Midterm Examination	25%
Participation Project	25%
Final Examination	25%

## Topics & Readings

### 1. Overview

W. Flanigan and N. Zingale, *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, ch. 1

### 2. American Political Parties

L.S. Maisel and MD Brewer, *Parties and Elections in America*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., ch. 1

@N.S. Gilman, "What the Rise of the Republicans as America's First Ideological Party Means for the Democrats," *The Forum*

@G. Pomper, "The Presidential Election of 2004," *The Forum*

### 3. Political Parties in Action

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 2, 9

@W. Mayer, "The Basic Dynamics of the Contemporary Nominating Process"

@CBS News Poll, "Attitudes of Party Convention Delegates"

### 4. Campaigns in America

Maisel and Buckley, chs. 6, 7

L. Bartels and L. Vavreck, *Campaign Reform*, ch. 1

A. Gelman and G. King, "'Party Competition and Media Messages in U.S. Presidential Elections," in S. Maisel, *The Parties Respond*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed. only, pp. 255-95.

@Polling Problems: *Washington Post*, "Don't Ask Me"

@The Ground War: *Time*, "Fighting for Every Last Vote"

\*R. Hart, *Campaign Talk: Why Elections are Good for Us*

\*A. King, *Running Scared: Why America's Politicians Campaign Too Much and Govern Too Little*

### 5. Campaigns: Negative Campaigning

J. Geer, "Assessing Attack Advertising," in Bartels and Vavreck, ch. 2

@S. Maisel, "Candidates: Promises and Persuasion," in C. Nelson et al, *Shades of Grey*, pp. 39-60

@R. Lau and G. Pomper, "Normative Thoughts on Negative Campaigning," in *Negative Campaigning*, ch. 7

\*K. Jamieson *Dirty Politics*

\*S. Ansolabehere and S. Iyengar, *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*.

### 6. The Mass Media

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 10

Flanigan and Zingale, ch. 7

T. Patterson, *The Vanishing Voter*, chs. 4,5

@S. Farnsworth and S. Lichter, *The Nightly News Nightmare*, pp. 151-176

@B. Bimber and R. Davis, *Campaigning Online*, pp. 143-71.

\*K. Jamieson and P. Waldman, *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories That Shape the Political World*.

\*T. Cook, *Governing with the News*

## 7. Research Paper Proposals

C. Prysby and C. Scavo, *Voting Behavior: The 2000 Election*

## 8. Money in Politics

Maisel and Buckley, chs. 4, 5

A. Corrado, "Financing the 2000 Elections," in G. Pomper, *The Election of 2000*, ch. 5

@A. Corrado and T. Mann, "In the Wake of BCRA," *The Forum*

\*R. Goidel, D. Gross and T. Shields, *Money Matters: Consequences of Campaign Finance Reform in U.S. House Elections*

\*M. Malbin, ed. *Life After Reform: When the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act Meets Politics* (Campaign Finance Institute, 2003)

## 9. Turnout and Election Administration

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 3

Flanigan and Zingale, ch. 2

Patterson, chs. 1,2,5

R. Niemi and H. Weisberg, *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, Introduction; Part I

@J. Citrin, et al, "What If Everyone Voted?: Simulating the Impact of Increased Turnout in Senate Elections," *American Journal of Political Science*

\*A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*

\*R. Teixeira, *The Disappearing American Voter*

## 10. Voting: Partisanship

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 3

Flanigan and Zingale, ch. 3

Niemi and Weisberg, Part V

@L. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996," *American Journal of Political Science*

@M. Hetherington, "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization," *American Political Science Review*

@Economic Models: *Washington Post*, "Is It the Economy?"

\*D. Green, B. Palmquist & E. Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*

\*J. Aldrich, *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*, pp. 28-61.

\*M. Wattenberg, *The Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics*

#### 11. Voting: Candidates, Social Characteristics and Ideology

Flanigan and Zingale, chs. 4-6

Niemi and Weisberg, Parts II, III

M. Fiorina, *Culture War?*

@P. Klinkner, "Red and Blue Scare," *The Forum*

@K. Kaufmann and J. Petrocik, "The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap," *American Journal of Political Science*

\*E. Carmines and J. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*

\*S. Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*

#### 12. The Election of 2004: Results and Implications

M. Nelson, ed., *The Elections of 2004*

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 11

G. Pomper, "The Presidential Election," in *The Election of 2000*, ch. 6

@G. Miller and N. Schofield, "Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States," *American Political Science Review*

@Year of Passion: Todd Purdum, *The New York Times*

\*W. Mayer, *The Divided Democrats*

\*J. White, *The Values Divide*

#### 13. Elections: Results and Realignment

Flanigan and Zingale, ch. 8

Niemi and Weisberg, Part VI

D. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments*, especially chs. 1, 2, 4, 7

W.C. McWilliams, "The Meaning of the Election," in G. Pomper, *The Election of 2000*, ch. 8

@M. Fiorina, et al., "The 2000 US Presidential Election: Can Retrospective Voting Be Saved?" *British Journal of Political Science*

\*D. Lawrence, *The Collapse of the Democratic Presidential Majority*

\*J. Judis and R. Teixeira, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*

#### 14. Reform

Maisel and Buckley, ch. 12

Patterson, ch. 6

"Report of the Task Force on Campaign Reform," in Bartels and Vavreck, ch. 8

@A. Hamilton, *The Federalist*, No. 68

@D. Thompson, "Election Times: Normative Implications of the Electoral Process in *the United States*," *American Political Science Review*

@Brooks Jackson, "False Ads: There Oughtta Be A Law! Or -- Maybe Not,"  
[www.factcheck.org/SpecialReports.aspx?DocID=188](http://www.factcheck.org/SpecialReports.aspx?DocID=188)

@ "Texas and the Bronx": J. Tierney, *The New York Times*

\*B. Buchanan, *Renewing Presidential Politics*

\*J. Green and P. Herrnson, ed., *Responsible Partisanship?: The Evolution of American Political Parties Since 1950*

#### **Final Exam:**

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm**