

**POL 398: Campaigns and Elections**  
**University of Mississippi, Spring 2017**

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Email: cdowling@olemiss.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:00am-1:00pm & by appointment  
Office Location: Deupree Hall, Room 235

Class Time: T/Th from 9:30-10:45am  
Class Location: Turner 241  
Course Website: blackboard.olemiss.edu

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**PURPOSE**

Billions of dollars are spent on elections in the United States, but to what effect? Campaigns spend money on voter mobilization efforts, television and other media advertising, and a variety of other methods. This course examines whether and to what extent all this campaign spending (and time and effort) matters—that is, does it have any meaningful impact on the outcome of elections? To do so, we consider both the conventional wisdom of campaigns and what academic scholarship reveals about the effect of campaigns. Thus, the purpose of this course is to examine how political science can inform the real-world campaign environment; upon completing the class, students should be better able to draw linkages between theoretical and empirical political science and its practical applications. Assessment will be based on class attendance and participation, short writing papers, a midterm exam, and a final research project and presentation that will use survey data from the 2016 elections to address a question related to the topic of the course. Given the nature of the research project, it is highly recommended that students have previously taken POL 251.

As is the case in any course, a great deal of topics germane to the course will not be covered. The interested student is encouraged to consult the instructor for additional readings on these subjects.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completing the class, students should:

- Have a deeper knowledge of how to assess the effects of campaigns.
- Have a deeper knowledge of the (theoretical and empirical) reasons why people vote and participate in other political activities.
- Have a deeper knowledge of the (theoretical and empirical) reasons why people vote for the candidates/parties they do.
- Be able to apply the class concepts, readings, discussion, etc. to contemporary political debates.
- Be better equipped to analyze contemporary research in political science and other social sciences, as well as news reports.
- Have completed a final research project and presentation related to the course.

**FORMAT**

This course will largely proceed in a seminar, not lecture, format. One of your main responsibilities in this course is to come prepared to discuss the readings and the topics we are covering. That is, not only must you read, but you must also spend time analyzing and critiquing the readings.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press.

All other required readings will either be available on blackboard (most as .pdf files) or I will provide links to other webpages. In addition, you should be able to find most of them through the Ole Miss Library search engine (<http://www.libraries.olemiss.edu/uml/>). The full reading list can be found on blackboard.

## Recommended text:

Powner, Leanne C. 2014. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. CQ Press.

## FINAL GRADES

Your final grade is based on five primary areas of evaluation, which are detailed below.

- Class Attendance and Participation: 15%
- Reading Quizzes (5 @ 5% each): 25%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Research Paper: 30%
- Presentation: 5%

A:	93-100	C:	71-80
A-:	90-92	D:	61-70
B+:	87-89	F:	Less than 60
B:	83-86		
B-:	80-82		

If you think an error has occurred in the calculation of your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me copies of your work. To that end, it is prudent to save anything returned from me until you receive your final grade report.

**\* Please note: Departmental policy is that no grades below a C can count towards a major in POL. This means a grade of C- does not count toward the POL major.**

### Class Attendance and Participation (15%)

Attendance will be noted at some point during each class session. Two absences are allowed during the semester for any reason and without the necessity of explanation. After that, absences will lower the student's grade. While in class, students will be expected to contribute to discussion. Please note that merely attending class is not sufficient for earning full "attendance and participation" credit. That is, "participation" is not equivalent to "attendance." The former is crucially important in a seminar-style course. You must *participate* in class discussion to do well.

Finally, class discussions are an important ingredient to any political science class from which both students and teachers can learn. I ask that you respect the diverse views of your fellow students and utilize common courtesies during class. While in class, refrain from talking while others are talking, eating, using the phone, etc... I will ask you to leave the class if you engage in behavior disrespectful to your fellow students or me. If you feel the need to engage in these activities (for example, if there is an emergency), please leave class.

\*Note: The University requires me to verify your attendance at least once during the first two weeks of the semester for financial aid and other administrative purposes. Students whose attendance is not verified

after a certain period will automatically be dropped from the class and any financial aid will be adjusted accordingly. Please see <http://olemiss.edu/gotoclass> for more information.

### **Quizzes (5 @ 5% each, or 25% of overall grade)**

To encourage reading the assigned material, we will have in class quizzes from time-to-time. Five quizzes will count toward your final grade. I will drop your lowest quiz grade(s), should we have more than five, so that only five quiz grades count toward your final average. Quiz dates are not predetermined.

### **Midterm Exam (25%)**

The midterm exam will cover material from course readings and discussion. Students cannot keep copies of the exams on exam day. The midterm exam is scheduled for: Thursday, March 9.

#### ***Make-up Work***

If you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must talk with me *in advance of the exam* to receive any consideration for taking the exam with full credit. If you miss an exam and have not cleared it with me beforehand, any late exams will be deducted points. Make-up exams can only happen when you obtain a University approved excuse. In lieu of a University-approved excuse, any student missing an exam will receive a zero on that exam.

### **Research Paper (30%)**

This is a full-scale research project, from problem identification through design, analysis, and conclusion. Two words of advice: (1) ask a question that, while significant, you are capable of answering, and (2) start now to survey as much of the relevant literature as time will permit.

The question asked must take an empirical, cause and effect form. To get an idea of the format, tone, and style of the paper, students will find it helpful to peruse issues of scholarly journals, and pay close attention to the readings assigned for class. I suggest students organize their papers according to the following outline, unless otherwise approved by me:

- I. Introduction – in a page or so, state the research question to be addressed and indicate its significance.
- II. Literature Review –two purposes: (1) place the research question in the context of what is purportedly known and (2) explain why the question demands attention.
- III. Research Design – a detailed discussion of how a valid answer to the question will be provided.
  - a. Definition of all key concepts
  - b. Description of the measurement of the indicators of the key concepts.
  - c. Description of the hypothesis test
    - i. How plausible rival hypotheses are to be ruled out
    - ii. The statistical techniques to be applied
- IV. Findings – a presentation and interpretation of the results
- V. Conclusion – a summary, discussing the significance of the findings within the context of the literature as previously developed.
- VI. Appendix – a list of the data sources (the data set must be submitted electronically along with the paper – the paper will be submitted electronically and as a hard copy).

\*Note 1: The schedule outline on the syllabus indicates when certain parts of the paper are due. We will discuss this process in class. The final paper is due during our final exam time: Thursday, May 11 at 8am.

\*Note 2: Under no circumstances can any part of this paper be used for any other course without my written permission.

\*Note 3: These research papers will most likely be group efforts. We will discuss this after the first week of class, once I know how many students will be enrolled in the class.

\*Note 4: My intention is that these papers will use survey data from the 2016 U.S. elections for their data. We will discuss this, and alternatives, during the first couple weeks of class.

### **Presentation (5%)**

During the last week of classes (Tuesday and Thursday, May 2 and 4), you will present your research paper to the class. I will provide more details on what is expected during these presentations as the date approaches, but basically you should expect to deliver a 5-10 minute presentation to the class.

## **OTHER COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Academic Honesty**

I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarizing in any form. Anyone caught cheating will, at the very least, fail that assignment and possibly the class. You may also face university disciplinary action. Please see the university handbook for more information on what constitutes academic misconduct and the official university procedure for dealing with such misconduct. For more information, please see the university's Student Academic Conduct and Discipline Policy.

### **Reading**

Make sure you have read before class. This is a crucial component to understanding the material in this course. This means you need to read the assigned material for each class meeting *before* that class meeting. The class will be more interesting for all involved and your grades will improve.

### **Communication**

It is the student's responsibility to check his/her University email address, preferably daily, since Blackboard works through University email addresses and this is how I will communicate with you. If you prefer another email address, set up forwarding from your University address.

The best way to contact me is to stop by my office during office hours, schedule an appointment, or by email.

#### ***A note about email communications***

Do not hesitate to email me with any questions or concerns you may have. However, please be professional in your emails. Before sending an email, please make sure you cannot easily get the answer from another source, such as the syllabus or other class documents. In addition, in many cases, I may request you meet with me to discuss your question rather than engage in a series of back and forth emails.

While I may not respond to emails immediately, during the week I will respond within 24 hours.

### **Getting Help**

If you do not understand something that we are discussing in class please let me know as you are almost certainly not alone. However, if no one asks for clarification there is no way for me to know when something needs to be clarified or reviewed. Some of the material we cover in each class will build on the material from the previous classes so if you don't understand something from one class you will almost certainly not understand the material for the next class. In short: Do NOT wait until you have been lost for several classes to ask for help!

### **Miscellaneous, but Still IMPORTANT Information**

- Changes to the syllabus may be made from time to time in order to correct errors, adjust the schedule, fine tune course details, or to address unforeseen issues. Changes will be discussed and announced in class. It is the student's responsibility to attend class to be aware of any syllabus changes. The official syllabus will always be available on Blackboard.
- I will make appropriate allowances for those with disabilities, but it is your responsibility to notify me of needed accommodations. In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations should work with Student Disability Services.
- Cell Phones: I do not want to hear or see them (including holding the phone underneath your desk while sending a text message). Turn them off.

Laptops: I permit the use of laptops or another electronic device for note-taking purposes. However, if I see that you are using the device for something other than taking notes, I will ask you to turn it off.

## **WEEK 1: Introductions/Syllabus**

### ***Tuesday, January 24***

- No Reading – course overview and expectations

### ***Thursday, January 26***

- Zigerell, L.J. 2011. “Of Publishable Quality: Ideas for Political Science Seminar Papers.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(3): 629-633.

## **WEEK 2: Political Science Theory and Methods Refresher**

### ***Tuesday, January 31***

- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1986. “Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics.” *American Political Science Review* 80(1): 3-15.

### ***Thursday, February 2***

- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2006. “The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627-635.

## **WEEK 3: The American Electoral System**

### ***Tuesday, February 7***

- McDonald, Michael P., and John Samples. 2006. “The Marketplace of Democracy: Normative and Empirical Issues.” In Michael P. McDonald and John Samples (eds.), *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics*. Washington DC: Brookings Press. pp. 1-24.
- Persily, Nathaniel. 2006. “The Place of Competition in American Electoral Law.” In Michael P. McDonald and John Samples (eds.), *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics*. Washington DC: Brookings Press. pp. 171-195.
- McDonald, Michael P. 2006. “Redistricting and Competitive Districts.” In Michael P. McDonald and John Samples (eds.), *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics*. Washington DC: Brookings Press. pp. 222-244.

### ***Thursday, February 9***

- TBD – readings related to the Electoral College

## **WEEK 4: Campaign Finance**

### ***Tuesday, February 14***

- Levitt, Justin. 2010. “Confronting the Impact of *Citizens United*.” *Yale Law & Policy Review* 29: 217-234.
- Dowling, Conor M., and Michael G. Miller. *Super PAC!* Introduction and Chs. 1 and 2.

### ***Thursday, February 16***

- For a sense of how much money is raised and spent, explore these data from the 2016 presidential campaign: <http://www.fec.gov/disclosure/pnational.do>
- The updated limits on contributions are at the Federal Election Commission’s website: [http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers\\_general.shtml#How\\_much\\_can\\_I\\_contribute](http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_general.shtml#How_much_can_I_contribute)

- Brown, Adam R. 2013. “Does Money Buy Votes? The Case of Self-Financed Gubernatorial Candidates, 1998-2008.” *Political Behavior* 35(1): 21-41.
- **Settle on a Research Question** for Research Paper

### **WEEK 5: Political Parties and Interest Groups**

#### ***Tuesday, February 21***

- Franz, Michael M. 2012. “Interest Groups in Electoral Politics: 2012 in Context.” *The Forum* 10(4): 62-79.
- Smith, Jeff, and David C. Kimball. 2012. “Barking Louder: Interest Groups in the 2012 Election.” *The Forum* 10(4): 80-90.
- La Raja, Raymond J. 2012. “Why Super PACs: How the American Party System Outgrew the Campaign Finance System.” *The Forum* 10(4): 91-104.

#### ***Thursday, February 23 – NO CLASS (NYU Experiments Conference)***

### **WEEK 6: Do Campaigns Mobilize Voters?**

#### ***Tuesday, February 28***

- Alvarez, R. Michael, Asa Hopkins, and Betsy Sinclair. 2010. “Mobilizing Pasadena Democrats: Measuring the Effects of Partisan Campaign Contacts.” *Journal of Politics* 72(1): 31-44.
- Gerber, Alan S, and Donald P Green. 2000. “The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-663.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.

#### ***Thursday, March 2***

- Enos, Ryan D., and Anthony Fowler. Forthcoming. “Aggregate Effects of Large-Scale Campaigns on Voter Turnout.” *Political Science Research and Methods*.
- **Introduction and Literature Review** sections of Research Paper due

### **WEEK 7: Do Campaigns Persuade Voters?**

#### ***Tuesday, March 7***

- Brader, Ted. 2005. “Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 388-405.
- Gerber, Alan S., James Gimpel, Donald Green, and Daron Shaw. 2011. “How Large and Long-Lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results From a Randomized Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 105(1): 135-150.
- Huber, Gregory A, and Kevin Arcenaux. 2007. “Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising. *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 957-977.

#### ***Thursday, March 9 – Midterm Exam***

<< Spring Break >>

**WEEK 8: Meetings to Conduct Data Analysis**

*Tuesday, March 21 and Thursday, March 23*

- Meeting times will be set throughout the week to help conduct data analysis for research papers.

**WEEK 9: The Politics of Resentment**

*Tuesday, March 28 and Thursday, March 30*

- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press.

**WEEK 10: Presidential Campaigns I**

*Tuesday, April 4*

- *The Party Decides*, ch. 6
- TBD – readings related to the 2016 presidential nomination process

*Thursday, April 6 – NO CLASS (MPSA Conference)*

**WEEK 11: Presidential Campaigns II**

*Tuesday, April 11*

- TBD – readings related to the 2016 presidential general election

*Thursday, April 13*

- TBD – readings related to the 2016 presidential general election
- **Research Design and Findings** sections of Research Paper due

**WEEK 12: Congressional Campaigns**

*Tuesday, April 18*

- Druckman, James N. 2004. “Priming the Vote: Campaign Effects in a U.S. Senate Election.” *Political Psychology* 25(4): 577-594.
- Lenz, Gabriel. 2009. “Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis.” *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 821-837.
- Maestas, Cherie D., and Cynthia R. Rugeley. 2008. “Assessing the ‘Experience Bonus’ Through Examining Strategic Entry, Candidate Quality, and Campaign Receipts in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 520-535.

*Thursday, April 20*

- Berinsky, Adam J., Vincent L. Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee Shaker, and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2011. “Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals?” *Political Behavior* 33(2): 179-202.
- Dolan, Kathleen. 2008. “Is There a ‘Gender Affinity Effect’ in American Politics? Information, Affect, and Candidate Sex in U.S. House Elections.” *Political Research Quarterly* 61(1): 79-89.



**WEEK 13: So, Do Campaigns Matter?**

*Tuesday, April 25*

- *The Message Matters*, chs. 1-3
- Other readings TBD

*Thursday, April 27*

- TBD
  
- **Concluding** section of Research Paper due

**WEEK 14: Presentations**

*Tuesday, May 2 & Thursday, May 4*

**WEEK 15: Research Paper Due**

*Thursday, May 11* – Turn in Research Paper by 8am