

Professor Jamie Druckman  
[druckman@northwestern.edu](mailto:druckman@northwestern.edu)  
311 Scott Hall

PoliSci 101-6-24 Freshman Seminar  
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Office Hours: By appointment

## **Media and Political Campaigns**

### **Course Description**

How do political campaigns work? What campaign strategies work best? How do the media cover campaigns? Are voters manipulated by slick media-based campaigns? Do polls help or harm voters? What about campaign ads? These are some of the questions that we will explore in the class "Media and Political Campaigns." The goal of the seminar is to enhance our understanding of how politicians conduct campaigns, how the media cover campaigns, and how campaigns and media coverage affect voters. We will not only examine the academic literature on these topics, but we also will follow the ongoing events of the 2006 campaign. Through a combination of group projects, short assignments, and essays, we will learn what makes a campaign effective, and what we can do to improve campaign quality.

### **Assignments and Grades**

The class meets in Scott Hall 212 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30pm-1:50pm. Students are expected to attend all classes, to complete all assigned readings and assignments on time, and to actively participate. Classes will include discussions of the latest campaign events, discussions of the assigned readings, and class activities/assignments.

Students will be involved in three formal activities, as follows.

1. Each student will be assigned to a campaign team, consisting of approximately four other students. Each campaign team will be assigned an ongoing competitive campaign that it will follow. This will involve a series of assignments including in-class presentations (described below). The goal is to assess the campaign and provide advice on how the campaign could have been improved. This will make up a total of 25% of each student's grade. Each member of the team will receive the same grade.
2. A series of individually completed short assignments, described below. One of these assignments involves an analysis of political web sites. Specifically, we will analyze the technical presentation and content of several candidate websites. Each student will then write a critique of the sites he or she analyzed. We also will take part in an exit poll on Election Day, as well as other assignments. Some of these assignments will involve multiple drafts (i.e., revisions after receiving comments from other students and/or the professor.) These assignments will make up a total of 25% of each student's grade.

3. The final essay will make up a total of 30% of each student's grade. The essay assignment will be distributed in class, and students will have several weeks to complete it.

The remaining 20% of each student's grade will be based on attendance and the quality of participation. If a student misses a class, it is the *student's* responsibility to provide written documentation of a legitimate excuse (see course policies); otherwise, it will be counted as an unexcused absence. Also, if a student misses class (excused or unexcused), it is the student's responsibility to learn about any missed assignments, discussion, and so on. The student should do this by talking to other students (first), and, if necessary, the professor. Participation involves taking part in class activities, discussing class readings in an informed way, and discussing on-going campaign events.

### **Readings**

Each student must subscribe to *The Chicago Tribune* – either the paper or web version. Each student is expected to read major articles on the campaign (in general) on a daily basis. We will discuss the events covered in these articles at the start of most classes.

The other assigned readings come from the following sources:

1. *A Course Reader* (which contains all readings except those from the required book).
2. *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You're Wrong*, by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, New York: Basic Books, 2000.

The course reader is available for purchase from Quartet. The book is available at Norris Bookstore.

*Students are expected to read all of the assigned readings before each class.* Surprise quizzes on the readings are possible. If a student misses a class without a legitimate excuse, he or she will receive a 0 on any quizzes. It also will be necessary for students to include direct references to the readings in their assignments.

### **Course Policies**

It is the student's responsibility to obtain an assignment if he or she is absent during the class in which the assignment is distributed or discussed. Assignments are due at the start of the class period on the days they are due. Make-up in-class assignments and/or late papers will be permitted *only* if the student presents written documentation of legitimate circumstances that prevented the student from completing the assignment on time. This documentation must be provided in a timely manner (i.e., within a week); failure to provide such documentation will result in the student receiving a 0 on the assignment in question. Legitimate circumstances include religious holidays, illness (verified by a note from a health care provider), serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and participation in group activities sponsored by the University. If a student wishes to appeal an assigned grade, he or she must submit a written statement to the professor explaining why the grade should be changed. Incompletes will be granted only

in the case of documented illness, and if the student and professor complete the required form.

A significant amount of work will be done in teams. Working with others invariably leads to some disagreement. Students should approach their partners/team with an open and flexible mind. If there are *major* problems, students should notify the professor. Finally, students are expected to type each written assignment. The assignments should be proofread; spelling, grammar, and writing style will make up part of a student's grade.

## Course Outline

### September 19 Campaigns, Democracy, and the 2004 Campaigns

- *Assignments:*
  - Access the WebPages of the major Illinois gubernatorial candidates, the US House candidates from Illinois Districts 6 and 8, and the US House (and Senate if applicable) candidates from your home district. (See <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm>.) There will be a “candidate quiz” at the start of the next class.

### September 21 How Elections and Campaigns Work

- *Readings (to be done by 9/21):*
  - “Government 101,” by Project Vote Smart.
  - Selected Readings on elections and campaigns.
- In-class quiz on candidates.
- Campaign Teams Assigned. Team Meetings.
- Campaign Team *Assignment:*
  - Create a persuasive message to be presented to the class on 9/26. Teams can attempt to persuade about anything! Draw on next week’s reading. The presentation should include persuasive communication, and then an explanation of the persuasive strategy employed (e.g., in light of the reading for next week). The entire presentation should last approximately 5 minutes. No written component.
  - Pick a political campaign that you will analyze by 9/28.

### September 26 How to Persuade Voters

- *Readings:*
  - “Do Campaigns Matter?,” and “The Morning After: Do Politicians Keep Their Promises?” by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2000. (from *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You’re Wrong*, New York: Basic Books, pages 3-36.)
  - “The Message-learning Approach,” by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo, 1981. (from *Attitudes and Persuasion*, Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, pages 59-94.)
- Campaign Team persuasion presentations.
- Discussion of academic integrity issues.
- Campaign Team *Assignment:*

- If your team has not already done so, pick a political campaign that you will analyze by 9/28.
  - Each team should conduct detailed background research on their candidates' personal/professional histories, issue positions, etc. This research will be presented on 10/3, and should last approximately 5 minutes. Also, each team will turn in a 2 page summary on 10/3.
- *Individual Assignment:* What's more important – image or issues?

## September 28 Campaign Strategies

- *Readings:*
  - “Winning and Holding Elective Office,” by William T. Bianco, 2001. (from *American Politics: Strategy and Choice*, New York: Norton, pages 91-106.)
  - “Lincoln at Freeport,” by William H. Riker, 1986. (from *The Art of Political Manipulation*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pages 1-9.)
  - “Voter Ignorance and Democracy,” by Ilya Somin, *Critical Review* 12: 413-419, 1998.
  - Look at candidate issue positions at : <http://www.vote-smart.org/>.
  - “Prologue,” by Samuel L. Popkin, 1991. (from *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaign*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pages 1-6).
- *Individual Assignment:* In the next class, we will develop a short survey on voter knowledge of campaign 2006 issues and image perceptions. Each student will administer the survey to at least ten people and tabulate the results by 10/8 (for discussion on 10/10).

## October 3 Using Polls

- *Readings:*
  - Selections from *The Voter's Guide to Election Polls*, by Michael W. Traugott and Paul J. Lavrakas, Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 2004, pages 1-28, 52-111.
  - “How Does Reporting of Poll Results Affect Campaign Coverage?” by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2000. (from *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You're Wrong*, New York: Basic Books, pages 206-210.)
- Campaign Team background research presentations. Background paper due.
- Work on survey.
- *Individual Assignment:* Collect survey data and format results.

## October 5 No Class

## October 10 Using Polls, cont.

- *Readings:* Complete readings from 10/3.
- Discuss survey results on issues and image.
- *Campaign Team Assignment:* Create an ad for your candidate, to be presented on 10/17 (approximately 2 minutes). Write a 1-2 page explanation for why you used the persuasive techniques you did, why you focused on certain issues/image, and what you hoped the ad would accomplish.

## October 12 Candidate Ads and Debates

- *Readings:*
  - “Candidate Advertising,” by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2000. (from *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You’re Wrong*, New York: Basic Books, pages 93-124.)
  - “Campaigns Use TV Preferences to Find Voters,” by Jim Rutenberg, *New York Times*, July 18, 2004.
  - “Showing Candidates, as They Praise Themselves and Bury Others,” by Alessandra Stanley, *New York Times*, May 1, 2004 (and see website <http://www.movingimage.us>).
  - “Why Winning a Presidential General-Election Debate Has Little to Do with Performance,” and “Is There Anything New to Learn in Debates? Do Voters Learn from Them?,” by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2000. (from *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You’re Wrong*, New York: Basic Books, pages 161-165.)
- Campaign Team Meetings to work on ads.

## October 17 Ad Presentations

- Campaign Team Ad Presentations. Ad paper due.
- Discuss “Campaign Internet Project.”

## October 19 Campaigning on the Internet

- *Readings:*
  - “Campaigning on the Internet ,” by Dennis W. Johnson, 2006 (from *The Electoral Challenge*, edited by Stephen C. Craig, Washington D.C.: CQ Press.)
  - “Political Blogs: the New Iowa?,” by David D. Perlmutter, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 26, 2006.

- Work on class “Campaign Internet Project” (we may meet in a computer lab).
- *Individual Assignment:* Write an approximately 2 page paper that describes what you found in your coding of candidate websites. What strategies did you see being employed? Do you think they were effective? What technological innovations were used? How would you change the websites? Due 11/9.
- *Campaign Team Assignment:* Your campaign team should choose one candidate from the race which you are analyzing. Then, using parts of the internet coding framework, describe how the candidate designs his or her page *and* what changes you would make, given the campaign. Defend your suggestions. Write an approximately 2 page paper and plan a brief informal presentation. Due 11/2. Your team will have time in this class and the next class to discuss the site.

### **October 24 Internet Project**

- Work on class Internet Project (we may meet in a computer lab).

### **October 26 Internet Project**

- Work on class Internet Project (we may meet in a computer lab).

### **October 31 Internet Project / Discuss Details of Exit Poll / Media Coverage**

- Work on class Internet Project (we may meet in a computer lab).
- *Readings:*
  - “Does Local Television News Inform As Well As Local Newspapers?,” “Do Newspaper Endorsements Matter? Do Politicians Speak for Themselves in Newspapers and on Television?,” “Has the Average Length of a Candidate’s Statement in News Dropped Since 1968?,” and “Is the Press Biased? Was the *New York Times* Biased Against Dole in 1996? Is Press Coverage Conservative or Liberal?,” by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2000. (from *Everything You Think You Know About Politics... And Why You’re Wrong*, New York: Basic Books, pages 149-160, 166-168, 187-196.)
  - “Political Scientists as Color Commentators: Framing and Expert Commentary in Media Campaign Coverage,” by Paul Brewer and Lee Sigelman, *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 7: 23-35, 2002.

### **November 2 Details on Conducting the Exit Poll**

- Campaign Team Internet site papers due. Informal presentations.

### **November 7 Election Day**

## November 9 Media Coverage

- *Readings:*
  - Complete readings from 10/31.
  - “The Multiple Effects of Television on Public Opinion,” by Stephen Ansolabehere, Roy Behr, and Shanto Iyengar, 1993. (from *The Media Game: American Politics In The Television Age*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, pages 139-156.)
  - “Going for Laughs on Saturday Night Before Delivering the News on Sunday,” by Katharine Q. Seelye, *New York Times* December 16, 2002. (Available from professor.)
- Discuss Election Results.
- Campaign Team *Assignment*: Prepare a presentation and essay describing your candidate’s election result. How did the result compare with the polls? What do you think your candidate did well? What did he/she do poorly? Prepare a brief presentation (approximately 2 minutes) and a 2 page paper. Due November 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Final essay distributed. Outline/draft due to a peer reviewer on 11/19 (to be discussed in class on 11/21). Final Draft due Dec 1.

## November 14 Campaign Reform (including discussions of turnout and campaign finance)

- *Readings:*
  - Excerpts from *Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence: Report of the Task Force on Campaign Reform*. The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, 1998. Available at: <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~lbartels/campaignreform/>.
  - Selected reports from the Pew Election Reform Project at: <http://electionline.org/index.jsp>.
  - “Turnout’s Not as Bad as You Think,” by Samuel L. Popkin and Michael P. McDonald, *Washington Post*, November 5, 2000.

## November 16 No Class

## November 21 Class Discussion and Party

- Campaign team presentations (written component due).
- Meetings about Final essay.