

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management

Fall (14 weeks)

2014

National Campaign Dynamics

6436

3 Credits

Mondays, 7:10PM - 9:40PM

Phillips Hall 110

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Lara M. Brown, Ph.D.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202) 994-4545

Email Address: larambrown@gwu.edu

Communication

Please contact me by e-mail, unless it is an emergency, in which case you may reach me on my cell phone. I will respond within 24 hours to all student e-mails. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss your work, I am available each week for an hour prior to class.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at **[fill in proximate location]** in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Attending class is required. Should you find yourself with a scheduling conflict, please contact me as soon as you are aware of the issue to let me know that you will absent, otherwise, it will be considered an unexcused absence and it will negatively count against your participation grade.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Lara Brown
Director, Political Management Program
larambrown@gwu.edu | 202-994-4545

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
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THE COURSE

Political Management Program Objectives

1. Assess a political environment, develop an appropriate strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy.
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective communication skills and techniques for use in a political environment.
3. Collect, evaluate and incorporate relevant empirical evidence to shape, optimize, and continuously inform the developed strategy.
4. Find, engage and motivate the essential and appropriate leaders, professionals and citizens to achieve the developed strategy.
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards in the profession and exhibits principled leadership.

Course Description and Overview

In this course, we will examine the historical and systematic patterns in national elections. We will consider differences between presidential and midterm elections; House and Senate contests; party nomination races and general elections; primaries and caucuses; Democratic and Republican party delegate selection rules; conditions contribute to “wave” elections; effect of the economy on election outcomes; and standard vice presidential selection models. In sum, we will delve into the political and partisan structural conditions that exist before any of the candidates or the campaigns get involved

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, the students will;

1. Understand the structural and political antecedents that set the stage for presidential and congressional campaigns. This class focuses on different types of elections and the ways they differ long before candidates and parties become involved in a campaign. In short, it focuses on understanding the systematic and historical political dynamics known to political scientists, but often are unknown to political practitioners. Whether it is different rules (e.g., plurality, majority, or proportional representation; absentee balloting same-day registration, or voter identification) or elections (primaries versus generals; presidential versus congressional; House versus Senate races; special elections; caucuses versus primaries; open or closed nominating contests), this class will delve into the ways that "structures" affect elections.
2. Be able to account for structure and systematic effects as part of your campaign strategy and take into consideration when planning tactics and responding to changes in the environment – Knowing these regular effects and learning how to account for them in your campaign plan, as part of your strategy, voter targeting, and messaging will make you a better political practitioner.

Students will prepare three deliverables for a candidate over the course of the class where they will be expected to address the challenges posed by specific electoral contexts (each deliverable will be worth 15% of your grade; total for these assignments is 45% of your grade).

3. Be able to perceive and exploit the longer-term political opportunities for your candidates – Understanding the systematic side of politics will help you put together a step-by-step plan to

help your candidate achieve their career goals and satisfy their "progressive ambition" (the desire to move into higher offices, e.g., from House to Senate or Governor to President).

Students will be asked to put together a long-term career plan for a politician, taking into account a decade's worth of electoral cycles (15% of your grade).

4. Become more analytical and professional, but also more creative in your thinking with regard to your passion for partisan politics and advocacy issues - This class is designed to teach you to be able to evaluate the true prospects for your candidate and his/her party in any given election. You will become a better a political practitioner because you will be able to more accurately assess the opportunities for and the constraints on your clients' success. You will also be a better judge of which campaigns you can win and which you may lose, and how you may truly be able to impact them. In short, political scientists understand that campaigns affect elections at the margins, and while these margins are important and make all the difference in terms of who is serving in elective office, there is also the reality that campaigns do not have the ability overcome some fundamentals (e.g., in certain instances, a down economy).

Students will be presented with two hypothetical candidates and situations, and you'll need to provide a 250-word assessment of whether you think this may be a winnable election (each hypothetical will be worth 10% of your grade; total is 20% of your grade).

Course Requirements

In addition to the above described assignments, students will be asked to bring each week to class an article or an image related to politics (no cartoons or satire) where the media frame includes stereotypical representations. This will count towards your class attendance and participation grade.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Candidate Deliverable 1 -- Electoral History and Election Context	Prepare a strategy memo for your candidate that assesses not only the electoral (vote) history of the office/seat for which they are running, but also discusses the opportunities and constraints that your campaign will need to recognize and account for as a result of the broader national political environment. Campaigns are not run in a partisan/election vacuum, and you need to consider what you can change and what you	Week 4	15%

	cannot. Approximate length should be about 2 pages of text + those with tables and figures.		
Candidate Deliverable 2 -- Voter Targeting	Prepare a strategy memo for your candidate that sets a turnout goal and explains who (which voters) your candidate is going to target to reach your goal. You must justify your voter targets based on similar elections and/or historical contexts (e.g., do not use presidential year numbers for projecting midterm elections). Approximate length should be about 2 pages of text + those with tables and figures.	Week 6	15%
Candidate Deliverable 3 - Messaging	Prepare a strategy memo for your candidate that states and then justifies your candidate's message. Include a message grid that takes into account what your candidate's opponent is likely to argue, etc. Approximate length should be about 2 pages of text + those with tables and figures.	Week 8	15%
Long-Term Candidate Plan	In our Week 7 class, I will provide you with a description of a candidate and the election that they are currently involved in. Your assignment will be to sketch out this candidate's likely career path for the next decade. You will then prepare a strategy memo to that candidate, detailing out the long-game, and you will attempt to consider areas where it will become important for them to stake their claim now, in order to be able to capitalize on those	Week 13	15%

	things in the future. More will be discussed during Week 7, but understand that this assignment is about thinking about "alignment" -- the alignment of strategy and tactics, the future and the present, the electoral context and a candidate's place within it. Approximate length should be about 3 pages of text + those with tables and figures.		
Hypotheticals - Candidates & Their Electoral Contexts	Twice during the semester, I will distribute a one-page "backgrounder" on a candidate and their electoral situation. You will be expected to write an approximately 250-word paragraph explaining to me why you think this candidate will win or lose, and what could be a potential "game-changer." Remember it is harder to write "short" than "long," so be sure to make your 250-words really count and focus on what you believe will be the most critical issue for this hypothetical candidate.	Weeks 9, 11	10% each; total for 2 hypotheticals is 20%
Midterm Election Prediction	On Nov. 3, in class, you'll be asked to complete a prediction "scorecard" for 10 Senate races & 12 House races. The list of contests will be distributed Week 9.	Week 10	5%
Attendance and Participation	Your articles/images that you bring and discuss, and your overall class engagement is required and in order for you to earn a high mark, you must fully engage in this class. Besides, it will make it much more fun!		15%
Total			100%

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*	Grading Standard
A 94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A- 90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+ 87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B 83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
B- 80-82	You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+ 77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C 73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials

In most instances, you'll read approximately 60-70 pages per week. Additional readings will be available as downloadable pdf documents on Blackboard.

Gary Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, eighth edition (Pearson, 2013). On syllabus: **CE**

James E. Campbell, *The American Campaign: U.S. Presidential Campaigns and the National Vote*, second edition (Texas A & M Press, 2008). On syllabus: **AC**

Elaine Kamarck, *Primary Politics: How Presidential Candidates Have Shaped the Modern Nominating System* (Brookings, 2009). On syllabus: **PP**

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

August 25, 2014

Week 1

Topic and Content Covered:

- 1: Introduction & Welcome -- Review syllabus; class to discuss campaign experiences
- 2: Distribute list of candidates -- choose a 2016 senator or their challenger in FL, NH, OH, PA, CO, NV!
- 3: Overview: Structure and Agency -- No campaign exists in a vacuum and no history happens without people. This class is about the deep interaction between history, circumstances, and people.

Read prior to first class (approx. 40 pages -- all pdfs available on Blackboard):

1. Diana Mutz, *The Great Divide: Campaign Media in the American Mind* (2012)
2. Morris Fiorina, *If I Could Hold a Seminar for Political Journalists...* (2013)
3. Sasha Issenberg, *How the Democrats Can Survive Going Down This November* (2014)
4. Ken Goldstein, *Matthew Dallek*, and Joel Rivlin, *Even the Geeks are Polarized* (2014)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 -- LABOR DAY -- NO CLASS

September 8, 2014

Week 2

Topic and Content Covered: National Politics and Congressional Elections

Reading Due Today:

1. CE - Chapters 1 and 6

September 15, 2014

Week 3

Topic and Content Covered: Congressional Elections Context and the Politics of Representation

Reading Due Today:

1. CE - Chapters 2 and 7
2. "Week 3" Folder - on Blackboard

September 22, 2014

Week 4

Topic and Content Covered: Congressional Elections -- Candidates, Campaigns, and Voters

Reading Due Today:

1. CE - Chapters 3, 4, and 5

Assignment(s) Due Today: Candidate Deliverable #1

September 29, 2014

Week 5

Topic and Content Covered: Congressional Elections -- Forecasting, Predicting, and Uncertainty

Reading Due Today:

1. "Week 5" Folder on Blackboard

October 6, 2014

Week 6

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Campaigns - Stable Context vs. Campaigns

Reading Due Today:

1. **AC** - Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Assignment(s) Due Today: Candidate Deliverable #2

October 13, 2014

Week 7

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Campaigns - Structure and Context

Reading Due Today:

1. **AC** - Chapters 3 and 4

Brown to distribute Long-Term Plan for Candidate Assignment (due Week 13)

October 20, 2014

Week 8

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Campaigns - Incumbency and Economy

Reading Due Today:

1. **AC** - Chapters 5 and 6

Assignment(s) Due Today: Candidate Deliverable #3

Brown to distribute Hypothetical #1 (due Week 9)

October 27, 2014

Week 9

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Campaigns - Normal, Unsystematic, and How Campaigns Matter

Reading Due Today:

1. **AC** - Chapters 7, 8, and 9

Assignment(s) Due Today: Hypothetical #1

Brown to distribute List of Contests that You Will Predict in Class NEXT WEEK!

November 3, 2014

Week 10

Topic and Content Covered:

1. Congressional Election Predictions -- do in class!!
2. Presidential Nominations -- And they're off -- almost, 1 more day until presidential candidates "start"

Reading Due Today:

1. **PP** - Introduction and Chapter 1
2. "Week 10" Folder (On Blackboard)

Brown to distribute Hypothetical #2 (due Week 11)

November 10, 2014

Week 11

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Nominations - Sequence, Calendar, Key Contests, and the Party Rules for the Awarding of Delegates

Reading Due Today:

1. **PP** - Chapters 2, 3, and 4
2. Skim and Print -- "Week 11" Folder (On Blackboard) -- We will discuss these documents in class!

Assignment(s) Due Today: Hypothetical #2

November 17, 2014

Week 12

Topic and Content Covered: Delegates counts, strategies, and conventions

Reading Due Today:

1. **PP** - Chapters 5, 6, and 7

November 24, 2014

Week 13

Topic and Content Covered: How Context Mattered -- Life Outside the Candidate's Control
TBD -- Guest panel: Invited - Ashely O'Connor (Romney 2012); Maria Cardona (Hillary 2008); Ali Lapp (DCCC 2006); Heather Larrison (NRSC 2014)

Assignment(s) Due Today: Long-term candidate career plan

December 1, 2014

Week 14

Topic and Content Covered:

1. Wrap-up and review of long-term plans.
2. 2016 Dems versus Reps -- break-out into groups, choose nominee; full class, discuss where it's headed

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Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.