

**POLS 6013-280**  
**Campaigns and Elections**  
**Thursday 5:30pm-8:20pm**  
**Spring Term 2016**  
**209 Prothro-Yeager Hall**

**Dr. Jeremy F. Duff**  
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## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Learning Objectives:** Elections are the centerpiece of American democracy. They are the primary way that citizens convey their preferences for and to government. For citizens campaigns are a time of increased political interest and involvement, and their opportunity to convey their preferences to politicians. For political parties, and interest groups, campaigns are a period to gain new political influence. Journalists are asked to translate information about the campaign to the electorate, and politicians must be able to market themselves and their policies both to the electorate and the political elite.

This course is a weekly seminar that will familiarize you with the academic literature on campaigns and elections in the United States. It should prepare you to conduct your own research in related areas. The course begins with a look at broad empirical research on national elections, campaigns, and voting behavior. It then transitions to consider several ongoing debates in recently published research.

**Required Texts:** The following are the required texts for the course:

Gary Jacobson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections 9<sup>th</sup> ed.*  
Lewis, Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg. *The American Voter Revisited.*  
Polsby, Wildavsky, Schier, and Hopkins. *Presidential Elections.* 13<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Along with these readings there will be a number of research articles from some of the top political science journals. These will be available on the course webpage.

### **Office Hours:**

Tuesday: 8:30am-9:30am, 11:00am-12:00pm, and 1:00pm-2:30pm

Wednesday: 9:00am-12:00pm

Thursday: 8:30am-9:30am, 11:00am-12:00pm, and 1:00pm-2:30pm

Also, by appointment (**send me an e-mail to schedule an appointment**)

### **Student Responsibilities**

*Attendance:* Graduate students **DO NOT** miss class.

*Readings:* Graduate students **COMPLETE ALL** the readings **PRIOR** to class.

Every student should come to class prepared to discuss the readings for each week. The ability to competently discuss current and past research on a particular topic is one of the

markers of a good academic. If you are not familiar with the readings then you will gain very little from the course. And your grade will reflect this, as well.

*Wikipedia:* Graduate students **DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT** using Wikipedia as a source for an academic paper or project. If you do so, you will get a zero.

*Late Assignments:* I **DO NOT** accept late work of any kind. Late work will be given a grade of zero.

*Plagiarism.* Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. “Proper attribution” means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

This is not limited to direct quotations. Any time you use material from a published source, whether quoting directly, borrowing from it, or paraphrasing, you can only do so with proper attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from me.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments and help to protect and promote academic integrity at MSU. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty – including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school – are simply not worth it.

Any paper or assignment that is found to be plagiarized will be given a grade of zero and will be reported through the proper channels according to the guidelines provided in the MSU Student Handbook.

## Nature of the Course and Evaluation

**Leading Class:** This is not a lecture-oriented course. Because of this, the success of the class will depend heavily on the full participation of each student. Broadly speaking, students will be expected to do all the required reading prior to each class and to participate actively in class discussion. Additionally, one or more students will be assigned the task of leading discussion each week. For each piece we read, you should be prepared to discuss how it fits in the literature, the theory, the research design employed, and potential problems with the work. You should also be prepared to discuss why the paper or book might be important despite any shortcomings. Your goal is to ensure that the class engages in thoughtful reflection about what we can learn from that week's readings. How you do this is up to you. You could spend time discussing the articles/books individually, engaging the themes across different pieces, connecting that week's readings to prior readings, or discussing ways to extend and elaborate on the week's readings. Your grade for this section will reflect the quality of your preparation, as well as, the quantity and quality of class discussion you generate.

**Classroom Participation:** Students are expected to be active participants every week. The extent and quality of participation will make up a large component of your course grade. Let me emphasize that you will not earn an A in this course unless you are a frequent, well-prepared, and thoughtful participant in class discussion. You should be prepared to lead discussion on any given article if called upon to do so, even if it is not your assigned week. I will call on any student and question them about the readings.

**Papers:** In order to demonstrate an understanding of the literature, you are required to write a total of three short empirical papers that should give you an opportunity to develop research skills in this area and to practice conducting original research. You will then choose one of the papers to revise for the final assignment or to use as a basis for a research design. Below is a brief outline of the papers:

- 1) Election Results Paper (5 pages)
- 2) Survey Data Analysis Paper (5 pages)
- 3) Content Analysis Paper (5 pages)
- 4) Revised Paper or Research Design

All paper assignments should be double-spaced in 12-point font along with a list of references and any graphs or charts. You are only required to report descriptive statistics but you can use multivariate analysis to investigate relationships. For each paper, you should propose and test one or more hypotheses (use a descriptive rather than a causal hypothesis) that relates to a topic of interest to you. If no question comes to mind, I recommend that you investigate one of the questions that I propose below.

### Assignment 1: Election Results Paper

Report and discuss the findings of your analysis of U.S. election results. Possible questions include:

1. Are geographic voting patterns within Michigan and Ohio in Presidential elections consistent over the past 20 years?
2. Are regions with more recent migrants voting differently than other regions?
3. Are Presidential primary election results related to general election results?
4. Are the voting patterns of northern cities and their suburbs converging or diverging?

### Assignment 2: Survey Data Analysis Paper

Report and discuss the results of an analysis of public opinion survey data on U.S. elections. I recommend that you use the National Election Studies or General Social Survey data that you can analyze online at [sda.berkeley.edu](http://sda.berkeley.edu). Possible questions include:

1. Have Catholic voting patterns remained consistent over time? Have changes occurred among particular ethnic or geographic groups within this religious group?
2. Which types of occupations tend to vote the most Republican and Democratic?
3. Which issue opinions are least associated with partisanship?
4. What types of women vote Republican?

### Assignment 3: Content Analysis Paper

Report and discuss the results of a content analysis of news coverage or advertising in U.S. elections. Possible questions include:

1. Does policy issue coverage in newspapers follow or precede candidate press releases on those same issues?
2. Did female reporters cover Sarah Palin more positively than male reporters?
3. Do the nightly network newscasts cover the same election-related stories that appear on the New York Times cover page each day?
4. Which issues were covered most frequently in recent Presidential campaign ads?

### Paper Assignment Structure:

You can follow any structure for these papers. Here is one common and acceptable structure:

Introduction: What is your research question and why should we care about the answer?

Literature Review: What research have we covered in class that is relevant to your question?

Theory and Hypothesis: What did you expect to find and why?

Method: What did you do? What problems did you encounter and how did you attempt to solve them?

Results: What did you find? Were your hypotheses correct? Provide your quantitative results and any qualitative information that helps explain your results.

Discussion: What is the significance of your results? How widely do you think they are applicable?

Conclusion: Do your results challenge or extend the research findings that you discussed? What would you do to provide additional tests of your hypotheses? What can we conclude from your analysis?

This is not a mandatory structure for any of the papers.

### Paper Due Dates

Election Results Paper Topic Selection:	February 4, 2016
Election Results Paper:	February 18, 2016
Survey Data Analysis Paper Topic Selection:	February 25, 2016
Survey Data Analysis Paper:	March 10, 2016
Content Analysis Paper Topic Selection:	March 31, 2016
Content Analysis Paper:	April 14, 2016
Revised Paper or Research Design	April 28, 2016

Topics are due in writing, at the beginning of class, on the days listed above.  
Papers are due at the beginning of class on the days listed above.

**Academic Integrity:** All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and ignorance of the academic honesty policy is not an acceptable defense. Please review your student handbook for the academic honesty policy here at Midwestern State. If you are found guilty of violating this policy, the appropriate actions will be taken by your professor and the university.

**Grades:** Your grade for the course will consist of your performance on the four papers, your classroom participation, and your participation as discussion leader. Grades will break down as follows:

1) Election Results Paper	15%
2) Survey Data Analysis Paper	15%
3) Content Analysis Paper	15%
4) Revised Paper or Research Design	15%
5) Class Participation	25%
6) Discussion Leader	15%

## **Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

The following is a list of reading topics. As stated before, please have the readings completed before the designated class period.

### **January 21**

#### **Introduction to the course**

No Readings

### **January 28**

#### **Presidential Elections**

Polsby and Wildavsky Chapters 1-3

### **February 4**

#### **Presidential Elections, Cont.**

Polsby and Wildavsky Chapters 4-5

### **February 11**

#### **Congressional Elections**

Jacobson and Carson Chapters 1-4

### **February 18**

#### **Congressional Elections, Cont.**

Jacobson and Carson Chapters 5-7

### **February 25**

#### **Voters**

Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg Chapters 1-5

### **March 3**

#### **Voters, Cont.**

Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg Chapters 6, 7, and 9

### **March 10**

#### **Campaign Effects**

Campbell, James E. 2001. "When Have Presidential Campaigns Decided Election Outcomes?" *American Politics Research* 29(5): 437-460.

Iyengar, Shanto and Adam F. Simon. 2000. "New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication and Campaign Effects." *Annual Review of Psychology* 51: 149-169.

## **March 17**

### **Mobilization and Voter Turnout**

Holbrook, Thomas M. and Scott D. McClurg. 2005. "The Mobilization of Core Supporters: Campaigns, Turnout, and Electoral Composition in United States Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(4): 689-703.

Bergan, Daniel E., Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Costas Panagopoulos. 2005. "Grassroots Mobilization and Voter Turnout in 2004." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(5): 760-777.

Fowler, James H. and Christopher T. Dawes. 2008. "Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 70(3): 579-594.

## **March 24**

### **Spring Break: No Class**

## **March 31**

### **Polls, Markets, and Prediction Models**

Kou, S. G. and Michael E. Sobel. 2004. "Forecasting the Vote: A Theoretical Comparison of Election Markets and Public Opinion Polls." *Political Analysis* 12(3): 277-295.

Erikson, Robert S. and Christopher Wlezien. 2008. "Are Political Markets Really Superior to Polls as Election Predictors?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72(2): 190-215.

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2008. "Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Time-for-Change Model." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 691-695.

## **April 7**

### **Primary Elections and Political Parties**

Steger, Wayne P. 2008. "Interparty Differences in Elite Support for Presidential Nomination Candidates." *American Politics Research* 36(5): 724-749.

Hogan, Robert E. 2003. "The Effects of Primary Divisiveness on General Election Outcomes in State Legislative Elections." *American Politics Research* 31(1): 27-47.

## **April 14**

### **Incumbency Advantage, Challenger Entry, and Finance**

Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Marsh. 2008. "The Campaign Value of Incumbency: A New Solution to the Puzzle of Less Effective Incumbent Spending." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 874-890.

Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2008. "Incumbent Vulnerability and Challenger Entry in Statewide Elections." *American Politics Research* 36(1): 108-129.

Moon, Joojin. 2006. "The Paradox of Less Effective Incumbent Spending: Theory and Tests." *British Journal of Political Science* 36, 705-721.

#### **April 21**

##### **The Effects of Negativity**

Fridkin, Kim L. and Patrick Kenney. 2011. "Variability in Citizens' Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns." *American Journal of Political Science*. 55: (2), 307-325.

Krupnikov, Yanna. 2011. "When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*. 55: (4), 797-813.

#### **April 28**

##### **Campaign Learning and Democracy**

Freedman, Paul, Michael Franz, and Kenneth Goldstein. 2004. "Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 723-741.

Sides, John, Keena Lipsitz, Matt Grossmann, and Christine Trost. 2005. "What Voters Want From Political Campaign Communication." *Political Communication* 22(3): 337-354.

#### **May 5**

##### **Campaign Issue Agendas**

Schaffner, Brian F. 2005. "Priming Gender: Campaigning on Women's Issues in U.S. Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(4): 803-817.

Sides, John. 2007. "The Consequences of Campaign Agendas." *American Politics Research* 35(4): 465-488.