



Course Syllabus: Campaigns and Elections

POLS 3753-101

Fall 2024

Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:50am

BW 226

Contact Information

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 10:00am-11:00am

Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30am-9:30am

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Course Description

In November of 2024 the United States will hold elections for the US Congress, the Presidency, and many other offices. The goal of this course is to provide the student with a fundamental understanding of how elections work in the United States. This will include discussions on the types of elections, campaigns and campaign strategies, and the roles of candidates, voters, and political parties in elections.

Textbooks

The Politics of Congressional Elections: Gary C. Jacobsen and Jamie Carson, 11th ed.

Change and Continuity in the 2020 and 2022 Elections: John H. Aldrich, Jamie I. Carson, Brad T. Gomez, and David W. Rohde.

Course Website

The course will use a D2L page as a place to obtain copies of the syllabus, and any other course documents that may be posted. You will also use the dropbox in D2L to turn in some of your assignments.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2023-24](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of

work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

The three exams will count 60% (20% each) toward your final grade. The research paper will make up 20% of your grade. The Election Project will make up 20% of your grade.

Table 1: Grade Scheme

Cut Off	Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Less than 60%	F

Student Responsibilities

Readings

The readings serve as a point of departure for lectures and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that each student completes the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. Remember, the readings are a point of departure from class lectures. You will be held accountable not only for my discussion in lecture, but also for anything in the textbooks that may not be covered in lecture or discussion.

Attendance

Class attendance is strongly encouraged. It has been my experience that those who do not attend class tend to have a difficult time with the course and generally receive lower grades. During the simulation, I will take attendance, and attendance will be considered when evaluating your participation.

Participation

Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Participation enhances course quality.

Election Simulation Project

Students will participate in a semester long project where they participate in an election either as members of a political party organization, or as individuals operating in the political environment outside the party structure. Students can be candidates, political party chairs, campaign managers, interest groups, think tanks, media correspondents, or pollsters. Grades for the simulation are based on participation and completing the assignments required for each role. The

simulation will last throughout the entire semester and will end with an election on November 26, 2024.

Election Research Paper and Oral Presentation

Students will select a congressional race from the 2024 congressional elections. You will pick from races that involve an incumbent member of Congress and a challenger, where the race is considered to be "close." Your job will be to write a three-part paper covering the race. The first part of the paper will analyze the race leading up to Election Day, covering campaign strategies, poll results, issues in the races, etc. The second part of the paper will cover your analysis of the outcome of the election. You should answer questions such as why the winner won, why the loser lost, and what could have been done differently by each campaign that might have changed the outcome. Your paper should finish by discussing the implications of the race for the national political scene, especially the power of the two political parties in Congress. Due dates for the three sections of the paper will be as follows:

Part 1: October 25, 2024

Part 2: November 12, 2024

Part 3: November 26, 2024

Papers are due **in D2L** by 11:59pm on the dates listed above. You will be required to put together a 5 minute presentation covering the highlights of your paper. Each presentation should include discussion on all three parts of the paper. The time and date of the presentation will be worked out later in the semester.

Writing Rubric

For all writing assignments, the following rubric will be used for evaluation:

100-90% – The assignment is thoughtful, concise (but thorough), well-articulated and well-developed. Student demonstrates advanced understanding of the topic and raises interesting questions and/or observations about the material. There are few, if any, stylistic or grammatical writing errors.

89-80% – Good points are made about the material, but the discussion falls short of the thoughtfulness and insight described above. The essay is well articulated and concise, but not particularly insightful. There are a number of stylistic or grammatical writing errors.

79-70% – An attempt is made at the material, but the student does not demonstrate a solid grasp of the main points of the material, nor does he or she raise any particularly interesting questions. There are several stylistic or grammatical writing errors.

69-60 % – This is a poor assignment on the whole. While the student attempted to address the assignment, the work is choppy, disorganized and largely

irrelevant to advancing understanding of the topic. Stylistic and grammatical writing errors occur throughout.

Below 60% - The student did not follow directions, the writing is unintelligible, the paper is riddled with stylistic and/or grammatical errors, and/or page number guidelines were not met.

0% - There is plagiarism involved.

I encourage all students to visit the *Writing Center* for tips and assistance with all written class assignments. Likewise, I am pleased to provide help to you throughout the term.

Required Examinations

There will be three required examinations. The scheduled examination dates are as follows (these will not change):

Exam 1: September 26, 2024

Exam 2: October 22, 2024

Final Exam: December 10, 2024 (8:00am-10:00am)

Basic Policies

Make-up Policy

If a student has a University-approved excuse and if the instructor is notified in writing, prior to the examination or assignment, and the student can provide official documentation to validate the excuse, arrangements for a make-up may be made. If a student fails to do any of these things, the student will receive a zero for the exam or assignment. Official documentation does not include a letter from the Dean of Students Office. You must provide me with actual documentation that validates the excuse and clearly demonstrates that you were unable to complete the assignment (or exam) by the due date. If a student fails to notify the instructor, or provide the proper documentation, the student will receive a zero for the assignment (or exam).

Exams, Assignments, and Grading

I will only discuss a grade with you in my office or via email. I will not discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, or over the phone. I want you to take time to look over your exam thoroughly, outside of the classroom before you make an argument for a different grade. Any discussion of exam grades should take place within my office hours or via email if you are not able to attend the scheduled office hours. If you feel that you and another student provided similar or equal answers to an exam question and you received a lower grade on that question, then both students must come to the assigned office hours with their exams in order for me to evaluate the answers equally and fairly. Keep in mind that in some cases I may lower the grade of the other student and not raise yours after reviewing both answers, if I feel that the situation deems it necessary.

Taking Exams Early

Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam, including the final, early. Only university approved excuses, death in the family, illness, etc. will be considered for taking an exam early.

Wikipedia

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in my class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Your work will be checked with AI checking tools and if it is determined that your assignment was completed using AI, you will be given a grade of zero for that assignment.

Late Assignments

I do not accept late assignments, papers, exams, quizzes, or anything else. If it is late, it will receive a grade of zero. If you miss an assignment because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of zero on that assignment.

Cellphones

These should be turned off when entering the classroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with me concerning a family emergency. At no time will you be allowed to look at your cellphone during an exam or quiz. If you are observed looking at your cellphone once an exam or quiz has been handed to you, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for that exam or quiz.

General Behavior

Students are expected to act like responsible adults. There should be no talking while I am lecturing or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.

Student Honor Creed

As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so. As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and

other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003
MSU Student Senate.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Policy Website](#).

Course Schedule

Date	Readings/Activities
August 27	Introduction to Course
August 29-September 3	The Context of Congressional Elections Jacobson: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
September 5-10	The Candidates Jacobson: Chapter 3
September 12-17	The Campaigns Jacobson: Chapter 4
September 19-24	The Voters Jacobson: Chapter 5
September 26	Exam 1
October 1-3	National Politics and Congressional Elections Jacobson: Chapter 6

Date	Readings/Activities
October 8-10	Representation Jacobson: Chapter 7
October 15-17	The 2020 Presidential Election Contest C&C: Chapters 1, 2, and 3
October 22	Exam 2
October 24-29	Who Voted? C&C: Chapter 4
October 31-November 5	Social Forces C&C: Chapter 5
November 7-12	Candidates, Issues, and the Vote C&C: Chapter 6
November 14-19	Presidential Performance C&C: Chapter 7
November 21-26	Party and the Vote C&C: Chapter 8
November 28	No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday
December 3-5	Research Paper Presentations
December 10 (8:00am-10:00am)	Final Exam