

**PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN POLITICS
THE MODERN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN**

30:119:004

M 9:30-12:20, 21SH

Professor David Redlawsk
Office Hours: 1:30-4:30 Monday
or by appointment

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Syllabus

This seminar is designed to examine the role of the political campaign in the American political system. And what better time to do this than in the middle of a hotly contested presidential election? We will look at the key parts of a campaign, from candidates to money to polling, to campaign reform as we read current research on the state of campaigning in America. We will also draw connections between our readings and the ongoing 2008 election campaign. While much of our focus will be on the presidential election, our readings will cover a wide range of campaigns.

As your professor, I bring experience as a local elected official in Hillsborough, New Jersey, where I ran for Township Committee (City Council) four times, losing twice and winning twice in a community of about 35,000 residents. I also managed several other local campaigns and worked on congressional campaigns. In 2006 I served as senior advisor and treasurer for the Loeb sack for Congress campaign here in Iowa, unseating a 30 year incumbent. I will, from time to time, attempt to bring this “real-world” perspective into the classroom. However, I will also do everything I can to make sure I present a balanced, bi-partisan picture of political campaigning,

Course Web Site

I have a web site at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~c030111/> which includes information about this course. Among other things, this syllabus will be posted there, as will any changes necessitated in the schedule due to unforeseen circumstances. In addition, as the semester progresses I will probably include links to political campaigning material elsewhere on the web which will be optional reading, but which may provide resources in preparing for your papers. Also, please note that some materials will be on ICON, especially those that are copyrighted and need to be behind HawkID authentication.

Requirements

1. **Participation:** First and foremost, you cannot successfully complete this class if you do not attend! Class participation is expected. Any student with more than 2 unexcused absences will receive a lower grade based on failure to participate in the class. Class participation includes actively being involved with discussions as well as participating in the on-line discussion board on ICON. Most importantly it involves doing the required reading before class. This is a seminar. If you do not do the reading we will not have very much to say to each other. Each class period one or two students will be assigned to summarize the reading for the day and to set up some key questions for our discussion. You should take about 10 minutes to summarize the reading and another 5-10 to lay out your questions. You must also put your summary and questions on our ICON discussion site no later than the Friday before class.

2. **The UI Hawkeye Poll:** You will participate in a survey research effort to collect data about the presidential election and voters. The UI Hawkeye Poll got a lot of press during 2007-08 when we were polling for the Iowa Caucuses. Now we are doing a series of Iowa and national polls in the run up to the 2008 general election. This class will work on a unique survey that will capture a small sample of voters every day over a one month period of time.

The polling project requires that you be “human subjects” certified if you are not already. The certification process is on-line and takes about two hours or so. Details on the process will be provided in class. **You must complete certification by September 11.**

This project will **require** that you commit 12 hours of time during the month of our calling which is likely to include weekend times. You are expected to complete at least 20 surveys during this time. Calling will take place at the Social Science Research Center in 305 Calvin Hall. You will work in shifts of a minimum of 3 hours at a time. You will be able to schedule your shifts during any time that we are actively calling (1pm-9pm every day starting at the beginning of October and ending 4 weeks later). A limited number of people can be scheduled each day, and scheduling will be first come-first served. You will get instructions on how to schedule during one of our classes.

Your grade on this project will be based on fulfilling time and completed survey requirements, and a short (3-4 page) reflection paper on the role public opinion polling plays in political campaigns. This paper will be due on November 10. Details on the paper will be provided in class.

3. **Exit Poll on Election Day:** All seminar participants will be involved in an Exit Poll which will include working in class to develop questions, taking a four hour shift on Election Day administering the poll to voters and writing a short paper. An exit poll attempts to find out voters’ attitudes and preferences immediately after they have cast their vote. This particular poll is follow-on to projects that have been carried out by my classes since the 2000 election. We will be administering the poll with a series of questions that are the same as were asked the past. We will also have new locally oriented questions as well which the class will help develop. To do this project you will need to be available on Election Day for at least one four hour stretch while the polls are open (7AM-8PM). You will be assigned to a polling place where you will hand out a survey to randomly selected voters (not all voters will get the survey). We will discuss the project specifics in much more detail in class. Your grade on this project will be primarily related to participation and a short paper (3-4 pages) on exit polling in elections. The paper will be due November 17.
4. **Reading Response Papers:** During the course of the semester you will write 2 short papers (3-4 pages each) which respond to the readings for a particular day. These papers are to be critical analyses of the readings, not just summaries. You should identify the key theme(s) and consider whether the author(s) have done a good job of convincing you of the accuracy of their arguments. These papers are meant to be short, so you must get to your own point as quickly as possible, and reference appropriate points from the readings in making your arguments. You may pick ANY 2 days over the course of the semester, as long as the first paper is turned in no later than October 6 and the second no later than November 3. Papers may be turned in any time *earlier* than those dates. You **MUST** turn in the response paper **BEFORE** class on the day(s) of the readings you choose to respond to.

5. **2008 Election Campaign Analysis Paper:** At the end of the semester you will turn in a final paper of 5-7 pages which analyzes the 2008 presidential election campaign. This paper is due by noon on December 15, and must consider the nature of this year's presidential campaigns along the lines of the topics we cover during the semester, including the roles played by polling, money, and negative campaigning. Why did what happened happen?

Grading

Class Participation/Discussion Leader	20%
Exit Poll Project/Paper	15%
Hawkeye Poll Participation/Paper	15%
Reading Response Papers (2)	30%
2008 Election Campaign Analysis Paper	20%

Required Books

Books are available at Iowa Book & Supply.

Asher, Herbert. 2007. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen should Know*. CQ Press.
ISBN: 978-0-87289-340-5.

Kahn, Kim Fridkin and Patrick J. Kenney. 2004. *No Holds Barred: Negativity in US Senate Campaigns*. Pearson Education. ISBN: 0-13-097760-8.

Maisel, L. Sandy, Darrell M. West, and Brett M. Clifton. 2007. *Evaluating Campaign Quality: Can the Electoral Process be Improved?* Cambridge University Press.
ISBN: 978-0-521-70082-5.

Sidlow, Edward I. 2004. *Challenging the Incumbent: An Underdog's Undertaking*. CQ Press.
ISBN: 1-56802-820-2.

Simiatin, Richard J. (Ed.) 2008. *Campaigns on the Cutting Edge*. CQ Press.
ISBN 978-0-87279-579-9

There will be additional readings mostly available online and accessible at the class web site and ICON site and designated as [ONLINE]. These readings are required.

You will also be expected to read some national newspaper **regularly** – the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are your best choices. However, the *Chicago Tribune* will probably provide pretty complete coverage of the national campaigns. You will also need to read one of the local daily papers (The *Press-Citizen* or the *Gazette*) to keep up on local campaign issues.

Schedule

While we will have readings assigned for particular dates, we will also allow ourselves to be guided somewhat by the ongoing political campaigns happening all around us. Thus it is highly possible that specific assignments on specific dates may vary as the semester progresses. Should revisions be necessary I will announce them at least one week before the original scheduled date. We will read a number of classic and new works on campaigns to prepare for class discussions. In reading these works I expect you to read them with a critical eye – that is, not to simply accept everything you read as “truth”. Truth seems to come in many flavors in the social sciences, and we’ll do our best to understand multiple perspectives throughout the semester.

August 25

SPECIAL NOTE: I will be at the Democratic National Convention as an elected pledged delegate for John Edwards (though supporting Barack Obama) during the first week of classes. As a result we will not have a traditional first week. However, we WILL meet electronically – I will be in Denver and you will be here in Iowa. I am planning not only to hold our class sessions electronically, but to also video/text blog the Convention experience itself. More information will be provided to you via email before the semester begins.

Discussions: Course Plans/Expectations: Introduction to Political Campaigns
The Democratic National Convention

READ: <http://www.demconvention.com/> This is the official site for the Democratic National Convention. Please look around. The Republican site is <http://www.gopconvention2008.com>.
My convention blog – <http://wiki.uiowa.edu> – sign in with HawkID
Also look at <http://demconwatch.blogspot.com>

ASSIGNMENT: You are to read/follow the blogging I do about the Democratic National Convention. You will be able to respond to my blog entries. Your assignment is to respond with thoughtful comments to at least four of the entries over the course of the week and to be prepared to discuss your comments in class.

September 1 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

September 8

HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING MUST BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER 11

Discussions: Running for Office

READ: Sidlow, *Challenging the Incumbent*, all
Semiatin, Ch 1: Campaigns on the Cutting Edge

September 15

Discussions: Polling in Political Campaign Context

READ: Asher, *Polling and the Public*. Chapters 1 & 2
Politically-e newsletter on polling [ONLINE]
PBS “How to Analyze a Poll” at
<http://www.pbs.org/elections/savvyanalyze.html> [ONLINE]
Pollster.com site for all the current election polls [ONLINE]
National Council on Public Polls – Questions Journalists should ask.
<http://www.ncpp.org/qajsa.htm> [ONLINE]

September 22

Discussions: The Challenges and Value(?) of Polling

READ: Asher, *Polling and the Public*. Chapters 3-9

September 29

HAWKEYE POLL SHIFTS WILL BEGIN AROUND OCTOBER 1 AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ABOUT OCTOBER 29

Discussions: Money Makes the Campaign go ‘Round

READ: Campaign Finance Institute on the BCRA
<http://www.cfinst.org/eguide/subsite/shays.html> [ONLINE]
<http://www.cfinst.org/eguide/index.html> [ONLINE]
Center for Responsive Politics
<http://www.opensecrets.org> [ONLINE]
Federal Election Commission: www.fec.gov [ONLINE]
Semiatin, Chapters 2 & 10

October 6

Discussions: More, More Money

READ: Ansolabehere, Snowberg, and Snyder. Unrepresentative Information: The Case of Newspaper Reporting on Campaign Finance. *POQ*, 69:213-231,
<http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/69/2/213> [ONLINE]

Readings from *The Forum*, March 2008: Has the U.S. Campaign Finance System Collapsed: <http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol6/iss1/> [ONLINE]

October 13

Discussions: The role of the Media in the modern campaign

READ: Semiatin, Chapters 3, 4, & 9

October 20

Discussions: Campaign Advertising and The issue of Negativity

READ: Kahn & Kenney, *No Holds Barred*, all

October 27

Discussions: Negative, Nasty, and Never Ending – 21st Century Campaigns

READ: RR Lau, L Sigelman, IB Rovner. 2007. The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: A Meta-Analytic Reassessment. *Journal of Politics*

RR Lau and GM. Pomper. 2002. Effectiveness of Negative Campaigning in U.S. Senate Elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 47-66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3088414>

WG Mayer. 1996. In Defense of Negative Campaigning. *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3, pp. 437-455, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2151970>

November 1 & 2 (Sat/Sun): Exit Poll training, plan on about 1 ½ hours.

November 3

Discussions: The 2008 Election: What's Going to Happen?

READ: Semiatin, Chapters 6, 7, 8
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: 653-663. Online at JSTOR at: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28200009%2994%3A3%3C653%3AATEOCTC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>

November 4: ELECTION DAY

EXIT POLL PROJECT – You will be assigned a four hour shift today to collect exit poll data sometime between 7AM and 7PM.

November 10

ROLE OF POLLING PAPER DUE

SPECIAL GUEST: Former Cong. David Bonior (D-MI) will join us to discuss the election campaign and the role of different interest groups and constituencies

Discussions: Groups and Politics – focusing on energy policy and on workers rights

READ: Four articles in the April 2008 edition of The Nation on the "New Deal"
<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080407> [ONLINE]

The first is the longer intro piece by Richard Parker entitled, Why the New Deal Matters. The rest are very short essays. Bill McKibben's, A Green Corp, speaks to the potential of a new green energy economy. The other theme I have chosen is workers rights/opportunities. Eric Schlosser's essay, The Bare Minimum, and Andy Stern's, Labor's New Deal should be read.

November 17

EXIT POLL PAPER DUE

Discussions: Exit Poll Findings – What do we now know about Johnson County voters?
Reforming Political Campaigns - What are the problems?

Look for and be prepared to discuss media analyses of the 2008 election cycle – presidential as well as congressional. Each member of the class must bring (either in hardcopy or via internet links) at least two contrasting analyses of the election outcomes.

READ: "Political Consultants and the Extension of Party Goals" by Kolodney, Robin and Angela Logan. *Political Science and Politics* vol 31.2 1998 [ONLINE]

Shades of Gray, Chapter 5 [ONLINE]

Maisel, et al., Evaluating Campaign Quality, Ch 1

November 24 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING WEEK

December 1

Discussions: Political Campaign Reform – Can it happen?

READ: Maisel, et. Al., Evaluating Campaign Quality, Chs 2-6

December 8

Discussions: The Future of American Political Campaigns

READ: Semiatin, Chapters 11 & 12
Cindy D. Kam. 2006. Political Campaigns and Open-Minded Thinking, *Journal of Politics*, 68(4):931-945,
<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=8&sid=3922ddd4-998e-4b4c-a272-2e224b2cbfc8%40sessionmgr8>

December 15: NO CLASS: Campaign 2008 Paper Due, 375 SH, Noon