

Campaigning to Win
PS 411 / CMN 424
T Th 3:30pm–4:50pm
G13 Foreign Languages Building
Spring 2009

Professor Scott Althaus
Office: 256 Lincoln Hall
Hours: Th 10:00am-noon, and by appt.

E-mail: salthaus@illinois.edu
Web: www.illinois.edu/~salthaus
Phone: (217) 333-8968

Course Overview

This will be a hands-on, “how it’s done” course that emphasizes the methods and tactics of modern political campaigns. This course will use a case study approach to illustrate the theories and concepts of persuasion, message targeting, and message delivery in the campaign context. The primary focus of these case studies will be on contemporary campaign practices in the United States, but we will also examine important historical cases that illustrate successful and unsuccessful attempts at mass persuasion.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are to familiarize students with (1) theories of persuasion that are especially relevant to political campaigns, and (2) the strategies, methods, and mass communication technologies that are used in contemporary political campaigns to mobilize and persuade voters. This course is designed to equip students with basic skills useful for managing and evaluating persuasive campaigns. In this way the course will be relevant both to the student with vocational interests in marketing or political consulting and the student who wants to be an informed consumer and observer of election campaigns.

Required Readings

Students are required to obtain the following books, which are available at local bookstores (one copy of each will also be on reserve at the Undergraduate Library):

Green, Donald, and Alan Gerber. (2007). *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout, 2nd Edition*. New York: Brookings Institution Press.

Hillygus, Sunshine, and Todd Shields. (2008). *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Shaw, Daron. (2006). *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Students are also required to obtain a set of additional readings, available individually from the electronic reserve system for the Undergraduate Library and from the course Moodle site.

Instructional Method

Since I am convinced that the best way to learn applied material is for students to apply it themselves, much of this course will be taught in an active learning style. As such, one of my primary roles in the course will be as “coach” or “coordinator” rather than as “enlightened guru.” Students are expected to be full and active participants in their own learning process, and I hope to be taught at least as much by my students as they are taught by me. To promote this kind of learning environment, group projects requiring a great deal of student initiative are at the

heart of this course. *A warning from experience:* If you have little curiosity about politics, and if you are enrolled in this class mainly because it fits your schedule and gives you three more units of 400-level credit, then this is almost certainly not the course for you. However, so long as you are willing to give it your best shot, even students with little or no background in matters political will find this a rewarding and fun course.

Assignments

Final grades for undergraduate students will be determined by performance on the following assignments:

Two group project reports	(15% each; 30% of final grade)
Two in-class exams	(15% each; 30% of final grade)
Pop quizzes and homework assignments	(20% of final grade)
Final campaign analysis paper	(20% of final grade)

Final grades for graduate students will be determined by their performance on the same mix of assignments as undergraduate students. The only difference is that graduate students will write more extensive final campaign analysis papers than undergraduate students, on campaigns approved by the instructor. In these papers, graduate students will conduct the same types of analyses using essentially the same types of data as other students in the course.

The **group projects** involve teams of 5-7 students that will conduct original research on one of three election campaigns, tentatively identified as the 2010 New York U.S. Senate race (open seat), the 2010 Illinois gubernatorial race (incumbent will probably be Democrat Pat Quinn), and the 2010 Florida U.S. Senate race (open seat). Teams representing either Democratic or Republican candidates will recommend targeting strategies for making efficient use of campaign resources based on an analysis of prior election returns (the first report) and will both recommend paid media strategies for reaching particular subgroups of potential voters as well as create realistic campaign advertisements for radio and television (the second report). These group projects are meant to be a realistic, applied learning experience. In order to confront the actual conditions that face those who design political campaigns, students will take the role of consultants whose expertise is sought by a candidate. The projects are a learning experience that simulates—but does not actually involve students in—a real-world, electoral campaign. The results of the projects will be public and may be shared with any interested parties.

As is well known, group projects often end up with some members doing a disproportionate share of the work. To ensure that each member contributes a fair share of the effort for the project, at the completion of each of the two reports I will ask you to confidentially assess the contributions made by each of your team members. If at least two members of a team give any particular team member less than a 100% score for effort, then the average score for that member will be used as a multiplier to reduce the individual's grade on that report. In this way, it is possible for the group as a whole to receive an "A" while a particular team member receives an "F". It is important to keep in mind that effort is being evaluated here rather than ability. It is expected that groups will allocate responsibilities according to the skills and abilities of individual members, so that members with fewer relevant skills can work on mastering new ones or take on simpler but more time-consuming tasks required for the project. In addition, you will have the opportunity to allocate a small amount of extra credit among your fellow group members to reward extra effort or special contributions.

Membership in these groups will remain consistent throughout the semester: once formed, you're with your assigned group for the duration of the course. In exceptional cases, it may be in

the best interests of a group to “fire” one of its members, or it may be in the best interests of an individual to “quit” from a group. Individuals wishing to quit their assigned groups, as well as groups wishing to fire a member, must officially notify me of their intent during the seven-day period following receipt of the first group report grade. Groups must be unanimous in their resolve to fire a member, which may occur only as a last resort and only with the approval of the course instructor. Students thus fired, along with individuals who voluntarily quit their groups, will be required to earn subsequent group project credit by doing all of the assigned group project work by themselves, and may not join another group for the duration of the course.

The two **in-class exams** may consist of definitional, short answer, short essay, and analysis/application questions. They will not be multiple-choice. The examinations for the class draw equally from course readings and lecture material.

In general, students should expect at least one **pop quiz** per week, as well as one **homework assignment** every three or four weeks. Pop quizzes will be given regularly at the start of class to test comprehension of the reading(s) assigned for that class period. Homework assignments will be given occasionally to help students master particular skills or concepts being covered in course.

The **campaign analysis paper** *for undergraduates* is a project (approximately 4-5 single-spaced pages of text plus approximately 5 pages of supporting documentation) that can be considered a cumulative final. The paper assignment will assess mastery of concepts covered throughout the course, as well as mastery of the skills developed in the two group projects, by requiring students to apply these concepts and skills to a new and unfamiliar campaign context. *Graduate students* will write a similar type of paper, but longer, at a deeper level of detail, and with more extensive analyses.

Extra Credit Policy

There are no extra credit opportunities available to students taking this course other than peer-awarded points that can be earned in the group projects.

Makeup Exam Policy

I understand that circumstances occasionally arise that require students to miss a scheduled hourly exam. My policy is to allow those students to take a makeup exam that is more difficult than the scheduled in-class exam, since people taking the makeup will have had more time to prepare for it than did students taking the in-class exam. Makeup exams will consist entirely of short answer, essay, and analysis questions.

Late Assignment Policy

Unless you make prior arrangements with me, homework assignments turned in past deadline will lose one full letter grade for each day of class that the assignment is late (beginning with the day the assignment is due). Only in extraordinary circumstances will I grant extensions when the request is made in the 48-hour period before the time the assignment is due. *Group project reports, pop quizzes, and graded in-class activities cannot be made up.*

Special Accommodations

All qualified students entitled to special testing accommodations or assignment deadlines should let me know as early in the semester as possible so I can make appropriate arrangements. Do not be shy about asking for special accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—if you have qualified for them, then you deserve to have them. I am fully committed to making sure that all students taking the course have equal opportunities for doing their best work on assignments and exams.

Expectations for Students

1. Readings assigned for particular days should be read prior to coming to class.
2. Conflicts with deadlines or other matters should be brought up with me well in advance of the conflict. I will do my best to find a remedy for the conflict, so long as I am given adequate time to do so.
3. You must attend class. Class sessions will not normally be devoted to repeating material covered in readings. Rather, classes will typically relate relevant material not covered in the readings, use the readings as background for discussing particular examples, go deeper into details or specifics, or use the readings as a springboard for discussion.
4. If you miss a class, you'll need to get a copy of lecture notes from another student. I don't provide copies of my notes to students.

Tentative Schedule

1/20 Introduction

Part I: What Campaigns Attempt to Do

1/22, 27 Fundamentals of Campaign Strategy

Faucheux, Ron. (2009). "Running for Office: The Candidate's Job Gets Tougher, More Complex." *Routledge Handbook of Political Management*. D. Johnson, ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 208-222.

Powell, Larry, and Joseph Clowart. (2003). *Political Campaign Communication: Inside and Out*. New York: Allyn & Bacon. Chp. 3 "Campaign Strategies"

Tzu, Sun. (1983 [c. 490 BC]). *The Art of War* [excerpts]. (New York: Delacorte Press)

[Mark Penn "The Plan" Memo to Hillary Rodham Clinton, October 2006](#) and [Mark Penn Strategy Memo to Hillary Rodham Clinton, March 19, 2007](#)

1/29, 2/3, 5 Strategies of Persuasion

Petty, Richard, and Joseph Priester. 1994. "Mass Media Attitude Change: Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. J. Bryant and D. Zillmann, eds. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates)

**The Persuadable Voter*, chps. 1-4

2/10, 12, 17 Strategies of Mobilization

2/10: *First Exam, on Campaign Fundamentals and Strategies of Persuasion*

* *Get Out the Vote*, chps. 1-10

Cillizza, Chris. (2007). "Romney's Data Cruncher." *Washington Post* (July 5) p. A1.

Part II: Campaign Research Skills

2/19, 24 Basics of Electoral Targeting Analysis

CC, chp. 6 "Prior Electoral Targeting"

CC, chp. 8 "General Strategy"

2/26, 3/3 Constructing Turnout and Support Models using Excel

2/26: *Second Exam, on Strategies of Mobilization and Basics of Electoral Targeting Analysis*

* *Race to 270*, chps. 1-2

- 3/5, 10 Analyzing and Presenting Electoral Targeting Data using MapViewer**
 * *Race to 270*, chps. 3–4
 Review electoral targeting projections for Illinois (page 9) in [Hillary Rodham Clinton's internal targeting projections for February 5th states, January 21, 2008](#)
- 3/12, 17 Group Project Work Days**
- 3/19 Group Presentations: Electoral Targeting Research**
- 3/24, 26 [NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK]**
- Part III: The Strategic Use of Campaign Research*
- 3/31 Selecting the Right Persuasive Strategy**
 Tringali, Brian. (2009). "Message Testing in the Twenty-First Century." *Routledge Handbook of Political Management*. D. Johnson, ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 113-125.
[Mark Penn Strategy Memo to Hillary Rodham Clinton for New Hampshire, December 30, 2007](#)
 Presidential campaign memos on focus groups (posted to Moodle)
- 4/2 Paid Media Options**
 Trent, Judith, and Robert Friedenberg. (2008). *Political Campaign Communication: Principles & Practices, 6th Ed.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 10, "Political Advertising".
 Seelye, Katherine Q. (2004). "How to Sell a Candidate To a Porsche-Driving, Leno-Loving Nascar Fan" *New York Times* (December 6), p. A18.
 Ubertaccio, Peter. (2009). "Network Marketing and American Political Parties." *Routledge Handbook of Political Management*. D. Johnson, ed. New York: Routledge, pp. 509-523.
- 4/7, 9, 14, 16 Paid Media Targeting Strategies for Persuasion and Mobilization**
 * *The Persuadable Voter*, chps. 5–7
 * *Race to 270*, chps. 5 and 6
 Faucheux, Ron. (1998). "Strategies that Win" *Campaigns & Elections*. (December/January): 24-32.
- 4/21, 23 Group Project Work Days**
- 4/28, 30 Group Presentations: Targeted Campaign Communications**
- 5/5 Ethics of Political Campaigning**
 No readings assigned
- 5/12 Final campaign analysis papers due no later than 4:30pm: electronic copies posted to Moodle and hard copies dropped off at my political science mailbox, 361 Lincoln Hall**