

POLITICAL SCIENCE 401G/601G
Political Campaigns and Elections
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays
William J. Raggio Building room 2008
Fall 2017 Syllabus

Kevin Banda

Office: 237 Mack Social Science

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30 PM and by appointment

Email: kbanda@unr.edu

Course Description:

This course centers on one of the most important topics in American politics: campaigns and election. Citizens choose their representatives on Election Day, and this process is fundamental to our understanding of democratic theory. This course is intended to provide students with the opportunity to read, talk, and think about how electoral politics works in the United States. We will cover many related topics, among them electoral systems, campaign strategy, the effects (or non-effects) of campaigns on citizens, voting, and elections at the national, state, and local levels.

This course has a prerequisite of PSC 101.

Required Texts and Course Materials:

- Karen Kaufmann, John Petrocik, and Daron Shaw. *Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths about American Voters*. 2008 (required).
- Stephen K. Medvic. *New Directions in Campaigns and Elections*. 2011 (required).
- John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, *Campaigns & Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*. 2012 (required).

The textbooks are available at the UNR Bookstore and additional required readings noted in the syllabus will be available via WebCampus (<https://wcl.unr.edu>). You can also purchase these books online, probably for lower prices than the bookstore offers.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the basic tenants of the key concepts in the study of campaigns and elections.
- frame original research in the context of prior literature, demonstrating an understanding of the discipline's scope and methods.
- evaluate evidence and arguments used in scholarly sources to summarize current thought on the topic being investigated.

- use advanced search strategies in library research databases and tools to find primary and secondary sources for a presentation or essay.
- acquire a conceptual framework that will allow them to interpret the meaning of campaign events and election outcomes.
- frame complex research questions or problems in clear thesis statements.
- identify the key debates in the study of campaigns and elections; utilize relevant concepts and approaches to systematize their analysis of campaign strategy; and thus analyze electoral politics in the U.S.

This course demonstrates Silver Learning Core Objective CO9 (science, technology, and society) and CO14 (application).

Class Policies and Procedures:

Attendance: Attendance is strongly encouraged as you are responsible for all lecture/discussion material and/or any changes in exam dates, course structure or required reading.

Extra credit: I may include one or two extra credit questions on the exams. Other than these questions, there are no other sources of extra credit in this course. Do not expect to be able to “fix” your grade late in the semester.

Technology: Silence your phone's ringer or turn it off entirely. I know what it looks like when students attempt to text during class, so do not bother trying to hide it. If I see you texting during class, your participation grade will suffer. You will be able to access my slides (if I use any) on WebCampus. You are free to bring your laptops, but be aware that I will not allow them if they become a distraction to either me or to your classmates. That said, my general recommendation is that you shouldn't bring your laptops. There is a ridiculous amount of research out there showing that laptops lead to worse student learning outcomes.

Communication: I make every effort to communicate to you my expectations, your responsibilities, and the substantive information covered in this course. I will send e-mails to the entire class. I maintain a WebCampus site for the class, and I will make announcements and issue some reminders in class. Note that I will only send e-mail out to your university-registered e-mail accounts as listed on the course roster in WebCampus. I will not keep track of any other e-mail addresses that you might use. I am also very easy to reach if you need to communicate with me. Come to my office hours or even better, send me an email. It is important for you to stay in touch, particularly if any problems arise.

Course evaluations: The Political Science Department has also converted to an online course evaluation process. Administrative Assistant, Kristen Kabrin, will send out email reminders when the online evaluations will be available. Please make sure your email in MyNevada is up-to-date.) If you have any questions regarding the process or the evaluation, please contact Ms. Kabrin at kkabrin@unr.edu.

Grading Criteria:

The objective in setting the evaluation components is to make sure they are fair to everyone in the class. With that in mind, there are several evaluation components to the class. All grading will be on a 0-100 scale. The following correspond to the approximate letter grades in this class:

94-100 = A	84-86.99 = B	74-76.99 = C	64-66.99 = D
90-93.99 = A-	80-83.99 = B-	70-73.99 = C-	60-63.99 = D-
87-89.99 = B+	77-79.99 = C+	67-69.99 = D+	<60 = F

Two midterm exams (30% each, 60% total)

There will be two exams in this class. These exams will be made up of identification and short essay questions. Missed examinations will be treated as a 0 unless the student has a documented or valid excuse, i.e. serious illness, deaths in the family, and required attendance at university-sponsored events. In other words, things like vacations and sorority/fraternity events are not excused. Students who have a valid excuse need to contact me before the day of the test (except in emergency circumstances). The required documentation needs to be given to me within a week of the examination.

Research question and sources (5%)

You put together a short document in which you introduce your research question to me and make an argument about why that question is important to our understanding of the political world. You will also clearly identify your dependent and independent variables. This will likely take you only one or two paragraphs. You will also turn in a full list of potential sources for use in your literature review (see the next section for more on what makes for a good source). This list should be formatted as a works cited page.

Use this as an opportunity to get feedback from me early. Ideally, you will have already talked to me either in person or via email about your research question. I will also let you know what I think of your sources. You should use the written portion of this assignment as a base for your introductory section in your full essay. **This document is due to me via email by class time on 4/6.**

Analytical Essay (35%)

Your paper will focus on a topic selected by you and approved by me that is relevant to the course. In other words, it should in some way be related to public opinion and political behavior in the U.S. **This paper will be due to me via email by class time on 4/27.**

You must come up with a **research question** that is related to the topic of this course. You could, for example, have a research question that focuses on why citizens choose to support one candidate over the other.¹ I must approve this question, so do not put off speaking with me; I want to make sure you are on the right path as quickly as possible. **Each student must have a unique research question**, so contact me as soon as possible.

¹ Other examples: how does elite polarization influence public opinion? How do citizens respond to negative advertisements? How does candidate race influence vote choice?

Once a research question has been approved, students should perform a literature review. This review should make up a large portion of the papers. What have previous studies found? What are the limitations of the studies you read? What remains unanswered or inadequately answered? If you can find easily accessible data, feel free to include it in your paper (but this is not required). Sticking with the previous example of candidate choice, you might present the percentage of the popular vote won by Democratic or Republican presidential candidates over the past several election cycles. **You need at least 6 sources (see below on what constitutes a good source).**

The following is an outline for your papers:

1. Introduction: tell me what your research question is and why it is an important topic. Tell me your thesis statement. Tell me what your dependent and independent variables are (generally speaking, you should only have one independent variable and one dependent variable).
2. Literature review: summarize the (minimum of 6) academic articles/books you read. Tell me the arguments put forth by the researchers and tell me what they found. This is the section in which you should criticize the work you've read if that is appropriate. You should group your discussion of papers that are related together if that is appropriate (depends on what you're doing). This will be the longest section of your paper.
3. Theory: this is the most important section of your paper. What is your explanation of how and why the world works the way it does? How does your independent variable affect your dependent variable (i.e. what's the direction of the relationship)? **WHY** does this process work the way you argue? If you're talking about citizens, what is going through their minds? If you're talking about candidates or parties, what are their strategic considerations? Make sure that your theory matches up with your unit of analysis. In other words, if your topic is a citizen's vote choice, you should talk about why citizens make the decisions they do and why they hold the attitudes they do. You can mention why candidates/parties choose certain strategies, but your focus should be on citizens in this case. Generally speaking, citations don't belong in this section. You are making an argument that should be somewhat unique (at least compared to what you have read); you shouldn't repeat a theory you've already read. So you need to make an argument that differs at least somewhat from the literature you reviewed. Note that this isn't quite the same as "opinion." Your theory should be logically cohesive and plausible. This section should probably be about 1-2 pages long.
4. Hypothesis: you must produce a falsifiable (i.e. you can be wrong) hypothesis. It should take the form of "as the **independent variable** increases/decreases, the **dependent variable** increases/decreases," (some of you may have more complicated expectations and that's okay, but we should probably talk about them before you write your paper). This hypothesis is falsifiable because you may observe no relationship between the variables or you may observe the opposite of what you expect. I have written a section here about hypotheses by itself, but your hypothesis should probably just be at the end of your theory section.
5. Design: In this section you should briefly discuss how you might test your hypothesis. Don't over think this; I don't expect you to design an entire survey or anything like that. If you're dealing with citizens, you should probably say you'd look at public opinion data, do an experiment, or look at aggregate voting statistics (depends on what's right for your

paper). If you're doing a paper on advertising, say you'll look at advertising data (how many of this kind of ad was aired in a contest or whatever), and so forth. Then you need to tell me what you would observe in the data if you are right and what you might observe if you are wrong. This section should be pretty short.

Your grade will be determined by (1) the completeness of your argument, (2) the strength of your analysis, and (3) the strength of your writing. **Papers will be docked 10 percentage points for each day they are late. If you turn in your paper after but on the same day as class, that is considered one day late.**

Format: Your essay must be typed. Use twelve point Times New Roman font, justified text (see how the text at the margins in this document are even or “flat?” This is what justified text looks like), double spacing, and one or 1.25 inch margins. Your paper should be no more than ten pages long. If you write more, be aware that the grader may stop reading at the end of the tenth page. Your paper may be shorter than ten pages, but be sure that you have carefully and fully answered each of the questions posed to you by the above essay prompt. If you turn in a five page paper, it is unlikely that you will have written an adequately detailed essay. If possible, please print on both sides of the paper. There should not be an extra space between your paragraphs. Word seems to do this by default. Don't let it. Speaking of contractions, do not use them. Do not use an enormous header and do not allow it to repeat on each page; just write your name. Number your pages. You do not need a cover page. Just for emphasis: **do not use any direct quotes.** This is a short essay. I want to see your arguments, not what someone else has to say. Include a title.

Citations: You will need a works cited page. Cite any work you reference using in text citations like this (Smith, 2011).

Sources: You need to draw on academic publications. That means peer reviewed books or journal articles that have been **published**. For books, that means you need to focus on academic presses (i.e. the University of Chicago Press), but academic-oriented commercial presses like Sage and Routledge are acceptable too. Here are a number of examples of acceptable political science journals: *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Electoral Studies*, *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, *Public Choice*, *Political Communication*, and *American Politics Research*. There are many other peer reviewed journals out there. **If you are unsure if the article you want to review is from an acceptable journal, you should ask me.** This seems to be a major problem for a small number of students, so do yourself a favor and double check with me. Avoid working papers and other unpublished works. Again, if you're not sure, **ask**.

Caution: Do not under any circumstances cite Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers, or anything else like that. If you choose to use something that was published by an ideologically driven think tank (CATO, Brookings, Heritage, etc.), be careful. Remember that these organizations have an incentive to shape our perceptions of reality to best suit themselves. It is unlikely that I will accept one of these pieces as one of your required sources, though you are certainly free to use them as additional sources. Again, if you're not sure, ask.

Graduate Student Requirements:

As part of the PSC 601G graduate level requirement, students will be required to submit a research paper. This paper must contain a more in-depth exploration of the literature, a clearly explicated theoretical argument, and a test using actual data of testable propositions drawn from the theory. The quality of this paper should be high; it should be of sufficient quality to present at a conference, send to a journal for peer review, or to be a dissertation chapter. In addition, additional readings are required and graduate students will be held to a higher standard of analysis and discussion than their undergraduate counterparts.

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog and the Office of Student Conduct (<http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy>)

Disability Services:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me and the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. You can refer to the Disability Resource Center website at <http://www.unr.edu/drc>.

Academic Success Services:

Your student fees cover usage of the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or <http://www.unr.edu/tutoring-center>) and University Writing Center (784-6030 or <http://www.unr.edu/writing-center>). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Audio and Video Recording:

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and

discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Preliminary schedule:

This schedule is preliminary. Thus the speed at which we move through the material may not match the information below. I will keep you up to date about where we are in class. If you aren't sure, ask.

Note: course readings are available through WebCampus. Those marked with one asterisk are located in the "readings" folder in the "files" section. Those marked with two asterisks can be found under "course reserves."

I provide URLs below if the reading is available online. Readings from the required textbooks are identified by the last name of the first author.

Week of 1/24: Course introduction. What are campaigns and why should we care?

- Sides chapter 1
- *Brady, Johnston, and Sides, "The Study of Political Campaigns"
- Gelman and Sides, "The Truth about Obama's Victory Wasn't in the Papers."
 - o <http://www.bostonreview.net/gelman-sides-stories-and-stats>

Week of 1/31: Electoral systems

- Sides chapters 2 and 3
- Medvic chapter 1

Week of 2/7: Parties, coalitions, and realignment

- Sides chapter 6
- Medvic chapters 7 and 8

Week of 2/14: The centrality of partisanship in American politics

- Medvic chapter 3
- Kaufmann chapters 1-3

Week of 2/21: Mobilization and voting

- Kaufmann chapters 3-7
- Medvic chapters 6 and 10
- Sides chapters 11 and 12

Week of 2/28: Campaign finance

- Sides chapters 4 and 5
- Medvic chapter 2
- http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_general.shtml#How_much_can_I_contribute
- <https://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/> (explore the pages here a bit)

Week of 3/7: Campaign strategy 1: when to run, what to discuss

- **Sandy Maisel, *From Obscurity to Oblivion: Running in the Congressional Primary*. Chapter 2.
- *Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox, “Why Are Women Still Not Running for Public Office?”
- *John Sides, “The Origins of Campaign Agendas.”
- *Lee Sigelman and Emmett H. Buell, Jr., “Avoidance or Engagement? Issue Convergence in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-2000.”

Week of 3/14: Campaign strategy 2: issue positions and tone. **MIDTERM 1 ON 3/16.**

- *Jonathan Kropko and Kevin Banda, “Priming Proximity and Directional Thinking in Voter Choice Experiments.”
- *Michael Tomz and Robert Van Houweling. “The Electoral Implications of Candidate Ambiguity.”
- **John Geer, *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. Chapters 1 and 2.
- *Richard Lau and Ivy Brown Rovner, 2009. “Negative Campaigning.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- *Kevin Banda, “Issue-Based Negativity and Candidate Assessment.”

Week of 3/21: Spring break! No class.

Week of 3/28: Campaign strategy 3: advertising

- **Michael Franz, Paul Freedman, and Travis Ridout. *Campaign Advertising and American Democracy*. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Medvic chapter 5
- **Darrell West. *Air Wars* chapter 1.

Week of 4/4: Presidential campaigns. **RESEARCH QUESTION DUE VIA EMAIL BY CLASS TIME ON 4/6.**

- Sides chapter 8
- Medvic chapter 12
- **James Stimson. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics* chapter 4.

Week of 4/11: Congressional campaigns

- Sides chapter 9
- Medvic chapter 11
- **Gary Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections* chapter 3.

Week of 4/18: State and local elections

- Sides chapter 10
- Medvic chapter 13
- *Thomas Carsey and Monica Moore, 2013. “State and National Factors in State Elections,” in *CQ Guide to State Politics and Policy*, edited by Richard Niemi and Joshua Dyck.

Week of 4/25: The media. PAPERS DUE VIA EMAIL BY CLASS TIME ON 4/27.

- Sides chapter 7
- Medvic chapters 5 and 9

Week of 5/2: Consultants and representation

- **Joe McGinnis, 1969. *The Selling of the President* chapters 1 and 2.
- Nicholas Lemann, "The Controller."
 - o <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/05/12/the-controller>
- *Ben Wallace-Wells, "Obama's Narrator."
 - o <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A0CE6DA1230F932A35757C0A9619C8B63>
- Kaufmann chapters 8 and 9
- Medvic chapter 14
- Sides chapter 13
- *Andrew Gelman and Gary King, 1993. "Why Are Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes Are so Predictable?"

Week of 5/9: MIDTERM 2 ON 5/9.