

## Politics 421: Studies in Electoral Politics

Spring 2012

Monday, 7:00 – 9:00 in Rice 100b

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Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday, 3:00 to 4:30 in Rice 203

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Congratulations on being selected as a Cole Scholar! The Oberlin Initiative in Electoral Politics has three major elements. You will begin by successfully completing this seminar before interning with a political campaign over the summer. You will then return in the fall to complete a seminar (Polt 422) in which you will use what you have learned to write a rigorous and original research paper. This program is intended to give you the practical and academic knowledge that will enable you to run for office one day.

This course has three core objectives:

- (1) to introduce you to the literature on campaigns and elections;
- (2) to teach you about the challenges of running for public office; and
- (3) to provide you with skills you will need during your internship and in later campaigns.

### Class Structure

This class will be run as a seminar. You are required to complete all assigned readings before class. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings and your reactions to them. Your active and positive participation is vitally important.

### Course Requirements and Grading

Final grades will be based on class participation, weekly discussion questions, a research paper on the 2012 campaign, a book review, and a placement research paper. The relative weight and due date of each component is as follows:

- Class Participation: 15%
- Discussion Questions: 15% (due each Monday before 3:00 pm)
- 2012 Campaign Research Paper: 20% (due Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm)
- Book Review: 20% (due Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm)
- Placement Research Paper: 30% (due Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am)

*Participation:* Active and engaged participation is critical to the success of this class. Your participation grade will be based on the *quality*, not the *quantity*, of your participation. Quality participation requires perfect attendance, *thoughtful* contributions, and a *positive attitude* toward the class and its activities. Your comments are expected to be reasonable, well-considered, and on-topic. You should come to class prepared to engage in discussion at any moment. You should also participate actively in class exercises. From time to time, you will be asked to jump into the role of a campaign worker or candidate. When this happens, your enthusiasm, effort, and execution will be evaluated.

*Discussion Questions:* Each week that we have assigned readings, you are required to post a question(s) on Blackboard **before 3:00 pm on Monday**. Your question will address a particular aspect of the week's readings and may be used during class discussion. You should write insightful and thought-provoking questions that draw on class material, and you should have some idea of how you might answer your own question before coming to class. (Please see Appendix 1 for more information on how these questions should be written.) You are also required to read and consider the questions posted by your fellow students before class begins. Each question will receive a grade out of 3 based on its connection to course material, creativity, and ability to provoke thought and discussion. Your question will only receive a perfect 3 out of 3 if it is firmly connected to course material (e.g., readings), creative, and leaves me thinking "wow, that's *really* interesting..."

*2012 Campaign Research Paper:* For your first writing assignment, you will research candidates who will be

campaigning during the summer of 2012. You are required to identify and discuss at least four candidates. Your paper will provide a succinct, yet detailed, synopsis of each candidate, discussing things like his/her experience, opponent, chances of winning, relevant district attributes, contact information, and any other piece of information you deem important. You should try to make an argument for why it might be interesting to work for this particular candidate. Collectively, our goal is to generate a list of potential internship sponsors. To that end, you should try to find candidates who will not be listed by your classmates. Please submit your 4 to 5 page paper as a single MS Word file. It must be uploaded to Blackboard by **3:00 pm on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**. Our class meeting that evening will be spent discussing these candidates and their potential viability as internship sponsors.

*Book Review:* Near the end of the semester, you will read one of three selected “campaign manuals” and then write a 4 to 5 page review that briefly summarizes the book and evaluates its strengths and weaknesses. This assignment is intended to pull together course materials and have you think about campaigns holistically before heading out to your internship. As such, your review must be connected to class readings and discussion—what are the key contributions that this book makes to our understanding of campaign politics? As with any good review, your assessment should be fair and avoid harsh language; any criticism should be coupled with constructive suggestions for improvement. Please submit your review via Blackboard before **3:00 pm on Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**.

*Placement Research Essay:* This final project will help you prepare for your summer placement. Your paper should be approximately 12 to 15 pages long (double-spaced), and you should use parenthetical citations in the text with a corresponding bibliography.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the paper is to conduct research on topics that will be relevant to your placement. Your main objective is to write a “Campaign Plan” for your candidate (see the McNamara example and/or the Blodgett and Lofy chapter as a *starter*). It is absolutely essential that you explain why certain factors are important given what you know about campaigns and voters—i.e., your paper *must* incorporate evidence from class readings and discussions. Your goal is to present a clear, concise, and insightful analysis of the race on which you will work. Researching and writing this paper will enable you to ‘hit the ground running’ when you arrive to do your internship.

All final papers are officially **due on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am**—of course, you are welcome to submit your paper earlier. Papers will ***NOT*** be accepted after this deadline unless an “incomplete” is granted by the college. In other words, you will receive a “0” and possibly fail the course if you do not meet this deadline, so plan accordingly.

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way. If you do not do well in this course (i.e., less than a C), the OIEP reserves the right to dismiss you from the program before you begin your internship.

A+	96+	B+	84-87	C+	70-74	D	50-59
A	92-95	B	80-83	C	65-69	F	0-49
A-	88-91	B-	75-79	C-	60-64		

## General Course Policies

### *Courtesy*

Please exercise common courtesy (e.g., no talking at inappropriate times, snoring, Internet browsing, cell phones) and come to class on time—pretty simple.

### *Honor Code*

Oberlin College policy mandates that your performance in this class adhere to the honor code. In general terms, this

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<sup>1</sup> For example, you might write “according to Smith (2005, 24), lawyers are...” or “scholars (e.g., Smith 2005, 25; Jones 2003, 56) have argued that...”. Complete references are then given in the bibliography following the text.

means that you will be given significant freedoms in exchange for your promise to not cheat, plagiarize material, fabricate information, or participate in any other dishonest academic activity. If you have any questions about the honor code, you should visit: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rulesregs\\_pdf/Rules+Regs06\\_HonorCode.pdf](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rulesregs_pdf/Rules+Regs06_HonorCode.pdf).

### *Disabilities*

Any student with a documented disability should see me immediately so that we can make reasonable accommodations.

## **Topics and Readings**

This course combines practical know-how with academic studies of electoral campaigns. As such, we will read work from both practitioners and scholars. There is no assigned textbook for this course. However, you will need to get access to one of the following for your book review assignment:

- Jeff Blodget and Bill Lofy. 2008. *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: A Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8166-5333-1)
- Catherine Shaw. 2010. *The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections, Fourth Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8133-4451-5)
- Michael McNamara. 2008. *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press. (ISBN: 978-1-4327-3195-3)

All other *required* readings (e.g., chapters, articles) are available on Blackboard—log in to Blackboard with your email username and click on ‘Readings’ to find the material. You are expected to do all of the required readings before the class meeting for which they are assigned. Optional readings are available from the instructor if you cannot find them yourself.

### Class One (February 6<sup>th</sup>): **Introduction**

This class is obviously devoted to discussing the syllabus and providing a course overview. After we get to know each other a little, we will watch the documentary “Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore?” to get a sense of the type of campaigns on which you may ultimately work.

### Class Two (February 13<sup>th</sup>): **Understanding Voters and Voting Behavior**

Campaign success requires knowledge of voters and voting behavior. Campaigns need to understand what voters care about and how they think. This class introduces the academic literature on how voters vote. In large part, formal theories of voting behavior have given way to psychological explanations that highlight the role of emotion and cognitive processing. By the end of this class, you should have a solid understanding of what campaigns are dealing with when they go after voters’ support.

#### *Required Reading:*

- David Patrick Houghton. 2009. “The Psychology of Voting Behavior” in *Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals, and Cases*. New York, NY: Routledge Press. 157-167.
- Louis Menand. “The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters” *The New Yorker*. August 30, 2004. 1-5.
- Bryon Allen and Chris Wilson. “Heuristics: Short Cuts Voters Use to Decide Between Candidates” *Politics Magazine*. November/December 2009. 1-3.
- Drew Westen. 2007. “Introduction” and “Winning States of Mind” in *The Political Brain*. New York, NY: Public Affairs Publishing. ix-xv, 3-23.

- Thomas Frank. 2004. "What's the Matter with America?" in William F. Grover and Joseph G. Peschek (eds.) *Voices of Dissent: Critical Readings in American Politics*. New York, NY: Longman. 155-159.
- Michael Schudson. 2007. "America's Ignorant Voters" in Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith (eds.) *Principles and Practice in American Politics, Third Edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. 492-499

*Optional Reading:*

- Samuel L. Popkin. 1994. "Prologue" and "The Reasoning Voter" in *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns, Second Edition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 1-21.
- Arthur Lupia and Mathew McCubbins. 1998. "The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What they Need to Know?" in Ken Kollman (ed.) *Readings in American Politics*. New York, NY: Norton. 327-339.

**Class Three (February 20<sup>th</sup>): The General State of Campaign Strategy**

This class introduces a number of key issues in contemporary campaigns. We will start by considering the idea, expressed by Thurber, that practitioners and academics differ in their approach to understanding campaigns. We will then analyze the general state of contemporary campaigns in America. What common practices are shared by candidates? How do campaigns differ based on geography, office level, and/or party? How do candidates win?

*Required Reading:*

- James A. Thurber. 2010. "Understanding the Dynamics and the Transformation of American Campaigns" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1-19.
- David Winston. 2010. "Creating a Winning Campaign Strategy" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 35-58.
- Michael John Burton and Daniel M. Shea. 2010. "The Campaign Plan" in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. 95-113.
- Michael McNamara. 2008. "Appendix A: Sample Campaign Plan" in *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press. 147-158.
- Dennis W. Johnson. 2011. "The Modern Campaign" in *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century: A Whole New Ballgame?* New York, NY: Routledge. 1-10.

*Optional Reading:*

- Jeff Blodgett and Bill Lofy. 2008. "Writing a Campaign Plan and Laying Out a Path to Victory" in *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: A Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 21-34.

**Class Four (February 27<sup>th</sup>): Cole Scholars Dinner and 2012 Campaigns Discussion**

We will start the evening at 5:30 pm with a dinner in Wilder Hall with past Cole scholars. This will be your opportunity to learn about their experiences and ask questions about the program and internship. After dinner we will move to our regular classroom for a discussion of the 2012 races you researched for your paper. As noted above, you will prepare a 4 to 5 page paper in which you write about at least four candidates who will be campaigning during the summer of 2012. Please upload your paper to Blackboard before 3:00 pm on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>. We will then discuss these candidates and their potential suitability for internships. Our goal is to create a long list of potential internship opportunities.

*Potential Sources:*

- [www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com)
- [www.cookpolitical.com](http://www.cookpolitical.com)
- [www.nationaljournal.com](http://www.nationaljournal.com)
- [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com)

### Class Five (March 5<sup>th</sup>): **Political Finance: Fund-Raising and Campaign Spending**

Money is an important factor in almost all American campaigns. Indeed, without it, candidates can do little to persuade voters and thus win the election. This class explores the ways in which candidates go about getting money and how they spend it. We will also engage in an activity aimed at assessing your fundraising abilities.

#### *Required Reading:*

- John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz. 2012. "Financing Campaigns" in *Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*. New York, NY: Norton. 82-119.
- Daniel Weeks. 2008. "Does Money Buy Elections?" Concord, NH: Americans for Campaign Reform. 1-12.
- Brooke Gladstone, Bob Garfield, and Steven Dubner. "Can Money Buy Elections: No" *On the Media*. October 29, 2010. 1-3.
- Norman Cummings and Grace Cummings. 2004. "Strategy and Tactics for Campaign Fundraising" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 67-82.
- Jim Burrows. "Using the Internet to Raise Campaign Contributions" from <http://www.winningcampaigns.org/Winning-Campaigns-Archive-Articles/Internet-to-Raise-Campaign-Contributions.html>. 1-3.
- Michael McNamara. 2008. "Sample Fundraising Script" in *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver: Outskirts Press. 193-196.
- To get a sense of campaign spending, browse the following:
  - [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)
  - [www.fecinfo.com](http://www.fecinfo.com)
  - [www.followthemoney.org](http://www.followthemoney.org)

#### *Optional Reading:*

- Mark J. Rozell, Clyde Wilcox, and Michael M. Franz. 2012. "Interest Groups and American Politics" in *Interest Groups and American Campaigns: The New Face of Electioneering, Third Edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 1-26.
- Ronald Dworkin. 2010. "The Decision that Threatens Democracy" in David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds., *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company. 158-166.
- Bradley A. Smith. 2010. "Citizens United We Stand" in David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds., *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company. 167-172.
- Candice J. Nelson. 2010. "Strategy and Tactics of Fundraising in 2008" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 93-104.
- Anthony Corrado. 2010. "Fundraising Strategies in the 2008 Presidential Campaign" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 105-135.
- Dennis W. Johnson. 2011. "Fundraising" in *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century: A Whole New Ballgame?* New York: Routledge. 43-57.
- Stephen J. Wayne. 2011. "Has Money Corrupted our Electoral Process?" in *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?* Washington, DC: CQ Press. 88-115.

### Class Six (March 12<sup>th</sup>): **Placement and Personal Finances**

This class is devoted to your placement and a discussion of how you will keep track of your personal finances during your internship. We will also discuss appropriate behavior during your internship both in regards to your employer and the Politics Department staff. You will have an opportunity to consider your internship budget and work on completing your assessment of expenses. Please note that we will be meeting at **12:15 pm** rather than our regular

meeting time. In exchange for this inconvenience, there will be pizza!

*Required Reading:*

- Oberlin Initiative in Electoral Politics “Internship Procedures”

Class Seven (March 19<sup>th</sup>): **Campaign Communications**

There is much that goes into a campaign’s communication strategy. This class will introduce you to some of the work on political communications. What role does the news media play in a campaign’s success? What do candidates do to get their message out to voters? How do voters react to these appeals? Which strategies seem to work the best, and when do they succeed/fail? What role does the Internet play in modern campaign communications?

*Required Reading:*

- Tad Devine. 2008. “Paid Media—In an Era of Revolutionary Change” in Richard J. Semiatin (ed.) *Campaigns on the Cutting Edge*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. 27-47.
- Leonard Steinhorn. 2010. “The Selling of the President in a Converged Media Age” in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 137-156.
- Ashley Parker. “In Nonstop Whirlwind of Campaigns, Twitter is a Critical Tool” *New York Times*. January 28, 2012. 1-2
- Colin Delany. “Ten Ways to Blow it Online in 2010” *Politics Magazine*. November 1, 2009. 1-3.
- John Sides. “The Moneyball of Campaign Advertising” *The New York Times*. October 5, 2011. 1-6.
- Ken Kurson. “How to Write a Great TV Spot” *Campaigns and Elections*. January 14, 2011.
- Michael John Burton and Daniel M. Shea. 2010. “Earned Media” in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. 177-190.
- Michael McNamara. 2008. “Appendix D: Sample Press Releases” in *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press. 167-170.
- To view presidential campaign ads, check out:
  - <http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/support/pitch.php>
- To view congressional campaign ads, check out:
  - <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/politicalads/>

*Optional Reading:*

- Thomas A. Hollihan. 2009. “The Impact of New Communication Technologies on Political Campaigns” in *Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press. 198-221.
- Dotty Lynch. 2010. “How the Media Covered the 2008 Election: The Role of Earned Media” in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 157-192

No Class (March 26<sup>th</sup>): **Spring Break**

Class Eight (April 2<sup>nd</sup>): **Image and Public Speaking**

This class meeting will give you a chance to improve your personal presentation style. Indeed, self-presentation is a critical aspect of politics and life in general. Having the ability to present yourself in a confident and engaging way will serve you well in your internship and other endeavors. You are required to prepare your own stump speech before this class. Then, during class, you will deliver your speech and take feedback on your performance. This exercise should not only improve your presentation abilities but also help you understand some of the things that might make your candidate successful.

*Required Reading:*

- Gary Genard. “Politics and the Art of Performance” *Campaigns & Elections*. December 28, 2011. 1-3.
- Robert Lehrman. 2010. “Language People Understand,” “Delivery” and “The Stump Speech” in *The Political Speechwriter’s Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. 71-80, 229-249, 296-302.
- Watch some famous political speeches at: <http://www.politicalspeeches.net/>

### Class Nine (April 9<sup>th</sup>): **Polling and Political Research**

This class will start with a discussion of polling and its role in modern campaigns. Most campaigns either do their own polling or rely heavily on the polling of others. It is, therefore, important to understand how polling is done *correctly* and how to interpret the results. We will also consider the methods used to research the opponent’s campaign—always a seemingly sneaky but useful strategy.

#### *Required Reading:*

- Michael John Burton and Daniel M. Shea. 2010. “Campaign Polling” in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. 95-113.
- Craig Charney. “Top 10 Ways to Get Misleading Poll Results” *Campaigns & Elections*. July 11, 2007. 66-69.
- Jeffrey Stonecash. 2008. “Sample Report” in *Political Polling: Strategic Information in Campaigns*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 79-117, 145-161.
- Mark Mellman. “Effect of Polls on Races” *The Hill*. January 19, 2010. 1-3.
- Cathy Allen. 1996. “Research and Polling” in *Taking Back Politics: An Insider’s Guide to Winning*. Seattle, WA: Jalapeno Press Publications. 139-155.

#### *Optional Reading:*

- Dennis W. Johnson. 2007. “Testing Public Opinion” in *No Place for Amateurs: How Political Consultants are Reshaping American Democracy, Second Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge. 87-114.
- D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2012. “The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 75(5): 962-981.
- Glen Bolger. 2010. “The Use of Survey Research in Campaigns” in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 59-91.
- Mark Blumenthal. “Are Polls Missing People with Mobile Phones?” *Mystery Pollster*. October 15, 2004.
- Bruce Hardy and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2005. “Can a Poll Affect Perceptions of a Candidate Trait?” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 69(5): 725-743.
- Michael Traugott and Paul Lavrakas. 2008. *The Voter’s Guide to Election Polls*. New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Dennis W. Johnson. 2007. “Political Research: Digging Up the Dirt” in *No Place for Amateurs: How Political Consultants are Reshaping American Democracy, Second Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge. 57-86.
- Bryce Uphold. “Quality Opposition Research” *Campaigns and Elections*. June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009.
- Michael John Burton and Daniel M. Shea. 2010. “Opposition Research” in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. 53-73.

#### *Additional Polling Resources:*

- [http://www.aapor.org/Poll\\_andamp\\_Survey\\_FAQ/4196.htm](http://www.aapor.org/Poll_andamp_Survey_FAQ/4196.htm)
- <http://www.people-press.org/methodology/>
- <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/education.html#.TxbvEpiPhkY>

### Class Ten (April 16<sup>th</sup>): **Field Operations**

This class will focus on “Field” operations—the laborious efforts of campaign workers to ensure that supporters get to the polls to cast their votes. Field is not the most glamorous of campaign activities but it is often considered quite important to the outcome. In addition, thoughts about field have been changing recently with the use of social media and other electronic forms of voter outreach and communication.

*Required Reading:*

- Cathy Allen. 1996. "Field Operations" in *Taking Back Politics: An Insider's Guide to Winning*. Seattle, WA: Jalapeno Press Publications. 191-222.
- Alan Rosenblatt. 2010. "Dimensions of Campaigns in the Age of Digital Networks" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 207-226.
- Jordan Lieberman. "Soc-Nets and Web Strategies Cannot Replace Door-to-Door" *Campaigns and Elections*. July 6, 2009. 1-2.
- Seth Masket. 2009. "Did Obama's Ground Game Matter?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(5): 1023-1039.

*Optional Reading:*

- Paul S. Herrnson. 2010. "Fieldwork in Contemporary Election Campaigns" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 193-206.
- Will Robinson. 2004. "The Ground War: The Importance of Organizing the Field" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 148-162.
- Democratic Gain. 2004. "Voter Contact Training Manual" Retrieved from <http://www.democraticgain.org/?page=2004manuals>
- Allison Dale and Aaron Strauss. 2009. "Don't Forget to Vote: Text Message Reminders as a Mobilization Tool." *American Political Science Review* 53(4): 787-804.
- Costas Panagopolous. 2009. "Street Fight: The Impact of a Street Sign Campaign on Voter Turnout." *Electoral Studies* 28: 309-313.
- Tiffany Davenport, et al. 2010. "The Enduring Effects of Social Pressure: Tracking Campaign Experiments Over a Series of Elections." *Political Behavior* 32: 423-430.
- Alan S. Gerber and Donald, P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Direct Mail, and Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94: 653-63.

Class Eleven (April 23<sup>rd</sup>): **Campaign Ethics and Going Negative**

In this class, we will discuss the role that ethics play in a campaign. We will consider the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate behavior by the candidate and his/her staff. We may also watch parts of the documentary "Street Fight" to get a sense of some of the ethical issues that can arise in a campaign. Is it wrong to lie to voters? Are mudslinging and/or going negative fair campaign tactics? Is there a limit to the resources that a candidate can use to win an election?

*Required Reading:*

- Carol Whitney. 2010. "Campaign Ethics in a Changing World" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 251-268.
- L. Sandy Maisel, Darrell M. West, and Brett M. Clifton. 2007. "Impact on Campaign Conduct" in *Evaluating Campaign Quality: Can the Electoral Process be Improved?* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 32-45.
- Cathy Allen. 1996. "Going Negative" in *Taking Back Politics: An Insider's Guide to Winning*. Seattle, WA: Jalapeno Press Publications. 333-344.
- Paul Freedman, William Wood, and Dale Lawton. "Do's and Don'ts of Negative Ads: What Voters Say" *Campaigns and Elections* October, 1999. 20-30.
- Leonard Steinhorn. 2004. "Ads Are Us: Political Advertising in a Mass Media Culture" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 109-128.
- Jim Rutenberg and Jeff Zellany. "Facing Second Loss to Gingrich, Romney Went on Warpath" *New York Times*. January 28, 2012. 1-2

*Optional Reading:*

- Linda L. Fowler. 2004. "Campaign Ethics and the Politics of Personal Destruction" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 205-222.
- Kim Fridkin Kahn and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. "Attack Politics: Understanding the Determinants of Negative Campaigning" in *The Spectacle of US Senate Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 74-98
- Chris Sautter. 2010. "Election Law is the New Rock 'n Roll" in James A. Thurber and Candice J. Nelson (eds.) *Campaigns and Elections American Style: Transforming American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 227-250.

**Class Twelve (April 30<sup>th</sup>): Putting it All Together**

Prior to this class, you will read and review one of the campaign manuals listed below. Please submit your 4 to 5 page (double-spaced) review via Blackboard **before 3:00 pm on April 30<sup>th</sup>**. Your review should briefly summarize the book, point out the book's major strengths and weaknesses, and provide a summary evaluation. Your review should also tie the book to course materials. Please ensure that your review is submitted as a single MS Word file. During class, each student will discuss their review, providing others with a sense of the book.

*Books to Review (pick one):*

- Jeff Blodgett and Bill Lofy. 2008. *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: A Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8166-5333-1)
- Catherine Shaw. 2010. *The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections, Fourth Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8133-4451-5)
- Michael McNamara. 2008. *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press. (ISBN: 978-1-4327-3195-3)

**Class Thirteen (May 7<sup>th</sup>): Placement Research Presentations**

During this final meeting, you will present and discuss your placement research essay. You will have 7 to 8 minutes to discuss the key factors in your race/district before answering questions. Active participation by all students is required. To help you organize your final paper, you might consult one of the following readings.

*Optional Reading:*

- Michael John Burton and Daniel M. Shea. 2010. "The Campaign Plan" in *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. 95-113.
- Jeff Blodgett and Bill Lofy. 2008. "Writing a Campaign Plan and Laying Out a Path to Victory" in *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: A Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 21-34.
- Michael McNamara. 2008. "The Campaign Plan" and "Appendix A: Sample Campaign Plan" in *The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office*. Denver, CO: Outskirts Press. 53-64, 147-158.

**Placement Essay is Due Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am**

## Appendix 1: Discussion Questions

Most weeks you will be required to post a discussion question(s) based on the required reading. (I will tell you when a discussion question is NOT due.) Here are some pointers for writing a good discussion question:

1. Relate your question to the assigned reading and identify your sources.
2. Ask questions that are sure to generate debate and discussion—i.e., don't write questions with easy and/or predictable answers.
3. Seriously consider and think about the topic *before* you write your question.
4. Feel free to connect your questions to material and discussions from past classes—i.e., put your question in the larger context of the class (but don't simply repeat old questions).
5. Have an answer to your question in mind before coming to class.

Here are some examples of questions from the 2008 Studies in Electoral Politics class. All of these questions come verbatim from our class on negative campaigning and campaign ethics.

### On Negative Campaigning:

It is hard to imagine campaigns without the candidates going negative, attacking each other or dishing the dirt on their opponents. I'm going to be an athlete for a minute and say that no one wins any sort of game by being nice, so why should campaigns be an exception? It was stated nicely in the Allen piece that voters like a fight, and the press will be more likely to cover a campaign or candidate if there are negative tendencies. This isn't to say that there are no disadvantages to going negative in a campaign and that we should move with reckless abandon when attacking the opponent. I think that we could have an endless discussion about what is right and wrong in a campaign, and the different legislation that can be put into place to forward more ethical campaigns. But, I don't think this will do anything to solve the "problem" of campaign ethics. Maybe it's just me being cynical, but I really believe that a candidate has the right to go negative, assuming that they accept the consequences for going negative (i.e. lost votes, less funding, a greater attack upon them etc...) and they know how to counter attacks. I know that this is a broad question, but does going negative really take away from the content of a campaign or the message of the candidate? Does the "average American voter" have the ability to sift through the "muck" of attack ads in order to choose who they want?

As a side note, it would be more frightening to me to see a squeaky clean candidate (or two for that matter) participating in a completely ethical campaign, than to see two candidates at each others' throats, (to use extremes). While I do view some of the tactics pulled by candidates to be dirty and unnecessary, I think it's a critical part of the campaign, and I also think that the "average voter" is smarter than some people give them credit for and can pick out what is right and wrong with a candidate.

### Ethical Campaigns:

Carol Whitney gives a list of four categories of information use that she views to be unethical, but all four are major staples of campaign politics. False information (list item #1) is used to great effect all the time (just ask John McCain's illegitimate black daughter), and information appealing to base human instincts (list item #4) has produced some of the most effective political ads of all time. (And also some of the most insidious.) Maybe I'm just morally bankrupt, but it seems to me like there couldn't be campaigns as we know them without these four unethical uses of information. (If all four were to be abolished, campaigns would just feature candidates talking plainly about their policy prescriptions, with no mention of their rivals. What's so great about that?)

It makes me think that maybe unethical campaigning is almost a necessary part of the process; is a candidate's job to be honest to voters, or is it to get elected and thus implement the policies that they think best? I like how right now it seems like we have a checks and balances system on campaign ethics, with candidates doing what they can to gain an advantage on their opponent, and with the media on hand to deliver a slap on the wrist (or punch in the gut) to candidates when they get caught acting unethically.

## **The Campaign Ethics They Deserve:**

In her essay “Campaign Ethics and the Politics of Personal Destruction”, Linda Fowler makes the point that the episodic nature of campaigns and campaign season invites candidates to engage in vicious attacks on their opponents, backhanded or not, with the intent of scoring a few more critical votes in the race to the finish line: “Roughly two-thirds of the electorate decides on a candidate before or during the party conventions, but for the remaining voters the campaign starts on Labor Day.” Question: Are the voters themselves to blame for this? Does the typical American voter – not necessarily well-informed, generally politically inactive, somewhat inattentive – get the campaign ethics they deserve?

### **Fact Check:**

The idea that not all attack ads are viewed equally in the eyes of voters (Freedman) and that there are right and wrong ways of engaging in negative campaigning (Allen) was something that was really interesting to me. It's perhaps easy to condemn all of negative campaigning until you read statistics saying that voters respond well to candidates who do respond to attacks--it shows character, and that the candidate will stand up for them if elected.

In the Whitney article, one of the unethical practices concerning communication was the use of a voting record to create a false impression of your opponent. In class, we have talked about spin extensively. Where do you draw the line between spin and false impressions?

Also to comment a bit on Elijah's post, I've been reading factcheck.org, produced by UPenn's Annenberg's School of Public Policy, to fill in the context of attack ads. The NY Times cites them often, and I found it to be thorough and responsible. To bring in an example off the site, I was wondering what you all thought about recent ads produced by Clinton and Obama in which they both lead viewers astray on the other's record on accepting money from PACs: [http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/pac-ing\\_heat.html](http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/pac-ing_heat.html)

Do you think one is acting more unethically than the other? Clinton began the attacks by juxtaposing Obama's current presidential pledge with statistics from his state senate, and U.S. senate campaigns. Did that then give Obama the right to respond with his own misleading attack ad on Clinton's record?

### **The Right Context:**

I am most interested by the ethics in making issue attack ads. I thought the Whitney and Fowler chapters' comments that it is not only wrong or underhanded, but unethical, to use information on your opponent out of context was very interesting. Obvious it is impossible to make a bright line distinction. However, I was wondering if we could discuss how far a candidate should go to present their opponent's statements within the correct context. After all, candidates only have a limited amount of time and they do not want to spend it making their opponent's arguments. Should we place our trust in the media to put the context back into the statements? Right now the media is doing a horrible job at that, if they are trying to at all, and especially when it comes to Obama.

### **Online Negativity:**

One feature that recurs in this week's readings is how frequently candidates fumble the attempt to go negative without alienating voters. How do you think the advent of the internet era (and the resulting provision of anonymity) has changed this? Several examples of the internet's power to shape the news, such as George Allen's macaca slip, have had a distinctly partisan edge. With this profusion of new avenues for disseminating information incognito, leaking a story about your opponent can be done with a much greater level of impunity. A candidate no longer has to risk the possibility of fallout for approaching a reporter. The disclosure of Barack Obama's comments about "small town resentment," although reported by an ostensibly pro-Obama blogger, are one example of what I'm talking about.

Also, whereas other mechanisms for attacking opponents come with legal implications (push polling is a criminal offense in New Hampshire), the legality of many practices is still unsettled with regard to the internet