

I. COURSE INFORMATION

POS 4275: Modern Political Campaigns

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Fall 2016

Meeting Times: **Mon., Wed., Fri. P7, 1:55pm - 2:45pm**

Classroom: [127 Fine Arts Building C](#)

Office Hours: **Mon. & Wed., 3:00pm - 4:00pm**

Office Location: [330 Anderson Hall](#)

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course about the role of campaigns in contemporary American politics. In this course, we examine the day-to-day realities of the modern campaign, its evolution and historical context, and the long-term effects of the “constant campaign” on the legitimacy and efficacy of our democratic institutions. The core focus of this course is the largest and most visible of modern campaigns - the quadrennial contest for the American presidency - but we will also examine, to a lesser extent, the dynamics of campaigns for seats in the House of Representatives and Senate. We will examine readings from both social scientists and campaign professionals, and consider how the different approaches of these two groups have contributed to the state of campaigning in the modern era. I place a special emphasis on the ongoing cycle of debate between observers and practitioners of campaigns and the contributions of political science to modern campaign practices.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will develop the ability to think clearly and analytically about:

1. The realities of the modern day campaign cycle and the campaign industrial complex.
2. The historical development and wider context of contemporary campaigns.
3. The role of political science in modern campaigning, and the key contributions of social science-based theory and data analysis methods to campaigns.
4. The role of money, including both internal and external fundraising and spending, in the modern campaign.
5. The role of media, including both traditional mass media and social media, in the modern campaign.
6. Standard operating procedures and best practices in campaign organizing.
7. The normative implications of the constant campaign for our democratic institutions.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Richard K. Scher: *Political Campaigns in the United States* (Routledge, 2016). ISBN 1138181862
2. Will Feltus, Kenneth M. Goldstein, and Matthew Dallek (editors): *Inside Campaigns: Elections Through the Eyes of Political Professionals* [revised edition] (CQ Press, 2016). ISBN 1506332963
3. Sasha Issenberg: *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (Broadway Books, 2013). ISBN 0307954803

Other assigned readings from scholarly journals and periodicals will be available in the “Readings” folder on Canvas and/or through clickable links embedded in the reading schedule on this syllabus.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The course requirements include two exams, one midterm paper, one final paper, one class presentation, and a series of online discussion posts.

1. Exams will consist of a series of multiple choice and/or short answer questions, primarily covering key terms and core concepts from both lectures and assigned readings. The final exam *is cumulative*, in that some material from previous sections may reappear, if I believe the material is especially important or otherwise deserves reiteration. Exam dates follow:

Midterm exam: **Wednesday, October 12th, 1:55pm**

Final exam: **Wednesday, December 14th, 10:00am**

2. The midterm paper will comprise a brief (no more than 5 pages) analysis of a U.S. Senate campaign for the 2016 election cycle. You may choose the campaign you wish to follow from a list of options I will provide early in the semester. This paper should synthesize core concepts from class lectures and readings and apply those concepts to an analysis of the Senate campaign, in addition to a detailed prediction of the outcome of the race. The midterm paper is due on **Monday, November 7th**.

3. The final paper will comprise a post-mortem analysis of the presidential campaign to which you have been assigned, similar in approach to the “autopsy” the Republican National Committee completed after the 2012 election cycle. Like the midterm paper, this paper should synthesize concepts from lectures and readings with your own analysis of the presidential campaign. I will present a more detailed rubric later in the semester. The final paper will be due on **Monday, December 12th**.

4. The class presentation will involve a short (no more than about 5 minutes) update to the class on important events of the week inside the presidential campaign to which you’ve been assigned. We will schedule the presentations at the beginning of the second week of class (after add/drop).

5. The online discussion posts entail a series of posts to an online discussion board through Canvas on the Senate campaign you’ve selected, which will unfold over the course of the semester, leading up to Election Day. Discussion posts will be due on Sunday of every week up to the final Sunday before the election (Nov. 4th). Posts should be a one or two short paragraphs, around 150 words, providing an update on the campaign including the latest polls, new media buys, changes to personnel, new messaging efforts, major media appearances, and so on. Generally, around one-half of the class will be required to post each week. I may assign other discussion topics at my discretion, including extra credit topics, which will be posted unannounced.

VI. GRADES AND GRADING SCALE

Midterm Exam:	25 pts.	Final Paper:	20 pts.
Final Exam:	25 pts.	Canvas Discussions:	10 pts.
Midterm Paper:	15 pts.	Presentations:	5 pts.
		Total:	100 pts.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

<u>A</u>	<u>A-</u>	<u>B+</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>B-</u>	<u>C+</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C-</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
100-94	93-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-60	59-0

Please note that a grade of C- or below in this class may not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, college, or general education requirements. Please see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/>.

VII. MAKE-UP POLICIES

My policies for excused absences and make-up work are consistent with university guidelines available at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. In general, written documentation is required for an excused absence, an extension on assigned work, or a make-up exam.

I will schedule make-up exams for authorized absences with advance written notice from the responsible official (e.g., athletic or academic advisor). You may make up an exam for an illness with a written doctor’s note only. If you miss an exam for any other reason, you have twenty-four (24) hours from the scheduled start time of the exam to contact me by email and request authorization to take a **written essay exam** as a make-up. Failure to contact me within twenty-four hours will result in a zero for the exam. Essay exams will be completed on Canvas within a pre-scheduled limited time frame (generally, two hours). Because you will have access to your notes and books during essay exams, you can expect the questions to be relatively challenging and my grading to be relatively unforgiving.

VIII. DISABILITY RESOURCES

Students with disabilities should register with the Disability Resource Center by calling 352-392-8565, or by visiting the DRC website at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>, and providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive further instructions on requesting accommodations. Please register *as early as possible* in the semester.

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I expect you to comply with all university policies pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. Please review the Academic Honesty policy at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/staff/policies.html#honesty>. The student honor pledge - "*On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment*" - is implicit in every exam or assignment you complete. However, I will make it explicit: Don't plagiarize and don't receive unauthorized help. If you do, you will receive a zero on the assignment or exam, you will not be permitted to redo it, you will have to explain yourself to me, I will lose respect for you, and your ability to pass this class will be seriously jeopardized. So don't do it.

The expectation of academic integrity extends to faculty and instructors as well. I repeat here the university's Faculty Honor Pledge: *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

X. RESPECTFUL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

This is a class about politics. Classroom discussion may touch on political and social issues which are often controversial and sometimes quite sensitive. Please be prepared for this possibility. Furthermore, be willing to open your mind to different ways of viewing the world that arise from the wide range of geographic, socioeconomic, religious, and racial and ethnic backgrounds - not to mention from different personal experiences with politics and the political system - that are represented at a major state university. This rich assortment of diverse life experiences is one of the great advantages of undergraduate study at a large university like UF.

As your instructor, I will maintain a respectful attitude toward all students during classroom discussion, and I will never discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other category protected by law, university policy, or common human decency. I expect the same from all of my students. I reserve the right to remove you from my classroom and assign an attendance grade of zero for unacceptable violations of these norms.

XI. EVALUATIONS

I expect all students to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are open during the last two weeks of the semester. Evaluations help me in my own assessment of the course and in my future academic pursuits. I take them seriously and I ask you to do the same.

XII. DISCLAIMER

I reserve exclusive right to my prepared materials including lectures, slides, exams, and quizzes. You may record lectures for personal use only. Unauthorized distribution of recorded lectures, course notes, examination material, and all other prepared materials constitutes a material breach of this right *as well as* a violation of academic integrity policies.

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

On this schedule, I employ the last name of the first (or only) author as shorthand for the book, e.g., "Scher" for *Political Campaigns in the United States*. Other readings are linked directly in the text. If the link does not work, simply Google the title of the article, and you are certain to encounter it at the top of the results.

IMPORTANT: This course schedule is a *guideline*. I reserve the right to change it as the semester progresses. In particular, I expect to add a number of other periodicals and podcasts to the schedule. These will be added separately on Canvas, and this file *will not be changed*.

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Week 1

Mon., Aug. 22nd Introduction.

Wed., Aug. 24th Scher, Preface and Ch.1, "Political Campaigns in the United States."

Fri., Aug. 26th Feltus, Ch.1, "Losing and Winning: The Craft and Science of Political Campaigns."

[Henry Brady, Richard Johnston, and John Sides, "The Study of Political Campaigns," in Brady & Johnston \[editors\], *Capturing Campaign Effects* \(2009, University of Michigan Press\).](#)

Week 2

Mon., Aug. 29th Issenberg, Ch. 1, "Blinded by Political Science."

[Matthew Yglesias, "Donald Trump's campaign is an amazing gift to political science."](#)
Vox.com (June 23rd, 2016)

Wed., Aug. 31st Feltus, Ch.2, "Political Math: How Campaigns Matter."

Fri., Sep. 2nd Scher, Ch. 2, "Political Campaigns in Historical Perspective."

PODCAST: [Whistlestop, "Hurrah and Hokum"](#)

Week 3

Mon., Sep. 5th Issenberg, Ch. 2, "A Game of Margins."

Wed., Sep. 7th Issenberg, Ch. 3, "The New Haven Experiments."

Fri., Sep. 9th **PRESENTATION GROUP 1**

Week 4

Mon., Sep. 12th Scher, Ch. 3, "Candidates and Campaigns."

[Excerpt: V.O. Key, "The Responsible Electorate"](#)

Wed., Sep. 14th Feltus, Ch.4, "Political Historian and Data Scientist."

Fri., Sep. 16th **PRESENTATION GROUP 2**

Week 5

Mon., Sep. 19th Scher, Ch.4, "The Campaign Industry."

Wed., Sep. 21st Issenberg, Ch. 4, "The Two Percent Solution."

Feltus, Ch. 5, "Marketing Maven."

Fri., Sep. 23rd **PRESENTATION GROUP 3**

Week 6

Mon., Sep. 26th Scher, Ch. 5, "Political Campaigns and the Media."

Wed., Sep. 28th Feltus., Ch. 6, "Producer and Stage Manager."

PODCAST: [FiveThirtyEight, "Why The Dean Scream Sounded So Different On TV."](#)

Fri., Sep. 30th **PRESENTATION GROUP 4**

Week 7

Mon., Oct. 3rd Issenberg, Ch.5, "'You Mean You Don't Do This In Politics?'"

Wed., Oct. 5th Feltus, Ch. 7, "Spinmeister and Policy Wonk."

Fri., Oct. 7th **PRESENTATION GROUP 5**

Week 8

Mon., Oct. 10th Issenberg, Ch. 6, "Geeks Versus The Gurus."

Wed., Oct. 12th **MIDTERM EXAM.**

Fri., Oct. 14th **NO CLASS.** Homecoming.

Week 9

Mon., Oct. 17th Scher, Ch. 6, "Money and Political Campaigns."

[The Public Square, "Do We Really Need Campaign Finance Reform?" Time.com \(January 19th, 2016\).](#)

Wed., Oct. 19th Feltus, Ch. 4, "Entrepreneur and Chief Financial Officer."

Fri., Oct. 21st **PRESENTATION GROUP 6**

Week 10

Mon., Oct. 24th Feltus, Ch. 8, "Field General."

Wed., Oct. 26th Issenberg, Ch. 7, "When Shame Pays a House Call."

Fri., Oct. 28th **PRESENTATION GROUP 7**

Week 11

Mon., Oct. 31st Issenberg, Ch. 8, "Showdown at the Oasis."

Wed., Nov. 2nd Issenberg, Ch. 9, "Models and the Matrix."

Fri., Nov. 4th **PRESENTATION GROUP 8**

Week 12

Mon., Nov. 7th Election predictions: Readings TBA.

MIDTERM PAPER DUE.

Wed., Nov. 9th Discussion of election results.

Fri., Nov. 11th **NO CLASS.** Veterans' Day holiday.

Week 13

Mon., Nov. 14th Feltus, Ch. 9, "Strategy Enforcer and Team Builder."

Wed., Nov. 16th Feltus, Ch. 10, "Candidate Caretaker and Confidante."

Fri., Nov. 18th Issenberg, Ch. 10, "The Soul of a New Machine."

Week 14

Mon., Nov. 21st Erika Franklin Fowler and Travis Ridout, "Negative, Angry, and Ubiquitous: Political Advertising in 2012." *The Forum* (2012, 10:4)

PODCAST: [Whistlestop, "Keep Your Attack Dog Fed."](#)

Wed., Nov. 23rd **NO CLASS.** Thanksgiving holiday.

Fri., Nov. 25th **NO CLASS.** Thanksgiving holiday.

Week 15

Mon., Nov. 28th Issenberg, Epilogue, "Pushing the envelope."

Wed., Nov. 30th Issenberg, Afterword, "The sovereignty of numbers."

Fri., Dec. 2nd David W. Nickerson and Todd Rogers, "Political Campaigns and Big Data." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2014, 28:2)

Week 16

Mon., Dec. 5th Scher, Ch.7, "Conclusion: Political Campaigns and Democratic Elections in the U.S."

Wed., Dec. 7th Wrap-up and final exam review.

Fri., Dec. 9th **NO CLASS.** Reading days.

Mon., Dec. 12th **FINAL PAPER DUE.**

Final Exam: Group 14B

Wednesday, December 14th, 2016, 10:00am.