PS 4026 – Campaigns and Elections  
Fall 2013

Class Time: MWF 9:30-10:20 am  
Classroom: Stubbs 116  
Professor: Dr. Christopher Mann  
E-mail: cmann13@lsu.edu  
Office Location: Hodges 210  
Office Hours: MWF 8:30-9:30, W 11:30-12:30, and by appointment

Course Description: This course is intended to provide an overview of campaigns and elections in the United States for political science majors and non-majors with an interest in understanding elections, campaigns, and voting in the United States. We will cover the institutions governing voting, political communication, public opinion, political participation, and political behavior.

The primary course objective is for you to gain a greater understanding of campaigns and elections, American style. This necessarily includes an in-depth understanding of the when, where, why, how and to what effect candidates, media, and voters shape strategies and outcomes. Specifically, by the end of this course, you should:

• Understand the reasons why individuals choose to participate or not to participate in the American political process.
• Understand the basic set up of the United States electoral system and how it influences outcomes.
• Understand the interactions among candidates, media and voters in the context of political campaigns.
• Become knowledgeable consumers of political information generally and campaign information specifically.

The material for this course will be presented in lecture, readings, and discussion. The readings provide an in-depth look at important aspects of American politics. You are expected to complete the readings prior to class. Attendance and participation are required. You will be graded on your preparation and contributions.

My goal is to engage you in the many fascinating aspects of campaigns and elections in the United States. We cannot cover everything on this broad and important topic in lecture, discussion, and the readings, so office hours are the appropriate time to discuss additional ideas and materials that may interest you. Of course, office hours are a valuable resource if you have questions about lecture, readings, assignments, or exams.

Contact Info: Email is the most reliable way to reach me. Although I try to respond quickly, I do not check email constantly so expect delays of up to 12-24 hours during the week and occasionally no response between Friday afternoon and Monday morning. If you need to reach me, please plan ahead. When sending an email message, please include your full name and the course number.

For class related communication, I will use the email address you have listed in Moodle to contact you, including any important announcements, so it is important to make sure that your email account listed with Moodle is up-to-date.

Course Website: All students officially registered for the course can access the course's Moodle page. The Moodle page includes a course syllabus, announcements, readings, assignments, and any other relevant course information.

Class Decorum: In addition to learning about campaigns and elections, you are preparing for ‘real life’ after graduation. As such, you are expected to comport yourself in class just as you would as a professional in the ‘real world’. You are expected to be on time, pay attention, refrain from talking in class or other interruptions, or engage in other distractions (text messaging, surfing the web on your computer, etc). Failure to behave with proper decorum in class may result in grade penalties.
Eating and gum chewing are not allowed in class. You may bring water or other non-alcoholic beverages in a spill resistant container for consumption during class.

Cell phones must be turned off and put away prior to class (along with any other electronic device that will ring, buzz, or make other noises/flash lights/etc).

Many of you will bring strong partisan attachments to the discussion of campaigns and elections. Partisan perspectives are welcome and appropriate for many discussions, but must be expressed in an appropriate and civil manner that is respectful of classmates, candidates, and other individuals engaged in the campaign. Rhetoric is an integral part of campaigning, but there is no place in this class for the vitriol or distortions sometimes seen in campaigns. In this class, you are a scholar – not an activist.

Accessibility Resources: Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students who have a documented disability. Please contact me by e-mail or during office hours during the first two weeks of school if you will be arranging alternative accommodations.

Late Submission of Assignments: Late assignments will either not be accepted or will incur a grade penalty unless they are due to documented serious illness or a family emergency. Start assignments early and protect yourself against computer failures. Retain an electronic version of your work.

Class Cancellation: In the event a class is canceled (due to natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.

Grading: The class will be graded based upon attendance/participation, campaign profile assignments, three exams, Media Effects Lab participation, and a final project/paper related to all of the material covered during the semester.

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Grading scale:
- A 90-100
- B 80-89.99
- C 70-79.99
- D 60-69.99
- F 0-59.99

Grade changes: I do make mistakes, so I am willing to review an assignment, exam, or final project grade you believe to be incorrect. However, a request to review a grade means that I will fully reconsider the grade assigned. Therefore, the assigned grade may go up or down based on my review (note: past grade reviews have resulted in changes up and down). You may be asked to explain your reasoning for a higher grade in writing before I will review any assignment.

Media Effects Lab Participation
This course draws on the type of research conducted here at LSU and part of the course is learning to be a careful consumer of this research. As in all things, there is no substitute for firsthand experience. Therefore, you will have the opportunity to receive course credit worth up to three point for your final grade by participating in ongoing research in the Media Effects Lab [MEL], or by completing an alternate assignment in lieu of a research participation opportunity (https://lsu-manship.sona-systems.com). Please note that to earn each point for your final grade, you must either earn two MEL points or complete alternate assignments associated with studies by
the due dates given—late participation or assignments will not be available. Students may earn up to 3 extra credit points for your final grade by accumulating additional MEL credit (2 MEL credits = 1 point for final grade).

**Exams**
This course has three exams, and all three will be take-home exams. Take-home exams are open-book and open-notes, but closed-mouth. You may **not** work with classmates, roommates, friends, or family members on the exam. The take-home exams are part of your learning experience, as well as an evaluation tool.

The first exam will cover material up to that point in the course. The second mid-term exam will cover material from the first exam to the second exam. The third exam will cover material from the second exam to the end of the course. The exams are not cumulative, but you will need to understand prior material to answer questions on later exams.

The later exams are worth more points because they cover more material. This is designed for you to learn what I expect on exams. Just so you aren't surprised, the later exams will also be longer in proportion to the number of points for the exam. Please plan your time accordingly.

You will have an adequate time to complete each exam. You should expect to commit the same amount of time to completing the take-home exam that you would commit to studying for an in-class exam. Since you have adequate time to complete the exam, you should proofread your exam. Typos, bad grammar, and lack of clarity will be penalized.

You have time and the full resources of course materials, the library, and the web to answer the exam questions. Any assistance from or collaboration with others on the exam will result in serious penalties, including failure of the exam, failure of the course, and other penalties deemed appropriate through the LSU disciplinary process.

**Exams must be turned in via Moodle no later than the start of class on the day they are due.**

**Exam Due Dates**
- Exam 1 - September 23
- Exam 2 – October 16
- Exam 3 – December 11 (by noon – end of scheduled final exam period)

**Note:** The first two dates are subject to change at my discretion, with advance notice, based on how we proceed through planned material. The dates may be postponed, but will not be made earlier.

Finally, there is no in-person final exam for this course. The last exam will be turned in via Moodle on (or before) the scheduled time. Since this is a take-home exam that will be handed out on the last day of class, the due date will not be rescheduled.

**Exam Make-up Policy:** No make-up exams will be given during the terms except for extraordinary situations. If you have a valid reason (documented illness or major family circumstances) for missing an exam, arrangements may be made for a make-up exam. If you are going to miss an exam, you must contact me BY E-MAIL prior to the exam and as soon as you are aware that you will miss the exam due date to avoid receiving a zero for the exam.

**Campaign Profile Assignment & Final Project**
Campaign profile assignment requires you to profile one of the many competitive campaigns from the 2012 General Election. We will have a “draft” for you to select the race you wish to profile. Draft order will randomly assigned by me in class using Excel. A list of competitive races will be provided on Moodle in advance. You may choose to a race not on my suggested list, but you will have to demonstrate that it was competitive and interesting enough for these assignments.
The race selected for the campaign profile assignment will also be the subject of your final project/paper. The weekly assignments build towards the final project, and I expect you to incorporate them (i.e. you will do a large portion of the final project in the weekly assignments, so you will only have to make revisions for the final project).

We will have an assignment each week, except weeks with an exam. You will upload the profile assignments on Moodle no later than the start of class on the due date (the night before is a good idea so you don’t forget). These assignments shall be 1½ to 2 pages (double spaced). I will announce the assignment and the due date in class and on Moodle when we have covered the appropriate material.

In each class, I may select students to provide brief oral reports on the race they are profiling. Your grade will be based on the summaries and in-class reports.

You will be profiling the race, not a particular candidate in the race. Your work is expected to be a non-partisan/bi-partisan case study of the campaign and both candidates. All candidates do smart things and stupid things. All candidates have good luck and bad luck. Your work should reflect this reality.

The final project/paper will cover the entire semester, including class discussions, political news, readings, and lecture. The details of the final assignment will be discussed and handed out in class. Discussing your project/paper with me during office hours is strongly encouraged.

Required Reading:
This is a course about campaigns and elections. In addition to the assigned readings on the syllabus, you are expected to read about campaign and election news from journalistic sources and/or a bi-partisan set of blogs.

I recommend Politico.com and RealClearPolitics.com for journalistic type coverage of the election at the national level. RealClearPolitics.com is an especially useful place for poll results. There are countless blogs about politics on both sides of the aisle. Among the most high profile are HuffingtonPost.com and Talking Points Memo [tpm.com] (liberal/Democratic) and DrudgeReport.com (conservative/Republican). Virtually every state has one or more (mostly) non-partisan blog about state and local politics. You should follow the appropriate state blog(s) for your campaign profile assignment.

You should also read about the election in a read journalistic news publication which covers national politics on a regular basis. This may be your hometown newspaper or a national/regional newspaper (for example, The Advocate, Times-Picayune, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Houston Chronicle, Dallas Morning News, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, etc).

You are required to do the reading for prior to each class. Readings are posted on the Moodle site, from two books are available at the bookstore, or are available as eBooks that can be read online via the library.

Books at the Bookstore:

eBooks available from the library:
b) Thomas E. Mann & Bruce E. Cain (editors), Party Lines: Competition, Partisanship, And Congressional Redistricting, 2005