

POLA 6120: Advanced Campaigns & Elections

Instructor

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Email for an appointment

Course Information for Fall 2020

CRN: 98388

Date & Time: Wednesday & Friday 3:10 PM – 4:20 PM

Classroom: Stanley Thomas 302

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide both a theoretical and a practical view of American campaigns and elections. To that end I have three primary objectives for students. The first is to establish a firm understanding of American elections and electioneering by examining both the rules of the game and the players. The second is to develop analytical skills with which to analyze the strategic situations faced by campaigns. The third is to introduce you to the work of the political scientist by concentrating on paradigms and techniques of the discipline. Our main focus is on federal elections (though references will be made to state and local elections), with particular attention to the 2020 presidential election. By focusing on the current campaign, as well as previous election cycles, we will see examples of the theoretical and descriptive points raised in the course.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes: 1) demonstrate advanced substantive knowledge about the campaign process and electoral outcomes; 2) articulate and evaluate theories of campaign behavior and electoral decisionmaking; and 3) ability to assess, in both oral and written assignments, the factors that lead to disunity in the United States as well as the factors that still unify Americans. These learning outcomes contribute to the following program outcomes: 1) students will be able to demonstrate research skills and utilize the proper methodologies necessary to write a paper in the discipline of political science; and 2) students will have an advanced knowledge of the political institutions and processes that shape elections in the U.S., including knowledge of the forces that drive political participation and the strategies employed by campaigns to persuade and mobilize voters.

Required Texts

All readings will be available on the course page on Canvas, either as PDFs or links to journal articles hosted through the library's website.

Assignments

There will be six components to the grade in this course. Each week (two class meetings) will cover one topic, and on the Friday of each week a pair of students will serve as discussion leaders. Instructions for discussion leadership are at the end of the syllabus. Additionally, students who are not serving as a discussion leader in a particular week will have to complete a reading summary for each Friday class (instructions follow). Additionally, students will complete a substantial research paper that involves the empirical study of campaigns and elections. During the course of the semester, students will be expected to complete a paper proposal, a literature review, and a research design. At the end of the course, students will complete a 'final' component, either the fully executed research paper or a take-home final exam. These components will contribute to the final course grade as follows:

Assignment	Date Due	Points
Discussion Leader	Varies	15
Weekly Summaries	Weekly	10 Points
Paper Proposal	Sept 9	5 Points
Literature Review	Oct 23	15 Points
Research Design	Nov 20	20 Points
Final Paper or Final Exam	Dec 2	35 Points
TOTAL		100 TOTAL POINTS

Course Policies

- **Format:** This course is a seminar. As a result, attendance is critical both for individual student learning as well as the successful operation of each class session. Students should come with course materials read in advance, prepared to engage one another in discussion. In all circumstances students are encouraged to stop me for questions or comments.
- **Grading:** This course will be graded according to Tulane's plus/minus grading system. Grades will be available by seeing me before or after class or during office hours. I will not provide grades over email or by phone.

A	93-100	A-	90-92.99	B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99	B-	80-82.99	C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99	C-	70-72.99	D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99	D-	60-62.99	F	59.99 and below

- **Expectations:** Students are expected to attend each class, to be on time, and to have all course materials read prior to the class in which they are discussed. Please turn off all electronic devices during class. Laptop computers are not permitted in class; please turn them off and put them away before class starts. All assignments must be completed for a student to pass the course. Requests for regrading any exam or assignment must be made no later than one week after it has been returned. No make-ups will be allowed except in very serious circumstances (I reserve the right to determine what is "very serious"). Course incompletes will only be allowed for circumstances in which the student is physically unable to complete the course; the student must otherwise be passing the course in order to be granted an incomplete.
- **Accommodations:** If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness, or handicap, or if you are involved with a university activity that requires you to miss class, let me know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. All students attending Tulane University with documented disabilities are eligible and encouraged to apply for services with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. Please see me or go to <https://accessibility.tulane.edu> for more information. Students needing accommodations must provide me a copy of the accommodation granted by the GCSA as soon as possible.

- **Academic Integrity:** As described in the Tulane University [Code of Academic Conduct](#), students are expected to uphold the honor and integrity of the academic process. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating on an exam (either providing answers to or receiving answers from another student), plagiarism (the use of another author's words or arguments without attribution), and unauthorized collaboration (working with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement). If a student commits any violation of academic integrity, I will pursue disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Academic Conduct.
- **Academic Freedom:** In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, particularly about political ideas, there are bound to be many differing viewpoints. Students may disagree with each other at times, or with me. These differences can help enhance class discussion and create an atmosphere where students (and I) will be encouraged to think and learn. In any event, grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs expressed in class or in assignments.
- **Note regarding syllabus dates:** Please take into consideration the dates of exams and the due dates for essays when scheduling other activities, travel, etc. This applies especially to course requirements that occur immediately before or after holidays. Note also that the final exam date is set by the registrar. Students must take the exam on this date; exceptions can only be granted by the Dean of Newcomb Tulane College. Finally, please note the university-designated makeup dates: October 10, 11, 24, and 25. These dates will be used for makeup classes in the event of a university closure.
- **Religious Accommodation Policy:** <https://registrar.tulane.edu/academic-calendar> (bottom of the page)
- **Title IX Policy / Support:** <https://allin.tulane.edu/>
- **Code of Student Conduct:** <https://conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct>
- **Compliance with COVID-19 Regulations:** <https://tulane.edu/covid-19/health-strategies>

Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Aug 19	Intro / Syllabus	
Aug 21	Intro to C&E Research	Sides, Shively
Aug 26, 28	Electoral Process / Context	Carroll, McKee, Mycoff
Sept 2, 4	Campaign Eras	Carson, Hirano
Sept 9 & 11	Campaign Finance	Grant, Jacobson, La Raja
Sept 16, 18	Strategy	Huang, Nickerson, Petrocik
Sept 23, 25	Political Parties	Brox, Herrnson, Huckfeldt
Sept 30, Oct 2	Interest Groups	Brunell, Franz, Leighley
Oct 7, 9	Media	Fridkin, Han, Ridout
Oct 14, 16	Presidential Campaigns	Gimpel, Shaw, Steger
Oct 21, 23	Congressional Campaigns	Burden, Campbell, Gronke
Oct 28, 30	State & Local Campaigns	Abbe, Squire, Troutstine
Nov 4, 6	<i>Post Election Discussion / Work Day</i>	
Nov 11, 13	Turnout	Gerber, Hillygus, Powell
Nov 18, 20	Vote Choice	Ansolabehere, Bartels, Gelman
Dec 2	<i>Final Exam or Final Paper due - 12:00 PM</i>	

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Discussion Leader Instructions

Every week two members of the class will serve as Discussion Leaders. The DLs will work with the professor to guide the class through the readings, raising interesting questions and exploring the concepts raised in the readings. The DLs should be particularly aware of how the concepts raised in the readings might link to behavior we have seen in recent campaigns and elections (i.e. look for real-world, practical examples).

Each week there will be some assigned articles that everyone will read for class on Wednesday. This material will provide a common background/basis for discussion. Beyond those articles, each discussion leader will make one additional selection for each topic (so two more total) that everyone will read for class on Friday.

Specific instructions for the Discussion Leaders:

1. Pick your topic/week.
2. Before your assigned week, search for scholarly articles (see note below) on your topic.
3. Select one for the entire class to read. This selection needs to be done on the WEDNESDAY before your scheduled Friday discussion leadership.
4. (The Professor and the rest of the class will read those two articles and prepare a weekly reading summary to be submitted by 9:00 AM Friday.)
5. Prepare your “lecture notes.” This should include a summary of the Wednesday readings, a summary each of the two additional readings, and any important questions or topics you want to cover in class.
6. Lead class on Friday. Class will begin with the two discussion leaders summarizing the articles and noting why they selected the articles that they did. The DLs will then guide class discussion, raising important points, referencing real-world examples, and discussion data and methodological considerations. The Professor will help guide the discussion and will also raise the various questions students submitted in their weekly reading summaries.

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Weekly Reading Summary Instructions

Every week you need to prepare a summary of the week's readings. This summary should be 1-2 pages, typed, in 10 or 12 point font. The purpose of the summary is to prove to me that you have done the readings. In addition, preparing the reading summary will help you remember important points that can be raised during class discussion.

Besides summarizing the readings, this paper should do three things:

- It should show critical analysis of the readings. How do the readings relate to one another and to the topic of the week? Are the readings mutually supportive or do they offer differing viewpoints?
- It should offer your perspective on the readings. What did you like? What did you not like? What would you have done differently?
- It should prepare you for class discussion. Are there any important points that need to be discussed in class? Are there any unclear concepts that need explanation? At the end of the paper write down these points or questions (at least one) so that we can address them in class.

The papers are due at **9:00 AM on Friday** each week and will be “turned in” on Canvas.

The papers will be graded on a check-plus/check/check-minus system:

- Check – this means that you have proved to me that you have done the readings and thought critically about them. Getting a check on each week's reading summary will get you full credit for this portion of the course grade.
- Check-minus – this means that you did not prove to me that you read and thought about the readings, though you probably did some of them. A check minus gives you no credit for the week's reading summary, but it can be counteracted by a...
- Check-plus – this means that you not only proved to me that you did the readings, but also that you have an exceptional understanding of the material, made insightful points, and raised important questions. You get no extra credit for a check-plus, but it can be used to make up for a check-minus in another week.
- Zero – this means you did not turn in a summary on time or that your summary demonstrates that you did not actually do the readings. You (obviously) get no credit for a zero and it cannot be counteracted by a check-plus.

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Research Project

The goal of the research project is to help students engage in empirical research on American campaigns and elections. While students are welcome (and encouraged) to study campaigns and elections in 2020, students may study any previous election (or elections) at any level: Presidential, Congressional, statewide, or local. Through this research project students will not only learn the analytical techniques used by political scientists to study elections and campaigns, but they will also produce original findings about how elections and campaigns work in the United States.

For all papers: Use 12-point, Times New Roman Font; 1-inch margins all around; Insert Page numbers at the bottom; Indent paragraphs & do not put spaces between them.

- Step 1: Paper Proposal – September 9

Your paper proposal should propose a research question. It should address why the topic of study is important. Why do we care what the answer of the research question is? Is it important in our understanding of campaigns? Election outcomes? Voter decisionmaking? Finally, you should consider what data you will use to answer this question and where you might find them. This proposal should be 2-4 pages.

- Step 2: Literature Review – October 23

At this point you should revise the material from the paper proposal into an introduction to your paper. This section should address any comments I made on your paper proposal

But the bulk of this draft will be comprised of the literature review. Regarding the literature review:

“A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. In writing the literature review, your purpose is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. As a piece of writing, the literature review must be defined by a guiding concept (e.g., your research objective, the problem or issue you are discussing, or your argumentative thesis). It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries.” See: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

Although there is no limit on the number of citations, each paper should include no fewer than ten scholarly works¹, including any relevant readings that we covered in class.

In writing your literature review, you should be developing hypotheses about your study. For example, if you're asking, "Why did voters vote for Donald Trump in 2016?" then your literature review should include the various hypotheses, including scholarly work that has been done on each hypothesis. So, you might hypothesize that "Republicans were more likely to vote for Trump" or "People who watched Fox News every day were more likely to vote for Trump."

Additionally, students cannot rely on material from web sites. Other than using the web to help you find material that has been printed elsewhere (in journals, books, etc.), you should not use the web on this project. Students *MUST* appropriately cite their sources in the text as well as in a works cited section. You must follow a standard citation format (I do not care which one you choose, but you must pick one and use it consistently and correctly).

The paper you turn in should conclude with a works cited page.

- Step 3: Research Design – November 20

This paper should first revise and connect the material from the first two parts of the assignment, taking care to incorporate any suggestions/comments I have made on the earlier versions. Specifically, you should have:

- ❖ An introductory paragraph or section that introduces the topic, presents the specific research question, and discusses why this research is important.
- ❖ The next section should be a revised literature review. You might need sub-headings that delineate different ideas/theories/hypotheses.
- ❖ Then, you'll need a section on the data. This section should discuss the data you will use to answer your research question. What are these data and where did you/will you find them? Why are these data appropriate for answering your research question? You should be explicit about which data constitute your dependent variable and independent variables. This section should also revise and expand on the hypotheses presented in the paper you

¹ A "scholarly work" includes reputable books, scholarly journals (such as those found through academic search engines), reputable newspapers or magazines, or in policy briefs. Popular magazines are generally not considered reputable for this field. Similarly, not all books are equal, and polemics that show little evidence of research should be avoided; books published by university presses are generally considered scholarly. The most appropriate journals for this project include: American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Political Science Quarterly, Public Opinion Quarterly, Political Behavior, Social Science Quarterly, Political Research Quarterly, and American Politics Research. See also: <http://www.tulane.edu/~bbrox/journals.html>

turned in at step 2. Hypotheses should be stated more clearly and incorporate the specific data/variables that you just discussed as being necessary to answer your research question

- ❖ Finally, you need to provide a research design. If you do a qualitative analysis, you should discuss how you will select your cases/documents/etc., what type of analysis you will perform on them, and how you will present your findings. If you do a quantitative analysis, you should discuss your analytical techniques and describe (or even include empty examples of) the tables or graphs you would use to present your findings.

There is no minimum page limit for Step 3; it is more important that you address all required components of the research design. That said, I think it is unlikely that you can do this in less than 15 or 20 pages.

- Step 4: Final Project – December 2

At this point you have a choice regarding your final assignment:

- ❖ You may choose to take the Final Exam. It will take place on December 2, 12:00-3:00 PM. As final exams are scheduled by the Registrar, there are NO EXCEPTIONS to this date & time.
- ❖ **OR** you may choose to continue work on your research design and actually complete the research paper.
 - You first need to revise the research design document according to any comments I have made.
 - Next, you need to ACTUALLY ACQUIRE THE DATA, and revise this section of the paper to provide full details about the data, where you found them, and any alterations/recoding you performed on the data before conducting your analyses.
 - You then need to full describe your analytical methods. Did you use qualitative or quantitative methods? Which specific procedures did you use to generate evidence to answer your research question, and why are they appropriate for this analysis?
 - Then, YOU WILL ACTUALLY ANALYZE THE DATA and include a lengthy section describing your results. What do the data say? How are we to evaluate your hypotheses? Do the data support or contradict your theory? Your findings should be presented in the text and you should feel free to include tables, charts, graphs, or other graphical presentations of data to the extent that they help to illustrate how your evidence addresses your hypotheses.
 - Finally, you will have a conclusion. This section should restate the research question and summarize the findings of your analyses. It should ultimately provide an answer to your research question. It should also address unresolved issues and possible next steps should you (or someone else) continue to work on this research question.

As above, there is no minimum page limit for the full research paper; it is more important that you address all required components. That said, I think one will need 15 or 20 pages for the research design, so a complete research paper should be 20-30 pages (perhaps more if you have large tables or illustrations).

To summarize, your paper needs the following components:

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Literature Review (including hypotheses)
- ❖ Data & Methods
- ❖ Results – text as well as tables/figures/graphs/etc.
- ❖ Discussion/Conclusion
- ❖ Endnotes/Works Cited/Appendices

Please contact me if you need further information about any of these components.

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OPTIONAL – Assist with a Research Project

During the fall campaign I am working on a research project that analyzes design elements of political yard signs. But to make that work I need a lot of yard signs!

I don't really want to take actual yard signs, but the project can still work with photographs of the yard signs. If you see a yard sign, snap a picture of it and email it (using as large a file size as possible) to:

yardsigns.project@gmail.com

These can be yard signs for any candidate for any office (national, state, local) from any political party (signs from 3rd party candidates are especially welcome). But please just send **political** yard signs – I don't need real estate signs, business signs, signs for the upcoming garage sale, etc...

How to take a picture of a political yard sign:



Please feel free to circulate these instructions and email address to friends and family, especially those in other areas of the country – I don't want only yard signs from New Orleans.