

Professor Markus Prior
Fall Semester 2006
TH 1:30-4:30

WWS 532
Political Campaigning

This class examines strategy and effects of modern election campaigns. The main goal is to introduce students to scholarly analyses of how campaigns are conducted and what their effects are on people's political reasoning and their vote choices. As part of the class, students will apply existing theories of campaigning and public opinion to the ongoing 2006 campaigns.

The class presents an overview of the different explanations of how people make voting decisions, from stable long-term factors (such as partisan identification) to short-term influences of campaign and media communication. The premise of this class is that people's political behavior is best understood by examining short- and long-term factors at different electoral levels (local, congressional, presidential), in different communication environments (large vs small districts, media markets), and for different groups of people (politically interested/uninterested).

Course Requirements

Readings and Discussion

The course will be conducted as a seminar. You will be expected to do the assigned readings *before* each class and come prepared for discussion. Some of the readings are technically demanding. It may therefore take you as long to read and understand a short journal article than to read some of the longer readings. Plan accordingly.

Assignments

Most of the class is reserved for discussion and student presentations. There is no term paper requirement for this class. In my experience, a seminar benefits more when students think about and present independent work in class, rather than write a paper after the semester is over. Hence, there are three assignments (in addition to the weekly required readings).

(1) Leading discussion

You will be responsible for leading the discussion of one week's readings. A sign-up sheet will be circulated in the first class. Discussions should focus both on the way we study campaigns (What do we need to know? What research designs are appropriate? How valid are the results?) and on the conclusions we can draw for the ongoing campaigns. Discussion leaders should assume that everyone has done the readings. Introductory summaries and PowerPoint presentations are **discouraged!**

A **one-page outline** of your plans for the discussion is **due by email at 2 p.m. on the day before you serve as discussion leader** (so I have a chance to give you feedback). You will be graded based on how well you

- steer discussion towards the important points raised in the readings,
- involve students in the discussion,
- keep students on target,
- cover both substantive implications (Why does this matter?) and research design questions (How do we know? Do we really know?)
- and relate discussion to topics covered in previous weeks and the overall class context.

(2) Supplementary reading (Reports and Presentations)

You will be required to select several supplementary readings, write a short report about their contributions, and present your findings in class. I will circulate a list of readings from which you pick. The written reports and your presentations should briefly summarize the reading you selected and then relate it to the required readings for the week.

You may pick readings for whichever **four** weeks you like (but not the week for which you serve as discussion leader), and must sign up at least one week in advance. You may select two articles and one book instead of four articles. **The written reports are due by email at 10 a.m. on the day of the presentation.** These reports should be 4-5 pages long (8-10 for books).

(3) Campaign Monitoring

You will be assigned a state for which you serve as monitor of the ongoing 2006 election campaigns. In preparation for each class, you are expected to research how the topic of the week affects campaigning in “your” state. For this assignment, you will use independently use Internet resources (such as the *Almanac of American Politics* and Lexis-Nexis) as well as survey data sets.

The last third of each class is reserved for brief campaign monitoring updates from all students. A short summary of your research (1-2 pages) **is due at the beginning of class.** The purpose of these assignments is to apply the scholarly literature to the realities of local campaigning and to collect relevant campaign information efficiently. I will hand out instructions specific to each week’s topic in class.

All coursework should be double-spaced and in 11- or 12-point font with a 1.5 inch margin on one side for my comments.

(Note for Ph.D. students: Instead of the campaign monitoring reports, you will be required to prepare and present a set of reports based on data analysis of the 2000 Annenberg Election Study or the 2004 American National Election Study. See me for details.)

Grading

Grading will be based upon class participation (20%), discussion leadership (20%), presentations and reports on supplementary readings (30%), and the “Plan your own campaign” reports (30%).

Office Hours: W 11-1 in Robertson 313 or by appointment (mprior@princeton.edu)

Readings

Readings in the following schedule are marked **(J)** if they are available online through www.jstor.org. Direct links for all (J) readings are posted in Blackboard. Readings marked **(E)** are available as pdf files in Blackboard.

Readings marked **(COPY)** were scanned by the library and are available from the library e-reserve. When logged into Blackboard the readings are located under the Ereserve selection (along the left side vertical taskbar). To access the E-Reserve directly (<http://infoshare1.princeton.edu/reserves/elecres.html>), you need the following login and password: *wws532 polcamp*
You must download the Djvu reader plugin to access the readings. The DjVu reader has been installed on most library computers in the WWS, OPR and CIT clusters. It is available free at: <http://www.lizardtech.com>

Finally, the following books are available for purchase at the bookstore. Readings from these required texts are marked **(TEXT)**.

Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2005). *Culture War?*
Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson (2004). *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics* (JHJ)
Patterson (1993). *Out of Order*.
Simon (2002). *The Winning Message*.

Weekly Schedule

Note: For each topic, readings are listed in the recommended order.

Week 1 – Introduction and Overview (Sep 14)

Week 2 –Campaigning in the U.S. (Sep 21)

Many political scientists and economists believe that “campaigns don’t matter.” Instead, they argue, election outcomes can be forecasted pretty accurately long before the polls close. This week introduces their arguments. We will refer back to them many times throughout this class.

Wlezien, Christopher. On Forecasting the Presidential Vote. *PS* 34 (1): 25-31. **(E)**

Holbrook, Thomas M. Forecasting with Mixed Economic Signals: A Cautionary Tale. *PS* 34 (1): 39-44. **(E)**

Wlezien and Erikson (PS 2004). The Fundamentals, the Polls, and the Presidential Vote. **(E)**

Lewis-Beck and Tien (PS 2004). Jobs and the Job of President: A Forecast for 2004. **(E)**

Campbell (PSQ 2005). Why Bush Won the Presidential Election of 2004: Incumbency, Ideology, Terrorism, and Turnout **(E)**

Gelman and King (BJPS 1993). *Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes Are So Predictable?* **(J)**

Erikson, Panagopoulos, and Wlezien (POQ 2004). Likely (and Unlikely) Voters and the Assessment of Campaign Dynamics **(E)**

JHJ, chs. 1, 2, 5 (TEXT)

Week 3 – Party Identification, Economic Voting and Stable Determinants (Sep 28)

The most important individual-level variable in research on voting behavior is party identification. The class starts by introducing different models of party identification. This week reviews other long-term factors, focusing mainly on economic voting and in particular the difference between pocketbook and sociotropic economic voting. More long-term influences, such as socioeconomic status and religion, will be mentioned more briefly.

Miller and Shanks (1996). *The New American Voter*. Ch. 6 (COPY)

Rahn (AJPS 1993) *The Role of Partisan Stereotyping in Information Processing About Political Candidates*. (J)

Bartels (AJPS 2000). *Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996*. (J)

JHJ, ch. 3 (TEXT)

Fiorina et al. (2005) *Culture War?* (TEXT)

Week 4 –Midterm Elections: Candidates, Money, and Competition (Oct 5)

Many aspects of voting behavior covered in this class occur in similar ways at different electoral levels. But elections to the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives also have unique aspects. In this week, we discuss institutional features and historical patterns in congressional elections. What can we learn about the upcoming midterm elections from the period of Democratic dominance in Congress and its end in 1994?

Jacobson (PS 1991) *Explaining Divided Government: Why Can't the Republicans Win the House?* (J)

Jacobson (PSQ 1996) *The 1994 House Elections in Perspective*. (J)

Jacobson (APSR 1989). *Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86*. (J)

Krasno, Green and Cowden (JOP 1994). *The Dynamics of Campaign Fundraising in House Elections*. (J)

Abramowitz, Alexander; and Gunning (JOP 2006). *Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in the U.S. House Elections*. (E)

Week 5 – Who Votes? (Oct 12)

Only about half of all eligible voters actually go to the polls on Election Day. Who are they? Why do they vote? This week examines the impact of mobilization efforts and asks what would happen if more people turned out.

McDonald and Popkin (APSR 2001). *The Myth of the Vanishing Voter*. (E)

Highton (Perspectives 2004). *Voter Registration and Turnout in the United States*. (E)

Gilliam (LSQ 1985). Influences on Voter Turnout for U. S. House Elections in Non-Presidential Years (J)

Bergan et al (POQ 2005). Grassroots mobilization and voter turnout in 2004. (E)

Citrin, Schickler, and Sides (AJPS 2003). *What if Everyone Voted? Simulating the Impact of Increased Turnout in Senate Elections.* (E)

Week 6 – Covering Campaigns (Oct 19)

How do media cover campaigns? This week looks at descriptive accounts of election coverage and people's demand for soft news.

Crouse (1973). *The Boys on the Bus?* Pp. 3-46. (COPY)

Patterson (1993). *Out of Order.* 53-175. (TEXT)

Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn (JOP 2004). *Demand for Election News: Horserace sells* (E)

Frankovic (POQ 2005). Reporting "The Polls" in 2004. (E)

Patterson (POQ 2005). Of Polls, Mountains: U.S. Journalists and Their Use of Election Surveys. (E)

Week 7 – Media Effects I: News and Campaign Events (Oct 26)

Having examined what media coverage of campaigns looks like, we move on to ask how this coverage affects potential voters. This week begins to focus the class on how we study media effects and what they are.

Iyengar and Kinder (1986). "More than meets the eye: TV news, priming, and public evaluations of the president" in George Comstock (ed.), *Public Communication and Behavior.* New York: Academic Press, 1986. (COPY)

Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992). *Common Knowledge.* Pp. 78-109. (COPY)

Shaw (BJPS, 2000) *Campaign Events, the Media, and the Prospects of Victory.* (J)

Dalton et al. (APSR 1998). Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election. (J)

Zaller (1996). *The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived. New Support for a Discredited Idea.* (COPY)

-- NOVEMBER 2: No Class, Break Week --

Week 8 – Campaign Environment & Candidate Strategy (Nov 9)

This week emphasizes that elections take place in very different communication environments. The political environment and the structure of media markets affect what kind of election people experience. By acting strategically and reacting to the environment and to other actors, candidates create large difference in the intensity of campaigns at all electoral levels.

Stewart and Reynolds. (LSQ 1990). *Television Markets and U.S. Senate Elections.* (J)

Simon (2002). *The Winning Message*. (TEXT)

Sellers (APSR 1998). *Strategy and background in congressional campaigns*. (J)

Sigelman and Buell (AJPS 2004). Avoidance or Engagement? Issue Convergence in Presidential Campaigns. (E)

Week 9 – Media Effects II: Advertising and Candidate Visits (Nov 16)

This week examines advertising strategy and its intended and perhaps unintended effects on political involvement and candidate choice.

JHJ, ch. 4, 7 (TEXT)

Spiliotes and Vavreck (JOP 2002). Campaign Advertising: Partisan Convergence or Divergence? (J)

Kaplan, Park, and Ridout (AJPS 2006). Dialogue in American Political Campaigns? An Examination of Issue Convergence in Candidate Television Advertising (E)

Ansolahehere et al. (APSR 1994) *Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?* (J)

Goldstein and Freedman (JOP 2002). *Campaign Advertising and Voter Turnout: New Evidence for a Stimulation Effect*. (E)

Week 10 - Midterm Elections: Explaining the Outcome (Nov 30)

Having reviewed general aspects of voting behavior and candidate strategy, we focus specifically on congressional elections this week. Unlike in presidential elections, one side is often at a considerable advantage in congressional elections even at the start of the campaign (see Week 3). This week's readings examine the impact of this imbalance on people's voting behavior. And they cover the effect of spending on election outcomes.

Jacobson (2004). *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. Pp. 122-146. (COPY)

McCurley and Mondak (AJPS 1995). Inspected by #1184063113: The Influence of Incumbents' Competence and Integrity in U.S. House Elections. (J)

Herrnson (2004). *Congressional Elections*. Pp. 129-158. (COPY)

Jacobson (Electoral Studies 2006). Campaign spending effects in U.S. Senate elections: Evidence from the National Annenberg Election Survey. (E)

Gerber (ABS 2004). Does Campaign Spending Work? Field Experiments Provide Evidence and Suggest New Theory. (E)

Week 11 – Political Sophistication, Interest, and Information (Dec 7)

Having reviewed the most important determinants of people's political decision-making, this week introduces the idea that different people use different criteria in making vote choices. The implications of difference in voters' information levels and attention to politics are discussed. Emphasis is given to the ways in which heterogeneity among voters conditions the impact of economic evaluations and media messages on vote choice.

Bartels (2003). Homer Gets a Tax Cut. (E)

Gomez and Wilson (AJPS 2001). *Political Sophistication and Economic Voting*. (J)

Lodge, Steenbergen, and Braun (APSR 1995). The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation. (J)

Althaus (APSR 1998). *Information Effects in Collective Preferences* (J)

Zaller (1992). The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinions. Pp. 216-253. (COPY)

Week 12 – Starting All Over: Primaries (Dec 14)

We have just elected a new Congress. The campaign '08 has begun. What better way to end this class than reviewing what we know about the nomination process.

Bartels, Larry. *Presidential Primaries*. Pp. 57-135 (COPY)

Mutz, Diana C.: Mechanisms of Momentum: Does Thinking Make It So? *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 1. (Feb., 1997), pp. 104-125. (J)

Cohen et al. (2003). *Beating Reform: The Resurgence of Parties in Presidential Nominations* (E)