

# POLS 4515H Campaign Politics (Honors)

Days:	Monday-Wednesday-Friday	Instructor:	Dr. Ben Kantack
Time:	10:10AM-11:00AM	Office:	380B Baldwin Hall
Room:	302 Baldwin Hall	Email:	ben.kantack@uga.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday 10:00AM-11:00AM (or by appointment)		(best way to contact)
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## Course Description

Political campaigns are replete with “turning points.” Every debate, speech, ad, endorsement, gaffe, scandal, and current event is intensely scrutinized, with media pundits heralding each fresh news item as a potential game-changer. But how many of these occurrences actually make a difference? How many skeletons in a candidate’s closet does it take to doom their campaign? Can campaign ads change voters’ minds? Is there a recipe for electoral success? How predictable are elections, and why are the polls sometimes way off? Do campaigns really matter?

The purpose of this class is to survey the political science literature on campaigns and elections, with a particular (but not exclusive) focus on American campaigns. We will examine races ranging from the local to the national, explore the vagaries of voters, and consider various aspects of campaign strategy. Along the way, we will attempt to separate the facts from the hyperbole by busting some of the most resilient myths about what does and doesn’t matter in campaign politics.

## Required Reading

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned for all but seven class sessions and will primarily consist of political science journal articles and book chapters. Academic writing is often dense. For that reason, we will spend the second class session developing tools for reading political science research.

All readings will be accessible via [eLearningCommons](#). The finalized reading list will be distributed no later than the first day of class. Students will be expected to complete all readings before the class sessions for which they are assigned.

## Grading

Grades will be allocated as follows:

- *Discussion* (15% of final grade): Each class session will include opportunities for discussion. Credit will be given for students who make a topical contribution to the discussion based on course material. Each student’s two lowest discussion grades will be automatically dropped from their final grade calculation.
- *Reading quizzes* (10% of final grade): If discussion demonstrates a satisfactory level of reading comprehension, no reading quizzes will be administered and all students will receive full credit for this component of their final grade. If discussion demonstrates an unsatisfactory level of reading comprehension, reading quizzes will be administered randomly at the beginning of

certain class sessions. Reading quizzes cannot be made up before or after the fact by students who are late or absent to the class sessions in which they are administered. In the event that reading quizzes are administered, each student's two lowest quiz grades will be automatically dropped from their final grade calculation.

- *Campaign presentation* (30% of final grade): Throughout the course, students will learn about campaign dynamics, strategies, and effects. This learning will culminate in a 10-minute partner or group (depending on enrollment) presentation in which students will apply what they have learned to analyze a political campaign. These presentations will be given during the final three class sessions. Further details will be provided in class.
- *Exams* (45% of final grade): Three equally-weighted exams will be given during regular class sessions. Exams will be designed to be non-cumulative; however, knowledge of the contents of an early exam may indirectly influence performance on a later exam. No exam will be given during the final exam period for this course.

## Grading Scale

93 – 100:	A	83 – 86:	B	73 – 76:	C	0 – 59:	F
90 – 92:	A-	80 – 82:	B-	70 – 72:	C-		
87 – 89:	B+	77 – 79:	C+	60 – 69:	D		

## Extra Credit Policy

From time to time, extra credit may be offered in the context of in-class activities. These extra credit opportunities will be conditional upon attendance and cannot be made up under any circumstances. No other forms of extra credit will be available.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance will not be graded. Physical presence in a classroom is correlated with, but does not in and of itself constitute, academic achievement. Students who are late or absent should consult their fellow classmates to obtain any desired notes regarding what they missed. Note-taking aids will be posted to [eLearningCommons](#), but lecture slides will not be disseminated outside of class. Students who are absent from class sessions in which exams are held must notify the instructor before the start of said class session to initiate the process of scheduling a make-up exam. If the instructor is not notified of the absence until the start of the class session, a 10% penalty will be assessed for each full or partial day that elapses until a make-up exam has been scheduled.

## Discussion Policy

Discussion enhances learning when participants are able to express their views without fear of reprisal, presume good faith in their interlocutors, and abide by standards of civility and decorum. Students should feel free to respectfully challenge their peers' opinions, and should expect to have their own opinions respectfully challenged by their peers or by the instructor.

## **Electronic Devices Policy**

The use of laptop computers and tablets will be permitted for class purposes only. The use of telephones will not be permitted. Students whose use of electronic devices becomes disruptive will be asked to discontinue said use and may be asked to leave the room.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

## **Disability Accommodation Policy**

Students desiring disability accommodations should consult the [Disability Resource Center](#) and should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

## Course Schedule

*NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

### **WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION**

Friday, January 5                      Course Introduction

### **WEEK 2: FOUNDATIONS**

Monday, January 8                      How to Read Political Science

Wednesday, January 10                  Democratic Theory

Friday, January 12                      Campaign History

### **WEEK 3: SYSTEMS**

Monday, January 15                      NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Wednesday, January 17                  Systems I

Friday, January 19                      Systems II

### **WEEK 4: PARTIES**

Monday, January 22                      Parties

Wednesday, January 24                  Party Organizations

Friday, January 26                      Polarization

### **WEEK 5: SUBNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS**

Monday, January 29                      State & Local Campaigns

Wednesday, January 31                  Congressional Campaigns I

Friday, February 2                      Congressional Campaigns II

**WEEK 6: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS**

Monday, February 5            Presidential Campaigns I  
Wednesday, February 7        Presidential Campaigns II  
Friday, February 9            **EXAM I**

**WEEK 7: VOTERS, PART I**

Monday, February 12          Attitudes  
Wednesday, February 14       Issues  
Friday, February 16           Identities

**WEEK 8: VOTERS, PART II**

Monday, February 19          Partisanship  
Wednesday, February 21       Memory  
Friday, February 23           Motivated Reasoning

**WEEK 9: MEDIA**

Monday, February 26          Media  
Wednesday, February 28       Advertising I  
Friday, March 2                Advertising II

**WEEK 10: MONEY**

Monday, March 5               Interest Groups  
Wednesday, March 7           Campaign Finance  
Friday, March 9                **EXAM II**

**WEEK 11: SPRING BREAK**

## **WEEK 12: CAMPAIGNS**

Monday, March 19                      Fundamentals

Wednesday, March 21                Polls

Friday, March 23                      Shocks

## **WEEK 13: TURNOUT**

Monday, March 26                      Turnout

Wednesday, March 28                Mobilization

Friday, March 30                      Targeting

## **WEEK 14: ECONOMICS**

Monday, April 2                        Retrospective Voting

Wednesday, April 4                    NO CLASS – MPSA CONFERENCE

Friday, April 6                         NO CLASS – MPSA CONFERENCE

## **WEEK 15: IMPLICATIONS**

Monday, April 9                        Citizen Competence

Wednesday, April 11                 Political Inequality

Friday, April 13                        Do Campaigns Matter?

## **WEEK 16: CONCLUSION, PART I**

Monday, April 16                        **EXAM III**

Wednesday, April 18                 **PRESENTATIONS**

Friday, April 20                        **PRESENTATIONS**

## **WEEK 17: CONCLUSION, PART II**

Monday, April 23                        **PRESENTATIONS**