

U.S. Parties, Groups, and Elections

POLS 215-01 // Fall 2018 // Morse-Ingersoll Hall 208 // TTh 10:00 – 11:50 AM //

Professor Philip Chen // chenp@beloit.edu //

Office: Morse-Ingersoll 7 // Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Course Description

Investigates the nature and functioning of political candidates, parties, and groups and their roles in elections. Students pay special attention to campaigns, media, and political rhetoric while gaining hands-on experience developing strategies and communication material for a Congressional candidate, with an emphasis on production of a portfolio of campaign work. Prerequisite: POLS 110 or 160 or Instructor Permission.

Course Objectives

By the end of this semester, you should be able to:

- Understand and describe how candidates, parties, and social groups work together during elections
- Analyze and critique the strategies used in elections based on the available evidence
- Produce and justify a variety of communication tools used to influence elections

Structure of the Class

I will occasionally lecture on new topics or extensions of the readings. However, I do not plan on lecturing on the readings because a) you are expected to have read them already and b) I'm not witty or interesting enough to lecture all the time.

The majority of the class will be spent on discussion and activities that are designed to help you integrate the readings and materials. Please come to class prepared to discuss the day's readings and bring copies of the readings, either in electronic or paper form, as this is a key component of this course.

We will also spend time in class talking about the current election cycle and comparing what is happening to the campaigns that you develop throughout the course. Thus, it is helpful if you stay up to date on what is happening during the election and especially your Congressional campaign.

Office Hours and Help

I strive to make this course understandable and accessible for all students. If you have any questions about the content or structure of the course or about specific assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to help if you come to me before assignments or exams are due. Please do not wait to ask for help until after the due date, come talk to me before if you are struggling.

Required Texts

This class will feature a mix of academic books and articles as well as pieces written by political practitioners. The required books are listed below and are available at the college bookstore or from Amazon or other places online. Readings are available on the class Moodle site at:

<https://moodle1819.beloit.edu/course/view.php?id=425>

There are two required books for the course:

Semiatin, Richard J. (ed.). (2017). *Campaigns on the Cutting Edge*.

Shaw, Catherine. (2018). *The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections. Sixth Edition*.

Grading

Grades are based on four different components, described in more detail below. 40% of your grade will come from the campaign portfolio that you will develop over the semester (1). An additional 25% of your grade will come from an analysis of the actual campaign that was run by your Congressional candidate (2). 10% of your grade consists of attendance and participation in class (3). Finally, 25% of your grade consists of weekly reading quizzes (4).

Reading Quizzes (Top 10)	25%	
Campaign Portfolio	40%	
Name, Party, and District of House Candidate		Required (No Grade)
District Analysis		Required (No Grade)
Campaign & GOTV Plan		Required (No Grade)
Fundraising Letter		Required (No Grade)
Campaign Announcement Press Release		Required (No Grade)
GOTV & Persuasion Advertisements		Required (No Grade)
Stump Speech		Required (No Grade)
Campaign Analysis	25%	
Rough Draft		Required (No Grade)
Analysis Conference		Required (No Grade)
Participation & Attendance	10%	

Weekly Reading Quizzes (20%) – Over the past couple years, I’ve come to dislike the concept of midterm and final exams because they place a premium on memorization and intense study rather than a cohesive synthesis of the material we read. In essence, finals and midterms seem to encourage students to memorize minutiae instead of substance.

However, the readings for this class were chosen with intention and I believe they are important for students to get the most out of the class. I will not lecture much on the readings, as I believe classroom discussions are both more enjoyable and a better way for students to learn the ability

to critique and challenge the works we read. In order for you to be prepared for these discussions, you will need to do the readings.

While I would love to be able to simply ask “did you do the reading?” and grade you on this, it seems unrealistic. On Tuesdays of most weeks we will have a short, graded, **open hard copy note** reading quiz. You are welcome to use both class and reading notes, but you **must have hard copies** of those notes. You will not be allowed to use your phone or computer to access your notes during the quizzes, but you may print off your notes prior to class. These quizzes will consist of a few multiple choice or short answer questions, as well as one or two longer (2-3 paragraph) questions that ask you to synthesize the readings in some way.

I understand that sometimes things come up and readings don't get done. Over the course of the semester, there are 11 Tuesdays when I will administer quizzes. This makes for an odd division of 25% of your grade. Out of these 11 quizzes, I will drop your lowest score. Of the remaining 10 quizzes, each will be worth 2.5% of your grade. While no one quiz will make or break your final grade, failing to do any of the readings will severely limit your potential in this class.

At the end of the semester, I will simply take your highest 10 quiz grades (dropping the lowest grade) and average them. Because you have a quiz that is not counted, you cannot make up quizzes for unexcused absences. However, if you are going to miss a quiz and let me know ahead of time, we can make arrangements for you to take the quiz at a different time. If you are sick or have an approved absence, just make sure to send me an email or talk to me.

Campaign Portfolio (40%) – The first major component of your course grade is the campaign portfolio. This is likely to be a different type of writing than you have done in most political science classes. Over the course of the semester, you will run a shadow campaign for a real candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives.

What this means is you will be in charge of learning about the district, drafting a campaign plan, devising communication for the candidate, and justifying the decisions you make based on the readings that we do throughout the course.

While the individual pieces of the portfolio are due at different times throughout the semester, you are graded on the final, edited campaign portfolio that you put together. This will feature revised versions of each component, based on feedback you receive from me, as well as a reflective writing piece that outlines the changes you made and how the portfolio was informed by the readings from the class.

You'll notice that the individual pieces of the portfolio are marked “Required (No Grade).” These can be thought of as low stakes requirements that give me a chance to give feedback for revisions. In order to receive full credit on your portfolio, you must turn in all of these components, even though your performance on these assignments does not factor into your grade. Failing to turn in these assignments will lower your final portfolio grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each missing piece. For instance, if your grade for the entire portfolio was a B+, but you failed to turn in your district analysis, your final grade would be a B. If you were missing both the district analysis and stump speech, your B+ would become a B-.

Campaign Analysis (25%) – In addition to the portfolio, you are responsible for a final written assignment that analyzes the actual campaign run by your candidate in comparison to what the literature suggests and your campaign did.

For this, you will assess where the real campaign was successful and where they could improve. Using examples from their campaign, make an argument about the decisions the campaign made, whether they fit with the evidence about what works, and what you would have done differently or similarly.

As with the portfolio, you need to turn in a rough draft of this analysis, in order to receive full credit on the final paper. In addition, we won't meet as a class the second to last week of the semester. Instead, each student will meet with me one-on-one to discuss their analysis and portfolio. This is also a required component for to receive full credit on the paper.

Participation and Attendance (10%) – The participation portion of your grade includes regular attendance in class, completion of in-class activities, participation in class discussions, and asking questions during class, and, most importantly, being an active and committed member of each simulation.

Half of this grade is based purely off of attendance. I will hand out a sheet for everyone to sign in at the start of class. If you are late to class, please check with me after class to make sure I've recorded your attendance for the day. There are 25 days in the semester that we will meet as a class, and I will use the following scale to determine your attendance grade:

A	0 absences
A-	1 absence
B+	2 absences
B	3 absences
B-	4 absences
C+	5 absences
C	6 absences
C-	7 absences
D+	8 absences
D	9 absences
F	10 or more absences

NOTE: This count does NOT include excused absences. If you miss class because of an approved college activity, illness, or prior arrangement with me, this will not count against your attendance grade.

The other half of this grade is based on in-class participation. I'll advise you that I take the participation portion of the class seriously. I give very few A grades for participation. Thus, you shouldn't assume that simply attending class regularly is enough to get full participation. I grade participation holistically. If you are attentive in class, offer opinions and reactions to readings, and are engaged in discussion, you will do fine. But these are not simply "free" points for the class.

Grade Scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	<60

Grading – On some assignments, you may receive a grade of B+/A- or something like that. This is just my shorthand way of assigning a number grade between two letter grades. Thus, an A grade is recorded in the grade book as 100 points while an A- grade is recorded as 92 points. If I think your work fell between these points, you may get an A-/A, which would be recorded as 96 points. So a A-/A is technically an A grade, but in the middle of the A range instead of the high end.

When calculating final grades, I always round up. So an 88.7% in the class becomes an 89% (B+), but an 89.1% would be rounded up to a 90% (A-).

Course Schedule:**Days with reading quizzes marked with (RQ)**Political Parties and Interest Groups

August 28	First Day of Class – No Readings
August 30	Sides, Shaw, Grossmann, and Lipsitz – Chapter 6* Medvic – Parties as Organization*
September 4 (RQ)	Medvic – Parties in Electorate* Vox – Problem of Two Parties*
September 6	Flanigan, Zingale, Theiss-Morse, and Wagner – Chapter 4* DUE: Name, Party, and District of House Candidate
September 11 (RQ)	Mason – Chapter 4* Mason – Chapter 6*
September 13	Semiatin – Chapter 7 Kaufmann, Petrocik, and Shaw – Chapter 4*
September 18 (RQ)	Medvic – Interest Groups*
September 20	Semiatin – Chapter 8 Vox – Citizens United* Vox – NRA Influence*

Elections – The Basics

September 25 (RQ)	McClain and Tauber – Chapter 15* Shaw – Chapter 2
September 27	Semiatin – Chapter 1 Shaw – Chapter 3 DUE: District Analysis

Elections – Telling Your Story

October 2 (RQ)	Vavreck – Chapter 2* Shaw – Chapter 4
October 4	Blodgett and Lofy – Chapter 2* Blodgett and Lofy – Chapter 3* Shaw – Chapter 13 (optional)

October 9 (RQ)	Shaw – Chapter 10 Faucheux – Chapter 4*
October 11	Shaw – Chapter 8 Kaufmann, Petrocik, and Shaw – Chapter 8* DUE: Campaign & GOTV Plan
October 16	No Class – FALL BREAK
October 18	No Class – FALL BREAK

Elections – Fundraising

October 23 (RQ)	Semiatin – Chapter 2 Shaw – Chapter 5
October 25	Semiatin – Chapter 10 Box-Steffensmeier 1996* DUE: Fundraising Letter

Elections – Persuasion, Mobilization, and Media

October 30 (RQ)	Blodgett and Lofy – Chapter 8*
November 1	Shaw – Pages 155-171 Semiatin – Chapter 9 DUE: Campaign Announcement Press Release
November 6	No Class – Election Day Shaw – Pages 171-185 Semiatin – Chapter 3 Blodgett and Lofy – Chapter 6* Blodgett and Lofy – Chapter 7*
November 8	Shaw – Chapter 12 Green and Gerber – Chapter 12* DUE: GOTV & Persuasion Advertisements
November 13 (RQ)	Shaw – Chapter 6 Semiatin – Chapter 4

Challenges to Representation

November 15	Semiatin – Chapter 11 Atkeson, Bryan, Hall, Saunders, and Alvarez 2010* Barreto, Nuno, and Sanchez 2009* DUE: Stump Speech
November 20	No Class – EXIT POLL
November 22	No Class – THANKSGIVING
November 27 (RQ)	Semiatin – Chapter 12 Hayes and Lawless – Chapter 6*
November 29	Semiatin – Chapter 13 Semiatin – Chapter 14 DUE: Rough Draft – Campaign Analysis
December 4	No Class – Portfolio and Analysis Conferences
December 6	No Class – Portfolio and Analysis Conferences
December 11	Campaign Debriefing – No Readings

Attendance: Regular attendance is vital for your success in this course. I understand, however, that sometimes circumstances prevent you from coming to class. Missing one class will not destroy your grade; missing several will.

Late Work: Assignments are due at the **beginning of class** on the day they are listed as due. Any assignments turned in after this time will be subject to the following late penalty: For each day late, I will deduct a third of a letter grade. So if an assignment is due Friday and you turn it in after class on Friday, a B+ paper would receive a B. If you turn it in Saturday, it would be a B-, Monday would be a C.

Assignments should be turned in using the Moodle system or handed in with a hard copy.

Grade Changes: Any appeals of a grade must be made at least **24 hours after** I hand back an assignment or exam. If you would like to appeal the grade you got on an assignment, prior to meeting with me you must submit a written statement detailing why you think your grade should be changed. I will then meet with you to discuss your statement and why you think your grade should be changed.

If I make a mistake in totaling your grade for an exam or assignment (e.g. I added the points up incorrectly) then you do not need to write a statement or wait 24 hours. Just talk to me after class or during office hours and I'll double check and fix the mistake.

Contacting the Professor: I encourage you to contact me with questions and concerns about the course, readings, and assignments. In general, quick clarification questions can be handled over email. More in-depth questions are best discussed in person during my office hours, where we can have an actual conversation. If my office hours conflict with your class or work schedule, I am available by appointment as well.

Please allow a full 24 hours for an email response. Often, my responses will be quicker than this, but do not send multiple emails about the same request until 24 hours have passed. I cannot guarantee that if you email me right before an assignment or exam that I will be able to answer your question in time, so please make sure and email me early if you have a time-specific question.

Extra Credit and Retakes: There is no scheduled extra credit in this course. You may not retake quizzes. There may be opportunities for extra credit, however.

Disability Services and Accommodations: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability or health consideration that may impact your coursework and/or require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEADS) located on 2nd floor Pearsons (north side), 608-363-2572, learning@beloit.edu, or make an appointment through joydeleon.youcanbook.me. LEADS will work with you to determine what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. Contact that office promptly, however, since accommodations are not retroactive. Every effort will be made to give you agency over disclosure of your disability status. Confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible but at times others need to know to some information to provide you appropriate accommodations.

Inclusivity: **Inclusivity** is a demonstration of equity and social justice through awareness, understanding, and respect for the differences in identity, culture, background, experience, and socialization, and the ways in which these forms of difference impact how we live and learn. Inclusivity requires equitable, institution-wide representation and access to resources. In practice, this manifests itself by each individual being aware of, committed to, and responsible for the well-being and care of all students, staff, and faculty.