

POLS 198: Honors American National Government (Campaign 2008)

**Washington State University, Spring 2008
Tuesday, Thursday, 10:35-11:50, Todd 211**

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Introduction

This course will take an in-depth look at the 2008 presidential, congressional and gubernatorial campaigns and elections. We will learn how voters make up their minds, how campaigns decide how to present themselves, and the rules of that govern campaign behavior, including campaign finance regulation.

At the end of the course, I expect that you will have improved 1) your critical thinking skills, 2) your ability to communicate with others and to an audience through both writing and speech and 3) your information literacy (i.e, your ability to find, gather, and evaluation information from both the library and the Internet).

Readings

There are three books available for purchase:

Wayne, Stephen J. 2008. *The Road to the White House 2008: The Politics of Presidential Elections*. 8th Edition. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.

Shea, Daniel and Michael Burton. 2001. *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Praeger.

John F. Kennedy School of Government. 2005. *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at 2004*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Grading

There are 1000 points available for this course. Your final grade in this course will depend on your success in four areas:

1. **Participation in a mock candidate debate.** You will serve as either a moderator, crafting questions for the candidates, or as one of the candidates currently running for his or her party's nomination for president. In preparation for this assignment, you must do research on your assigned candidate so that you will be able to answer the moderator's questions as the real candidate would. We will hold two in-class debates, one Republican and one Democratic. I will assign roles (candidate or moderator) to each student, but if you have a preference for a particular role, candidate or party, let me know before or after class or send me an email. (100 points)

2. **Participation in or observation of a presidential caucus.** You will attend a caucus, literally a local party meeting, and either participate or act as an observer. You will write a 2-3 pages describing the event and what you learned through your participation. Idaho holds its Democratic caucuses on Tuesday, February 5, and Washington holds both its Democratic and Republican caucuses on Saturday, February 9. (100 points)

3. **Two essays.** You will research and answer two essay questions that I will distribute two weeks prior to this due date. About 3 pages (double-spaced, one-inch margins) is a good length for each of your answers. You must cite all sources using a generally accepted standard of citation. I will grade your assignment using four criteria: correct spelling and use of English grammar (50 points), the ease with which you express your ideas (50 points), the quality and originality of your ideas (50 points), and your use of academic sources, including books assigned for this course, to underpin your arguments (50 points). DUE Thursday, February 29, 5 p.m. (200 points)

4. **Campaign Strategy Report.** You will develop as a team a campaign strategy for electing one of 4 candidates on the WSU campus in the fall 2008 general elections: the Democratic presidential nominee, the Republican presidential nominee, Christine Gregoire (the presumed Democratic nominee for Washington governor), or Dino Rossi (the presumed Republican nominee for Washington governor). I will assign you to one of these four groups. Please let me know if you have a preference, but I cannot guarantee that I can follow your wishes. For this assignment, you will:

A. Design a survey that you will administer to WSU students. Before giving the survey, each group will need to receive approval of the Institutional Review Board. As long as you avoid sensitive topics, find respondents age 18 or older, and obtain informed consent, you should not have much difficulty in obtaining an exemption from full IRB review. You will need to submit the human subjects approval form found at <http://www.irb.wsu.edu/forms.asp>. Please have me review the form before you submit it. (100 points)

B. Lead a focus group in class. Each group will be responsible for bringing 4 focus group participants to class with them. (100 points)

C. Produce a campaign ad for your candidate. This should be in a video format. Academic Media Services, 150 Holland, has a variety of video equipment that you can

borrow, and they do accept equipment reservations (335-7336). You may find more information at: <http://ams.wsu.edu/AMS/EquipTech/EquipmentLoan.aspx> (100 points)

D. Submit a final group report to me that details the results of your research and your recommendations for your campaign. (250 points)

E. Present as a group the recommendations for your group's candidate to the class (50 points).

F. Submit a short individual report that details your contributions to this assignment.

GRADING SCALE:

930-1000	A
900-929	A-
870-899	B+
830-869	B
800-829	B-
770-799	C+
730-769	C
700-729	C-
670-699	D+
600-669	D
0-599	F

Other information

If there are things I talk about in class that you do not understand, do not hesitate to talk to me about them. I am here to help you learn the course material. And if there are other matters that you think should be brought to my attention, let me know.

ATTENDANCE. Attendance is **required** for this class, and I will be taking attendance each day. If you develop a pattern of not coming to class, I will lower your final grade in the course at my discretion.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments must be at my office by 5 p.m. on date they are due or they will be considered late. For each day an assignment is late, including weekends, I will subtract 10 percent of the assignment's total point value from your score. I prefer to receive hard copies of assignments in my office, but if you are turning in a late assignment, please also email me an electronic copy so I know exactly when it was submitted.

ACADEMIC ETIQUETTE. Do not carry on side conversations or read the newspaper during class. Doing so is disrespectful to your classmates, and I will ask you to leave the room if you are disturbing others. Turn off all cellular phones during class.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT. I do not tolerate plagiarizing or cheating of any kind. Such behavior will result in **failing the course** and other disciplinary action. Please see the Student Handbook at the Division of Student Affairs website at www.studentaffairs.wsu.edu for a full description of the types of academic misconduct. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see me immediately.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the DRC (Admin Annex Bldg, Room 205). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

Course Outline

Jan 8	Introduction
Jan 10	History of Presidential Campaigns (Wayne 1)
Jan 15	Presidential Nominations (Wayne 4, 5)
Jan 17	Presidential Nominations (Kennedy School p. 1-96)
Jan 22	Presidential Nominations (Wayne 6)
Jan 24	In-Class Republican Debate
Jan 29	In-Class Democratic Debate
Jan 31	The Political Environment (Wayne 3)
Feb 5	The 2004 Campaign (Kennedy School, p. 97-208)
Feb 7	The 2004 Campaign (Kennedy School, p. 209-end)
Feb 12	Campaign Context (S&B 3-5)
Feb 14	Campaign Organization (Video in class, Wayne 7)
Feb 19	Campaign Organization (S&B 1-2)
Feb 21	Campaign Organization
Feb 26	Media (Video in Class, Wayne 8)
Feb 28	Media (S&B 10)
Mar 4	Media/Political Advertising (guest speaker in class)
Mar 6	Political Advertising
SPRING BREAK	
Mar 18	Work in groups on surveys/focus groups/presentations
Mar 20	Surveys (S&B 7)
Mar 25	Surveys
Mar 27	Mobilization (S&B 6)
Apr 1	Mobilization (S&B 8)
Apr 3	Focus Groups in class
Apr 8	Focus Groups in class
Apr 10	Campaign Finance (Wayne 2)
Apr 15	Campaign Finance (S&B 9)
Apr 17	Election Reforms (Wayne 10)
Apr 22	Presentations in class
Apr 24	Presentations in class