

PubPol 683

Elections & Campaigns

Fall Semester, 2021

Instructor: Rusty Hills
Class time: Tuesday, 5:30 to 8:20 p.m.
Location: 1110 Weill Hall

Office Hours: I have an Open Door and Open E-mail policy, and am happy to meet in-person (I am fully vaccinated) or online via Zoom.

For in-person meetings, my preference is to meet before or after class on Tuesdays, at Weill Hall or a coffee shop in Ann Arbor of your choosing. But I can make accommodations for additional dates if Tuesdays outside of class are unavailable.

Instructor Contact Information:
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Course Overview:

The purpose of PubPol 683 is to examine political campaigns and explain what candidates, campaign managers, and campaigns do and why they do it. One very important point to remember: **There is no policy without victory.**

This course will introduce you to the art and the (sometimes) science of political campaigning. Topics to be covered include political communications, including speeches and debates, crafting and framing a message, earned media, paid media, and social media.

Our course will also examine campaign planning and management, polling and research (why was so much of the polling in 2016 and 2020 so wrong?), identifying, targeting and turning out voters, coalitions and interest groups, budgeting and fundraising, the political environment, and Get Out The Vote efforts.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have a better, more thorough understanding of campaign decision-making, what messages are communicated and why, the selecting and segmentation of diverse voter groups (voter targeting), and the elements of successful and unsuccessful campaigns.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **This I Believe essay.** (3-page limit). This is an essay on the core value that drives your life. It does not have to be about politics. For additional information on “This I Believe,” go to <https://thisibelieve.org>
2. **Explain a Campaign OR Examine Diversity in a Campaign** (6 pages.)

For this assignment, you may choose between one of two options.

 - a. Option One: Explain a campaign.
 - i. Select one candidate and one campaign and explain to me what happened and why. Your memo can focus on either the winning or losing candidate.
 - ii. Because this assignment is limited to 6 pages, DO NOT attempt to explain a presidential campaign. **That is beyond the scope of a 6-page paper.**
 - iii. Select a U.S. Senate, gubernatorial, congressional or State Senate or State House campaign, or a ballot issue campaign.
 - iv. You can focus on a Michigan election, or an election from your home state if different from Michigan.
 - v. Focus on just one of the candidates.
 - vi. Explain the principal reason why she or he won or lost.
 - b. Option Two: Examine Diversity in a Campaign.
 - i. Select a campaign that featured a candidate of color. (Examples in Michigan would include any of the elections involving now-Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, or U.S. Senate candidate John James.)
 - ii. Argue whether the diversity of the candidate helped or hurt her or his campaign, and why.
 - iii. Select a U.S. Senate, gubernatorial, congressional or State Senate or State House campaign,
 - iv. You can focus on an election in Michigan, or an election from your home state or country if different from Michigan.
3. **Book Review.** (6 pages).
 - a. Choose one book from among these three: “Lucky” by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, or “Frankly, We Did Win This Election,” by Michael Bender, or “I Alone Can Fix It,” by Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker.
 - b. Key elements of your book review:
 - i. What was the main point of the book?
 - ii. Did you agree or disagree with the author(s)?
 - iii. Why or why not?
4. **Final Project:** Write a campaign plan.
 - a. Your plan must either be a primary election or a general election. Not both.

- b. For example, you want to run for State Representative in Detroit. That means you should write a campaign plan on how to win a primary.
- c. Or you want to run a State Senate campaign in Oakland County. That could be either a primary campaign plan, or a general campaign plan. Pick one.
- d. DO NOT write a campaign for how to run for President and win 270 electoral college votes. That is too complicated for one short paper.
- e. Select one upcoming election in 2022 or 2024 – gubernatorial, senatorial, congressional, state senate, state house or a ballot issue.
- f. Must be a real candidate or ballot issue. Not the Elf on the Shelf.
- g. It could be your own campaign. I welcome that.
- h. Then, write a ten (10) page paper that includes the following elements:
 - i. Prepare a Win Number. How many votes do you need to win your election? Explain how you arrived at that number. This should not take up a lot of space, perhaps 5% of the paper.
 - ii. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the paper should be devoted to the following points:
 - 1. SWOT analysis {Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats}.
 - 2. Voter Coalition.
 - 3. Message.
 - 4. Vote Goals & Conclusion.
 - iii. The **SWOT analysis** is straightforward: list for me the various elements in each category for the candidate whom you have selected. For example, what are the candidate’s strengths? What are her or his weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?
 - iv. For the **Voter Coalition** portion of your final paper, list and give a reason for the voter groups – the voters, coalitions & interest groups – that will support your candidate, and how those groups combine to achieve 50% plus one of the electorate. In other words, tell me how you plan to assemble a winning coalition.
 - v. For the **Message** portion of your paper, tell me what is your candidate’s message, and why you have selected this message. Explain how you will apply your candidate’s message to the voter, coalition & interest groups you are appealing to. Why will these groups vote for you? What is your message to them?
 - vi. For the **Vote Goals and Conclusion** portion of your paper, add up the votes from your voter coalitions to demonstrate how you achieve your Win Number. For example, suppose your goal is 1.4 million votes. Explain how you achieve that. X% support of White voters plus Y% of Black voters. A% of union members and B% of progressive voters. Or G% of Republican base plus J% of independents and H% of Right to Life voters and M% of suburban women. I need to see a path to victory
 - vii. **If you have questions, please ask.**
 - viii. **Repeat – if you have a question, please ask.**

Class Format: The semester will combine lecture with class discussion, supplemented with guest lecturers. Questions are not only welcomed; they are essential to deciphering this interesting but complicated thing we call politics. So please ask questions.

Required Texts: "Lucky" by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, or "Frankly, We Did Win This Election," by Michael Bender, or "I Alone Can Fix It," by Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker.

But the real textbook will be each days' headlines and news stories that pertain to politics and government.

Because you are a student at the University of Michigan Ford School, I expect you to be conversant with national and state politics. The New York Times and Washington Post are excellent resources for national politics. I also recommend the Politico website. The Detroit Free Press and Detroit News, and the Michigan state government reports, Gongwer and MIRS, provide solid coverage of state politics. Read the news each day and come to class prepared to discuss.

Help with Writing: We are blessed to have an outstanding Writing Center at the Ford School, and I would encourage students to take advantage of all the services that the Center offers. For more information, I would direct you to www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/

Course Requirements: Attendance is required. Student participation is critical to understanding the material, and therefore is a percentage of your final grade. Students are expected to finish assignments on time, be prepared for the weekly discussions and topics, participate in discussions, AND be respectful of the opinions of all other students and guests.

NOTE: All assignments are due on the date assigned.

Ford School of Public Policy Inclusivity Statement

Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs.
- be open to the views of others.
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community • value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.

- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community.

Ford School Public Health Protection Policy

In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course--including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project--you must follow all the public health safety measures and policies put in place by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. Up to date information on U-M policies can be found here. It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are awaiting a test result because of symptoms. If you do not have a verified COVID-19 vaccine report in the U-M vaccination report system, you are required to participate in [weekly testing](#) if you intend to come to campus for any reason.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, both those relating to the pandemic and other issues such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, can directly impact students' academic performance and overall wellbeing. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

Kristen Carney, LMSW is an embedded counselor within the Ford School. She is available to meet with Ford School students in-person or via remote access using Zoom. You may reach her at krisca@umich.edu

In addition, you may access other counselors and urgent services at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and/or University Health Service (UHS). Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text '4UMICH' to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through the University Health Service and through CAPS.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please reach out to U-M [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations and how to communicate about your accommodations with your professors. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

Academic Integrity

The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct.

Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one's own in writing or presentations, and failing to give full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action.

The Ford School's policy of academic integrity can be found in the MPP/MPA, BA, and PhD Program handbooks. Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct and their consequences is available at:

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11#112>

Use of Technology

Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (e.g. social media), you must first have informed consent.

Without explicit permission from the instructor and in some cases your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings, or pre-recordings from class, discussion sections or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.

Grading: Students will be graded on class participation and the successful completion of the four individual assignments: essay, memo, book review, and final assignment, with the final assignment weighted more heavily.

Participation:	10%
Assignment #1:	10%
Assignment #2:	25%
Assignment #3:	20%
Assignment #4:	35%

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.7	93-90
B+	3.3	89-86
B	3.0	85-80
B-	2.7	79-75
C+	2.3	74-70
C	2.0	69-64
D+	1.3	59-56
D	1.0	55-52
D-	0.7	51-50
E	0.0	Less than 50

TOPIC SCHEDULE*

August 31

Class Overview

Review of syllabus, all assignments and expectations, topics to be covered, questions answered.

Read:

1. **The Front-Runner's Fall**, by Joshua Green, *The Atlantic*.
2. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/09/the-front-runner-s-fall/306944/>
3. **Read Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Michelle Nunn's Campaign Plan, from the Washington Post.**
4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/07/28/how-to-read-the-leaked-michelle-nunn-campaign-plan/>

September 7

Campaign Planning & Management

All the elements of a political campaign.

Strategy (Your overarching path to victory).
Tactics (how to implement your strategy.)
SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

Assignment #1: Write your “This I Believe” essay. (3-page limit). This is an essay on the core value that drives your life. It does not have to be about politics. For additional information on “This I Believe,” go to <https://thisibelieve.org>
Due date: September 21

September 14

Crafting a Message, Message Development & Branding

Targeting messages.

Different messages, different audiences, different mediums, different timing.

Big Picture. Framing. Going on offense, setting the agenda.

September 21

Speeches & Debates

Tips & tricks of the trade for crafting successful speeches and for winning debates.

Assignment #1 is DUE.

Assignment # 2:

5. Explain a Campaign OR Examine Diversity in a Campaign (6 pages.)

For this assignment, you may choose between one of two options.

a. Option One: Explain a campaign.

- i. Select one candidate and one campaign and explain to me what happened and why. Your memo can focus on either the winning or losing candidate.
- ii. Because this assignment is limited to 6 pages, DO NOT attempt to explain a presidential campaign. **That is beyond the scope of a 6-page paper.**
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- iv. You can focus on a Michigan election, or an election from your home state if different from Michigan.
- v. Focus on just one of the candidates.
- vi. Explain the principal reason why she or he won or lost.

b. Option Two: Examine Diversity in a Campaign.

- i. Select a campaign that featured a candidate of color. (Examples in Michigan would include any of the elections involving now-Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, or U.S. Senate candidate John James.)
- ii. Argue whether the diversity of the candidate helped or hurt her or his campaign, and why.
- iii. Select a U.S. Senate, gubernatorial, congressional or State Senate or State House campaign,
- iv. You can focus on an election in Michigan, or an election from your home state or country if different from Michigan.

Due Date: October 12

September 28

Paid Media

Television, cable, day parts, radio, direct mail, Internet, newspaper. Comparative communications (Negative ads).

Who defines whom? And who gets there first?

October 5

Earned Media

Generating press and media coverage without paying for it. Press releases, debates, speeches, newspaper and other endorsements. How to deal with the press? Can you?

October 12

Social & Digital Media

The new communications. How has the changing nature of communications, new media, digital and social media, affected campaigns?

Digital Data. How do we mine data, and what is the most effective use of data?

Assignment #2 is DUE.

Assignment #3:

Write a book review of “Lucky” by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, or “Frankly, We Did Win This Election,” by Michael Bender, or “I Alone Can Fix It,” by Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker.

Key elements of your book review:

- a. What was the main point of the book?
- b. Did you agree or disagree with the author(s)?
- c. Why or why not?

Limit it to no more than 6 typewritten pages, double-spaced.

Due Date: November 9

October 19

Fall Study Break

October 26

Polling & Research

1. Polling as a snapshot in time. What polling can do, what polling cannot do. Why bother to pay for polling if every media outlet is already polling?
2. Research. Know yourself, your strength and weaknesses; know your opponent, strength and weaknesses; know your voters, your state, your environment, your issues.

November 2

Voter Contact

Identifying, differentiating, targeting & turning out Voters.
Microtargeting. Who are our voters, and how in the world do we find them?

November 9

Book Review

Assignment #3 is DUE.

Assignment #4

Final Project: Write a campaign plan.

- a. Your plan must either be a primary election or a general election. Not both.
- b. For example, you want to run for State Representative in Detroit. That means you should write a campaign plan on how to win a primary.
- c. Or you want to run a State Senate campaign in Oakland County. That could be either a primary campaign plan, or a general campaign plan. Pick one.
- d. DO NOT write a campaign for how to run for President and win 270 electoral college votes. That is too complicated for one short paper.

- e. Select one upcoming election in 2022 or 2024 – gubernatorial, senatorial, congressional, state senate, state house or a ballot issue.
- f. Must be a real candidate or ballot issue. Not Ms. or Mr. Perfect.
- g. It could be your own campaign. I welcome that.
- h. Then, write a ten (10) page paper that includes the following elements:
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 - vii. If you have questions, please ask.

DUE DATE: December 7

November 16

Fundraising, Budgeting & Scheduling

The not very glamorous, but absolutely essential elements of all winning campaigns. How to raise money, 101. Strategic scheduling (P.S. Don't ever be the Scheduler!)

November 23

Thanksgiving Break

November 30

Transition to Power

The votes have been counted. The election is over. Now it is time to transition from campaigning to governing. What needs to be done, and who should do it?

Is policy really personnel? Should all campaign staff transition to public service? What's most important? How are issues sequenced? Must all campaign promises be fulfilled?

December 7

Lessons Learned

Assignment #4 is DUE.

***NOTE:** The dates on which topics are to be covered are subject to change, but **assignment due dates will remain the same.**