

# PubPol 423

## Political Campaign Strategy & Tactics

### Winter Semester, 2018 (Election Year!)

Rusty Hills

Tuesday 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., 1230 Weill Hall (Paul & Nancy O'Neill)

Office Hours: By appointment, Room 5303; Preferably before or after class.

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**Course Overview:** The 2016 election is behind us, but it has left us with plenty of lessons to learn, just in time for the upcoming election of 2018. The purpose of PubPol 423 is to examine campaigns and explain what happens and why.

**Remember: There is no policy without victory.**

This course will introduce you to the practical side of political campaigning: how to win elections. Topics to be covered include campaign planning and management, crafting and framing a message, earned, paid and social media, polling and research, speeches and debates, identifying, differentiating, targeting and turning out voters, coalitions and interest groups, budgeting and fundraising, the political environment and Get Out The Vote efforts.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. **This I Believe essay.** (3-page limit)
2. **A Memo to the Professor.** You will write a memorandum listing the issue, your recommendation, facts and discussion. (6 pages) Your choice:
  - a. "The future of the Democrats: should the Party turn more toward the center, similar to what Bill Clinton did in 1992, or should the party embrace the progressive left as emphasized by Senator Bernie Sanders?" OR,
  - b. "The future of the Republicans: should the Republican Party embrace President Trump and offer a vigorous and bold defense of his policies or should the party return to its historical roots and offer a different path forward more aligned with past Republican policies (such as free trade and strong opposition to Russia, for

- example), even if it means breaking with the President of your party?" OR
- c. "The future of politics: has the two-party system become so broken that it is time for America to emulate other democracies, and spur the creation of a new, third party that better represents the hopes and dreams of a majority of Americans who no longer find a comfortable home with the Democratic and Republican parties?"
  - d. Write me something interesting and worthy of reading.
3. **Book Review** of "Shattered," by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes. (6 pages)
    - a. Alternative political titles will also be considered. Consult with Professor first on other books.
  4. **Final Project:** Write a campaign plan.
    - a. Select one upcoming election in 2018 or 2020 – presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial, congressional, state house or state senate or a ballot issue.
    - b. 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.
      - 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
      - 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?

**For all assignments, please be sure to 1) Include your name, and 2) number your pages.**

**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/](http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/)

**Required Texts:** “Shattered,” by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes. 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 and Real Clear Politics websites. 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 prepared.

**Class Format:** The class will combine lecture with discussion, supplemented with guest lecturers.

**Course Requirements:** Attendance is required and will be taken in class. Student participation is critical to understanding the material, and therefore is a healthy percentage of your final grade. Students are expected to arrive on time, 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:** Even if you miss a class, **all assignments are still due on the date assigned.**

What does that mean? Your grade will be lowered for each class period that an assignment is not handed in. In other words, missing a class is not an excuse for failing to complete an assignment.

## **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

## Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let your instructor know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of courses may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make your instructor aware of your needs, they can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential. Other information of Ford School norms/expectations and resources for students can be found at: <http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectation>

**Grading:** Students will be graded on class participation and the successful completion of the four individual assignments: essay, speech, book review and Memo to the Candidate.

Grade	Points	Percentage
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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

**Plagiarism:** In a word -- Don't! Plagiarism is grounds for failing the class. The University of Michigan and the Ford School take this offense seriously.

#### TOPIC SCHEDULE\*

### January 9

#### Class Overview

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

### January 16

#### 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:** Go to NPR web site and review "This I Believe" essays. Then, write your own personal manifesto, your own "This I Believe," what is most important to you. **Due date: January 30**

January 23 (This is also the State of the State night)

## 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.

January 30 (This is also the State of the Union night)

## Speeches & Debates

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

### **Assignment #1 is DUE.**

### **Assignment # 2:**

Write A **Memo to the Professor**. You will write a memorandum listing the issue, your recommendation, facts and discussion. (6 pages) Your choice:

- c. "The future of the Democrats: should the Party turn more toward the center, similar to what Bill Clinton did in 1992, or should the party embrace the progressive left as emphasized by Senator Bernie Sanders?" OR,
- d. "The future of the Republicans: should the Republican Party embrace President Trump and offer a vigorous and bold defense of his policies or should the party return to its historical roots and offer a different path forward more aligned with past Republican policies (such as free trade and strong opposition to Russia, for example), even if it means breaking with the President of your party?" OR
- e. "The future of politics: has the two-party system become so broken that it is time for America to emulate other democracies, and spur the creation of a new, third party that better represents the hopes and dreams of a majority of Americans who no longer find a comfortable home with the Democratic and Republican parties?"
- f. Write me something interesting and worthy of reading.

**Due Date: February 20**

February 6

## Paid Media

Television, cable, day parts, radio, direct mail, Internet,

newspaper. Comparative communications (Negative ads).  
Who defines whom? And who gets there first?

## February 13

### 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 deal with the press? (If someone figures this out, please explain it to the Prof.)

## February 20

### 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:**

Your Choice:

**Book Review** of "Shattered," by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes. (6 pages)

**OR**

Alternative political titles will also be considered. Consult with Professor first on other books. For example, write a book review of **one** of the books describing the 2012 or 2008 presidential election (From 2012, choose either "Collision 2012" by Dan Balz or "Double Down" by Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. From 2008, choose from "The Audacity to Win" by David Plouffe, "Game Change" by Mark Halperin and John Heilemann or "The Battle for America" by Dan Balz and Haynes Johnson. Write a review of just ONE of these books)

Key points for your book review:

- What was the main point of the book?
- Did you agree or disagree with the author(s)?
- Why?

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

**Due Date: March 20**

## February 27

## No Class – Winter/Spring Semester Vacation

March 6

### Polling & Research

1. Polls were all wrong in 2016. Why? What can polling do, what can't it 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.

March 13

### Voter Contact I

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

March 20

### Book Review

**Assignment #3 is DUE.**

**Assignment #4**

Final Project: Write a campaign plan.

- a. Select one upcoming election in 2018 or 2020 – presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial, congressional, state house or state senate or a ballot issue.
- b. 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.
  - ii. Ninety-five (95%) of the paper should be devoted to the following points:
  - iii. SWOT analysis {Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats}
  - iv. Voter Coalition
  - v. Message
  - vi. 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 his or her weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?



- vii. 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.
- viii. 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?

**DUE DATE: April 10**

March 27

### 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!)

April 3

### Campaign Case Study #1.

#### Political Environment; Coalitions & Interest Groups

#### Voter Contact II

1. **Political Environment.** Just as the weather affects people, so too does the political environment. How does it affect message, issues, coalitions, etc.? Is the Political Environment a force beyond your control?
2. **Coalitions and Interest Groups.** Friends don’t let friends win alone.

April 10

### Campaign Case Study # 2

**Assignment #4 is DUE.**

April 17

### Final Thoughts, Lessons from Winning & Losing

**\*NOTE:**

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