

PubPol 423

Political Campaign Strategy & Tactics

Winter Semester, 2015

Rusty Hills

Tuesdays 5:30 (5:40 Michigan Time) to 8:30 p.m., 1110 Weill Hall

Office Hours: By appointment, 4th floor office; Preferably before or after class.

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Course Overview: Welcome to Professor Hills' Kollege of Political Knowledge. The purpose of PubPol 423 is to provide a practical understanding of the strategies and tactics employed in modern-day campaigns for public office; what candidates and campaign managers do, and why they do it. This is applied knowledge, not theroretical.

There is no policy without victory. This course will introduce you to the art and science of political campaigning. Topics to be covered include campaign planning and management, crafting and framing a message, earned and paid media, polling and research, speeches and debates, social media, data-driven decisions, 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. Candidate Speech. (6 pages)
3. Book Review of "Collision 2012" by Dan Balz (6 pages)
4. Final Project: Write a campaign plan.
 - a. Select one upcoming election in Michigan in 2016 or 2018 – 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?

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/

Required Texts: Students will be required to read the book: "Collision 2012" by Dan Balz.

Because you are a student at the University of Michigan Ford School, I expect you to be conversant with both national and state politics. The New York Times, Washington Post and Congressional Quarterly are excellent resources for national politics, and you may read the Post online for free. The Detroit Free Press and Detroit News, as well as the Michigan state capitol newsletters, Gongwer and MIRS, provide solid coverage of state politics. There are also a number of good websites and blogs, including Politico and Real Clear Politics.

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 of guest lecturers.

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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help us determine appropriate accommodations. We will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

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
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 13

Class Overview

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

January 20

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 political testament, your own "This I

Believe." **Due date: February 3**

January 27

Crafting a Message & Message Development

Targeting messages. Different messages, different audiences, different mediums, different timing. Big Picture. Framing. Going on offense, setting the agenda.

February 3

Speeches & Debates

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

Assignment #1 is DUE.

Assignment # 2:

Write the assigned speech for your candidate.

ASK ME NOW: Different speeches for different candidates.

Due Date: February 25

February 10

Paid Media

Television, cable, day parts, radio, direct mail, Internet, newspaper. Comparative communications (Negative ads). Who defines whom? And who gets there first?

February 17

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?

February 25

Social & Digital Media

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

Assignment #2 is DUE.

Assignment #3:

Write the book review for "Collision 2012" by Dan Balz. Key points for your book review:

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

Imagine that you are writing for the Washington Post Book Review, so keep it to no more than 6 typewritten pages, double-spaced.

Due Date: March 17

March 3

SPRING BREAK – No Class

March 10

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.

March 17

Book Review

Assignment #3 is DUE.

Assignment #4

Final Project: Write a campaign plan.

- a. Select one upcoming election in Michigan in 2016 or 2018 – 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:
 - ix. Prepare a Win Number. How many votes do you need to win your election? Explain how you arrived at that number.
 - x. Ninety-five (95%) of the paper should be devoted to the following points:
 - xi. SWOT analysis {Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats}
 - xii. Voter Coalition
 - xiii. Message
 - xiv. 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?
 - xv. 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.
 - xvi. 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 14

March 24

Voter Contact I

Identifying, differentiating, targeting & turning out Voters.

Microtargeting. In short, who are our voters, and how in the world do we find them?

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

March 31

Voter Contact II

If Voter Contact Part I was targeting, and figuring out the answer to the question: “Who are our voters?” then Voter Contact Part II is turnout. Learning who our voters are does us no good unless the campaign can also turn them out to vote.

The last 96 hours: How to snatch victory from defeat at the very end of a campaign.

April 7

Fundraising, Budgeting & Scheduling

The not very glamorous, but absolutely essential elements of all winning campaigns.

How to raise money, 101. Strategic scheduling (Don't ever be the Scheduler!)

April 14

Political Environment; Coalitions & Interest Groups (Blessing & Curse)

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.

Assignment #4 is DUE

April 21

Final Thoughts, Lessons from Losing

What have we learned from the 2014 election cycle? What can we learn from losing campaigns?

***NOTE:** The dates on which topics are to be covered are subject to change, but

assignment due dates will remain the same.