

PubPol 683

Elections & Campaigns

Fall Semester, 2015

Rusty Hills

Wednesdays 5:30 (5:40 Michigan Time) to 8:30 p.m., 1210 Weill Hall

Office Hours: By appointment, Room 4227; Preferably before or after class.

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Course Overview: Politics is a noble profession. It is the way by which we govern ourselves. But why do politicians and campaign managers do what they do?

Welcome to Professor Hills' Kollege of Political Knowledge. The purpose of PubPol 683 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. **Remember: There is no policy without victory.**

This course will introduce you to the art and un-science of political campaigning. 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, 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. This is applied knowledge, not theoretical.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. This I Believe essay. (3-page limit)
2. A Nomination Speech. You will write a speech nominating the candidate of your choice for President of the United States. (6 pages)
3. Book Review. Your choice of "Collision 2012" by Dan Balz or "Double Down" by Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. (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:
 - 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 his or her 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?

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 and review one of two books: “Collision 2012” by Dan Balz, or “Double Down” by Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. Select one book to review. Select one.

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.

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*

September 9

Class Overview

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

September 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 political testament, your own "This I Believe." **Due date: September 30**

September 23

Crafting a Message & Message Development

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

September 30

Speeches & Debates

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

Assignment #1 is DUE.

Assignment # 2:

Write a speech nominating your candidate at a national convention for President of the United States: Clinton, Bush, Sanders, Rubio, O'Malley, Warren, Walker, etc.

Due Date: October 21

October 7

Paid Media

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

October 14

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 21

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 OR "Double Down"

by Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. Key points for your book review:

- What was the main point of the book?
- Did you agree or disagree with the author(s)?
- 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: November 4

October 28

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 4

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:
 - vi. Prepare a Win Number. How many votes do you need to win your election? Explain how you arrived at that number.
 - vii. Ninety-five (95%) of the paper should be devoted to the following points:
 - viii. SWOT analysis {Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats}
 - ix. Voter Coalition
 - x. Message
 - xi. 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?
 - xii. 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.
 - xiii. 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: December 9

November 11

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?

November 18

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.

November 25

No Class – Happy Thanksgiving

December 2

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!)

December 9

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

Final Thoughts, Lessons from Losing

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

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.**