

Campaign 2008

POLI 220, section 3868

Fall 2008

Prof. Moran

Class Hours	M, 10-10:50 W, 9-11:50
Classroom	K-114
My office:	K636
Office Hours	MTW, 8-9:00 am; M 2-3 T 11 am-1 pm W 2-3 pm
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I. Description

This course concentrates on the campaigns and elections in the current season: the full contingent of House seats, the Senate race (particularly that in New Jersey) and of course, the historic Presidential election.

II. Materials

We have one (1) required textbook for the course:

Morton, Rebecca. 2006. *Analyzing Elections*. New York: W.W. Norton
ISBN: 978-0-393-97829-2

The textbook is a first edition in an important series examining American politics from a rational choice perspective. We need a text to help structure our study of the campaign, but we also need to concentrate on current developments in the campaign. That means you are expected to become active consumers and users of a variety of news and media outlets.

III. Class Structure

The basic structure for the class is going to be pretty traditional; that is, a significant amount of lecture and note taking. However, those of you who have been in my classes before know that I allow for and encourage a fairly substantial amount of class discussion and participation.

IV. Requirements

The basic requirements for the grade in this course fall into three broad areas: examinations, research project, and class participation. To do well in each of these aspects of the course, you are asked and expected to complete a fair amount of reading (usually between 25 and 50 pages a week; excluding the newspaper) and to attend class on a regular basis.

Midterm Exam
(30%)

We will have a midterm exam in mid October. It will most likely be a take-home examination. The grading rubric will be distributed with the exam.

Final Exam
(35%)

The final exam will be held in class and given at the date and time designated by the University (Tuesday, 13 December, 8:00 am in G-320) If you cannot make that time due to some emergency, I will offer some alternative dates. It will be essay format and you will receive a study guide well in advance of the exam.

Research Project
(30%)

This is a 200-level course, but I think most of you are political science majors or minors, so I'm hoping we can bump up the expectations a bit.

The culmination of the research component is a 10-15 minute oral presentation to the class discussing the scope and conclusions of your research and an accompanying paper (the general rule is, to get a good 10-15 minutes, you need about 10-15 pages; not counting the citations and footnotes).

The reason for this is I think we have several opportunities for you to present that research at academic venues beyond our classroom and I'd like for each of you to have the opportunity to experience the thrill that accompanies sharing the

fruits of your hard efforts in front of a broader public.

Finally, if the research is particularly strong, you will have the chance to present at a regional professional political science meeting (the Pennsylvania Political Science Association) in the spring. It's fun would look good on your c.v. if you are applying to grad school.

The written part of the research project is due on the last day of class.

Class Participation (10%)

Class participation will be based on both the quality and the quantity of your participation in class discussions. Obviously, coming up with a brilliant *bon mot* in September and then sitting mute for the rest of the semester won't help too much. Neither is speaking constantly but off topic. Participation comes in various forms and the grading will reflect the fact that not everybody is comfortable speaking in class. To that end, we will have numerous small group exercises that should allow you all to speak and express your views.

Generally I use the following as a rough guide for determining this part of the grade:

Participation in the form of regular *attentive* attendance to class is generally good for a “B.” I don’t have a hard mathematical formula for determining “regular attendance” – i.e., I don’t take attendance and you don’t have a set number of classes that you can miss before a penalty kicks in. You’re all adults and you should want to come to class rather than being coerced into doing so. Please note, however, the “attentive” part of the criteria. Stopping by regularly, but then spending the class time dozing, dining, and disrupting will adversely affect the grade.

The same general rules apply in the discussions (both full class and small group). As a rule, it’s better to speak more rather than less, but the discussion has to be on topic. Regaling your colleagues with your exploits at the bar over the weekend will not help the grade.

Occasional pop quizzes (see “Caveats” below) will be factored into this portion of the grade as well.

IV. Meeting Schedule

Part I: Fundamentals

3 September: Introduction
Reading: Pick up the textbook mentioned above.

For this first class here we’ll review the structure and content of the course and refresh ourselves as to the basics of the campaign.

8-10 Sept: Rational Choice Politics/ Voting I

Reading: Morton, chp. 1, 2

15-24 Sept: Voting II
Reading: Morton, chp. 3, 4, 5

This question is not as obvious as it seems. How do we decide what constitutes the news? How do we decide what should be reported? How is it reported? Who makes these decisions and why?

**Part II:
Money & the Media**

29 Sept – 1 Oct: Campaign Finance

Reading: Morton, chp. 6

6 – 8 Oct: Money and Voting

Reading: Morton, chps. 7,8

**Part III:
Information and Voting**

13 - 15 Oct: Democratic Control

Reading: Morton, chp. 9

20 - 22 Oct: Public Opinion

Reading: Morton, chp. 10

**Part IV:
Federal Elections**

27-29 Oct: Congressional Elections

Reading: Morton, chp. 11

2 – 11 Nov: Presidential Elections

Reading: Morton, chp. 12, 13

**Part V:
Challengers, Minor Parties, Minority**

16-18 Nov : Minors and Independents

Reading: Morton, chp. 14

23 Nov: Minority

Reading: Morton, chp. 15

30 Nov – Dec 8 **Research Presentations**

Final Exam will be given at date and time determined by the University.

Papers due on the last class meeting day.

Caveats

1. This syllabus is meant as a guide for the course.

While I will do my best to maintain the pace outlined above, I am not guaranteeing that that will in fact occur. *Any substantive changes related to due dates, course content, or course requirements will be distributed in class.*

2. Please do your best to **get to class on time**. I am well aware of the joys of traveling in this little corner of the Garden State. That being said, you all know traffic is a nightmare and parking can be a pain, so plan accordingly. Tardiness adversely affects the “Participation” part of the grade.

3. **Keep the food consumption to a minimum.**

Coffee, tea, or something to drink is fine; a five course meal from the truck is not. If you’re gonna chow down, bring enough to share with everybody, make sure it doesn’t stink too badly, or better yet, keep it out of the classroom (and I strongly prefer the latter – eat on your own time).

4. *Turn off the cell phones, pagers, two ways, iPods, or whatever latest bit of nonacademic technological wizardry you possess.* If I hear any of these or see you text messaging during class, the class stops and it’s quiz time. Again, this isn’t high school. You’re attending a university because you want to, not because the state is forcing you. Show

some respect for your colleagues and me. If you really are so indispensable that disconnecting from the world for the time that we’re together is impossible, then skip class and come back later when you feel you can participate fully. The grades for the quizzes will be factored in to the “participation” part of the course.

5. **Respect your colleagues.** Politics is great fun to talk about and I want to encourage you all to express your thoughts freely, but be mindful of the impact your words can have on others in the room.

6. **Missed and Late Exam Policy:** All exams are due on the date assigned. Exams received after that time will be docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late for the first 2 days, then 1/3 for each class day late after that. In the event of missed in-class exam (including the final), you will receive a grade of “F” for the missed work unless you give me prior notification of the conflict and reason for missing the exam.

7. **Plagiarism:** All submitted work must be the product of your own thought. If you are found to have plagiarized all or part of an assignment, you will receive a grade of “F” for that assignment.