



**GOVT 2334 American &
Texas Government II:
Campaigns, Elections, and
Political Behavior**



Fall 2012
Department of Government

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An analysis of the American electoral process and political campaigns. This course focuses on political parties, campaign strategy, the electoral process, public opinion, and voter turnout.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Office Location UAC 110
Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00. TT 10:00-11:00 And by appointment.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Plunkitt of Tamany Hall. 1995. Signet Classics. 0-451-52620-1
Mailel & Brewer 2010. *Parties and Elections in America. 5th Edition.* ISBN# 978-1-4422-0102-6
Wayne 2007. *Is This any Way to Run a Democratic Election?* 4th Ed. ISBN#978-1-60426-635-1
Ceaser et all. 2009. *Epic Journey.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN#978-0-7425

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students of political science often make the mistake of assuming that the study of government and politics are the same thing. Indeed, most courses offered at the university level are government courses – the study of institutions, political theories, and law. Ironically, many political science students never develop a good sense of what “politics” is all about. This course – Campaigns & Elections – is designed to introduce students to one of America’s favorite pastimes ... politics!

You were expecting baseball? You are not far off. You may know people or have friends who can name all the players on their favorite teams and the teams they dislike the most. They can tell you the batting averages, draft picks, position, pitching style, batting patterns, and history of every player. They have a passion for the game. Politics is the same way. I know people who can name all the members of Congress, tell you their home states, voting records, committee assignments, and policy decisions. They feel passionately about a particular presidential candidate, and can tell you all the reasons why one person would make a better president than some other person. They argue passionately on behalf of one party and are equally vocal

against another. These people may put bumper stickers on their car, signs in their yard, wear a party hat, or even paint their face. These people are political junkies!!!

Well, the Super Bowl of politics is upon us ... national elections! The difference in this game is that the stakes are real. Whoever wins will determine: how much of your money you get to keep, what services the government will provide for you, who you can marry, what you can eat, what you can drink, what you can smoke, what you can do with your body, what kind of car you can drive, and much more. In sum, this contest determines your future and the future of the country. More than a game, politics defines life and liberty. When your team loses, your life is directly affected. And you think people cry when their favorite football team loses? So get out your face paints, turn on your televisions, and open your newspapers. You my, friend, are about to be turned into a political junky!!!

This course is designed to introduce students to the “sport” of politics. Students will follow national elections in the media, assess candidates and their positions, and analyze campaign strategy. To apply what they have learned, students will run a mock campaign and focus on key elements such of campaign strategy such as campaign themes, slogans, fund raising, candidate image, issue position, advertising, polling, voter mobilization, media relations, and crisis management.

By the end of the course you should have developed a good understanding of the American electoral process, campaign strategy, and voter behavior.

RELATION TO DEPARTMENTAL GOALS AND PURPOSES

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to develop a level of expertise related to the topic of political campaigns and elections in the United States.

RELATION TO COLLEGE GOALS AND PURPOSES

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to develop a level of expertise in a particular field; improve critical-thinking skills and the ability to articulate difficult concepts, theories, and arguments; and provide a setting that fosters an appreciation for education and encourages students to learn more about the world in which they live. More importantly, as with all other courses at the University, this course should encourage students to use the knowledge and skills they gain to improve the human condition, strengthen the bonds of society, govern wisely, and live well.

RELATION TO THE PURPOSE STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

This course on politics reflects the values of the University Ten Pillar Vision by building on the classics, increasing our cultural impact, renewing our community, and allowing students to see the connection between theory and application. The course, like all courses in the Department of Government, is founded on the belief that our Christian faith informs our worldview, personal values, and desire to serve others.

ATTENDANCE

Please see the official Attendance Policy in the HBU Classroom Policy on Blackboard. Students missing more than 25% of the class will be given a failing grade.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS

Students needing learning accommodations should inform the professor immediately and consult the Academic Accommodations section of the HBU Classroom Policy posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADE SCALE

Students experiencing difficulty in the course should contact the professor early in the semester, not at the end. Final grades will be assigned based on test scores, the final, and attendance for a total of 400 possible points. **There is no negotiation of final grades.**

Your final grade will be based on these five requirements. Failure to complete any of the five may result in a failing grade. After the official drop date, a compelling, non-academic reason to withdraw will be required in order to withdraw.

(1) Attendance– It has been my experience that students who do not attend class do not do well on the exams. **Each absence beyond what is allowed by the University (3) will deduct 3 points from your total point accumulation.** Also, Please be aware of the University attendance policy.

(2) Completion of the assigned readings - Our class discussions will use the textbook as a starting point. Failure to have completed the assigned readings puts you at a disadvantage and deprives the class of your input. Furthermore, some material on the exams may be taken from the text although it was not covered in class. Failure to read always results in lower grades. **10 reading quizzes will be given over the course of the semester, each worth 5 points for a total of 50 points.**

(3) Participation in class discussions – Since our class will be centered on our conversation, I expect you to participate in the discussion. I frequently call on people in class. Failure to participate in class discussions (either through choice or absence) will result in a lower course grade.

(4) Five projects – **Each project is worth 10 points.** Projects will be graded on a comparative curve.

(5) Three exams - **Each exam is worth 100 points.** The essays will focus on material covered in the assigned readings and our class discussions.

**50
POINTS**

**50
POINTS**

**300
POINTS**

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

**A = 368 points or more B = 320-367 points C = 280-319 points D = 240-279 points
F = 239 points or below**

A = Excellent

B = Good

C = Fair

D = Poor

F = Failing

LATE WORK & TEST POLICY

Late work will be penalized. You should not miss any exams. If you are sick, you need to notify the professor in advance. The professor reserves the right to administer a different exam, deduct points for taking the exam late, and/or schedule the makeup for a later date. Missing an exam without giving prior notice will result in a zero for that test, with no makeup.

Student Signature – I have read and understand the syllabus for this class. I understand that the content of this syllabus and the topical outline are subject to change at the discretion of the professor. I have read and understand the HBU Classroom Policy posted on Black Board. **I promise to uphold the Code of Academic Integrity at Houston Baptist University and will not tolerate its violation by others.**

September 5 Census Date/Last date to drop without a "W"

September 9 - Dec 11 0% Refund for Classes Dropped during these dates

September 17-21 Spiritual Emphasis Week

October 26 Last date to drop with a "W"

WEEK	TOPIC	READING	ACTIVITY
WEEK 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Ideology 		Ideology Quiz
WEEK 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partisanship & Parties 2. Public Opinion 		
WEEK 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Socialization 2. Voter Turnout 		
WEEK 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voter Behavior – CNN Data 2. Realignment 		
WEEK 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Third Parties 2. <i>Third Parties</i> 		EXAM ONE
WEEK 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction & Election Overview 2. History of Presidential Selection - the Founders Intentions 		
WEEK 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of Presidential Selection – From King Caucus to Chicago 2. “Chicago – 1968” 		
WEEK 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McGovern/Fraser & Modern Presidential Primaries 2. Presidential Primary Strategy – It all Starts in Iowa 		
WEEK 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Who Wants to be President?” & Interregnum 2. Nominating Conventions & Footage 		
WEEK 10	<p>EXAM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presidential Debates 		EXAM TWO
WEEK 11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electoral Strategy & Electoral College 2. Campaign Strategy 		
WEEK 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media Strategies – Unpaid 3. Media Strategies – Paid 		
WEEK 13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Campaign Killers</i> 2. Presentations 		
WEEK 14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Campaign Finance & Finance Reforms (527s) 		
WEEK 15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Campaign 2012 		

FINAL EXAM