

PubPol 423

Political Campaign Strategy & Tactics

Winter Semester, 2020

Jill Alper

Tuesday 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., 1110 Weill Hall (Betty Ford Classroom)

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Overview:

The purpose of PubPol 423 builds upon the original syllabus of Professor Rusty Hills and is quite simple: to examine campaigns including strategy and their functional area components - and to discuss both historical and modern-day events in action to learn from case-in-point moments.

Remember: There is no policy without victory.

Welcome! This course will introduce you to the art and science of political campaigning. Topics to be covered include a heavy emphasis on political communications, including speeches and debates, crafting and framing a message, earned media, paid media, digital and social media, voter contact, and field.

PubPol 423 will also examine campaign planning and management, polling and research, identifying, 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. I want something interesting, something I could send to policymakers in Washington. Here are some sample choices:
 - 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?” (6 pages)
- d. If you choose a different topic, clear it with me **beforehand**.
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.**
4. **Final Project:** Write a campaign plan.
 - a. Select one upcoming election in 2020 – presidential (for winning the State of Michigan), senatorial, congressional, state house or a ballot issue.
 - b. Must be a real candidate or ballot issue.
 - c. 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? Tease out how you will utilize campaign tactics to spread that message and express your strategy in a timeline and budget.

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 Books: “Shattered,” by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes and “Don’t Think of an Elephant,” by George Lakoff. 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 the Washington Post are excellent resources for national politics. I also recommend the Politico, The Skimm, The Talking Points Memo and Real Clear Politics websites. The Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, and the Michigan state government reports, Gongwer and MIRS, provide solid coverage of state politics if you have access to them. Read the news each day and come prepared. We will have interactive discussions during each class.

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

Course Requirements: Attendance is required and will be taken in class. Student participation is critical to understanding, and thinking about the material, and therefore is a 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.
- Missing a class is not an excuse for failing to complete an assignment.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the fundamental principles of winning candidate-centered campaigns.
2. To have both a general understanding and working knowledge of the functional areas of campaigns in order to prepare the student to create or assess a basic campaign strategy, plan, or approach.
3. To assist the student in developing a perspective on how the media ecosystem works in the context of campaigns: both in terms of how it impacts campaigns and how campaigns drive news to their own benefit.
4. To develop the student's ability to effectively voice their understanding and evaluation of current events in a group setting - to either advocate or present their point of view, or a general point of view - in order to contribute to the public discourse.

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

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.

Student Mental Health and Well-Being 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/>

Other information about 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, memo, book review, and final assignment, with the final assignment weighted more heavily.

CRITERIA

Grade	Points	Percentage		
A	4.0	94-100		
A-	3.7	93-90	Participation	10%
B+	3.3	89-86		
B	3.0	85-80	Essay	20%
B-	2.7	79-75		
C+	2.3	74-70	Memo	20%
C	2.0	69-64		
D+	1.3	59-56	Book Review	20%
D	1.0	55-52		
D-	0.7	51-50	Final Assignment	30%
E	0.0	Less than 50		

In writing, I will be looking for:

- Carefully, thoughtful remarks constructed with historical or other evidence-based background or research support;
- New or creative ideas;
- A clear point of view on the subject; and,
- Clear demonstration of goals and integration of strategy and tactics.

For Class Participation:

- Current day awareness of news and events;
- Engagement in class; and,
- Articulation of ideas or questions related to any discussion or content.

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 14

Class Overview

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

January 21

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.

Reading:

THE CAMPAIGN PLAN - Wellstone.org.

https://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/The-Campaign-Plan_1.pdf.

Assignment #1: Go to the NPR website and review "This I Believe" essays. Then, write your own personal political testament, your own "This I Believe."**Due date: February 4**

<https://www.npr.org/series/4538138/this-i-believe>

January 28

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.

Reading:

Blodgett, Jeff, and Bill Lofy. Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: a Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers. Chapter 3, p. 35-61- Creating a Message and Delivering It to Your Audience. University of Minnesota Press, 2008,

<https://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/WinningYourElectionTheWellstoneWay-1.pdf>.

Begin reading: Lakoff, George. Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014. Utilize what you learn from this book in your final project. Include your thinking on how you would research and design your message within the context of the campaign plan you are drafting. Finish reading by March 10th for class discussion on polling and research.

February 4

Speeches & Debates

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

Assignment #1 is DUE.

Assignment # 2:

A Memo to the Professor. You will write a memorandum listing the issue, your recommendation, facts, and discussion. 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 Democrat in 2020: should the Democrats embrace the strategy of President Obama in 2020 and chart a different path? If different, what political prescript will comprise an electoral college win?”
- d. “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?” (6 pages)

Due Date: February 25

Reading:

“Organizing and Producing Candidate Debates: An International Guide.” Admin, National Democratic Institute, 15 Apr. 2019, and Producing Candidate Debates-an NDI international Guide.pdf.

<https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Organizing%20and%20Producing%20Candidate%20Debates-an%20NDI%20international%20Guide.pdf>

February 11

Paid Media

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

Reading:

Blodgett, Jeff, and Bill Lofy. Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: a Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers. Chapter 7, p. 127-137 - Reaching Voters through Paid Advertising. University of Minnesota Press, 2008,

<https://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/WinningYourElectionTheWellstoneWay-1.pdf>.

February 18

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?

Reading:

Blodgett, Jeff, and Bill Lofy. Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: a Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers. Chapter 8, p. 137- 165 - Working with Reporters and Communicating Your Message Through Earned Media. University of Minnesota Press, 2008, <https://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/WinningYourElectionTheWellstoneWay-1.pdf>.

Geiger, A.W. "Key Findings about the Online News Landscape in America." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 11 Sept. 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/11/key-findings-about-the-online-news-landscape-in-america/>.

February 25**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:**

Write a book review of "Shattered," by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes. Other political books will also be considered.

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.

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 24

Reading:

Kenski, K., Jamieson, K., & Owen, D. (2017-08-24). New Media and Political Campaigns. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. : Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199793471-e-016>

Optional reading to be added on digital campaigns as a background resource for those especially interested in digital campaigns.

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? How does a campaign effectively use polling?
2. Research. Know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses; know your opponent, strength, and weaknesses; know your voters, your state, your environment, your issues.

Reading:

Deane, Claudia, et al. "Election 2020 Polling Field Guide." *Pew Research Center Methods*, Pew Research Center, 19 Nov. 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2019/11/19/a-field-guide-to-polling-election-2020-edition/>.

Class Discussion: How has George Lakoff's book impacted your thinking on polling, framing, and research?

March 17

Voter Contact and Field

Identifying, differentiating, targeting & turning out Voters.

Microtargeting. Who are our voters to get to a win, and how in the world do we find them?

Reading:

Blodgett, Jeff, and Bill Lofy. *Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way: a Comprehensive Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers*. Chapter 5, p. 75-117 - How to Build Your Base and Use it for Direct Voter Contact. University of Minnesota Press, 2008, <https://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/WinningYourElectionTheWellstoneWay-1.pdf>.

March 24

Book Review

Assignment #3 is DUE.

Assignment #4

Final Project: Write a campaign plan.

- a. Select one upcoming election in Michigan in 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 three points:
 1. SWOT analysis {Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats}
 2. Voter Coalition (Tell me how and where you will get the votes to arrive at your win number).
 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?
 4. Tactics
 - Iv. Provide an overview of how TV, radio, digital, mail, phones, field, and other tools will be used as a percent of total budget and from a timing standpoint.

DUE DATE: April 21

March 31

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!)

Reading:

Principal Authors, Dee Ertukel and Mary Jane Volk. Making the Dough Rise: A Manual for Campaign Fundraisers, Edited March 2011.

<https://annieslist.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Making-The-Dough-Rise.pdf>

April 7

Political Environment; Coalitions & Interest Groups

1. **Political Environment.** Just as the weather affects people, so too does the political environment. How does it affect the 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.

Reading

"Joining Forces: A Guide for Forming, Joining and Building Political Coalitions." NDI, National Democratic Institute, 16 Apr. 2019, <https://www.ndi.org/node/24020>.

Zito, Salena. "Great Revolt: Inside the Populist Coalition Reshaping American Politics". CROWN, 2019.

April 14

Case Studies

April 21

Final Thoughts, Lessons from Winning & Losing

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.**