

Spring 2015 Political Science 100G  
How to Win (or lose) an Election  
Professor Nathan Fletcher

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## SUMMARY

Do you have what it takes to win an election? Do you even know that it takes? This course will focus on the components of a political campaign with a particular focus on the practical realities that lead to winning or losing. Topics include: campaign organization; vote targeting, role of political parties, social media and the Internet, fundraising, the role of the press, how to handle a crisis, debates and much more. All of these areas will be explaining citing specific examples from federal, state, and local races. The course will examine research about what makes an effective campaign strategy and focus on how technology has affected the way campaigns contact voters. Taught by someone who has both won and lost elections, this course will give you a historical understanding of the basic principles of elections and political campaigns.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor Nathan Fletcher

Email: [nfletcher@ucsd.edu](mailto:nfletcher@ucsd.edu)

Office: SSB 377

Twitter: @nathanfletcher

Office Hours: Thursday 2:00 to 4:00

(This time is subject to change and will be confirmed weekly)

(Reserve times via weekly doodle post)

### Teaching Assistants:

Kaleb Kalinowski

[kkalinow@ucsd.edu](mailto:kkalinow@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours:

Tuesday 2:00pm to 4:00pm

(and by appointment)

SSB 35

Mona Vakilifathi

[mvakilif@ucsd.edu](mailto:mvakilif@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 10am -12pm

(and by appointment)

SSB 448

## CLASS INFORMATION

Lecture: Thursdays 5pm - 7:50 pm

Location: CENTR 212

Final: 6/11/2015 7:00PM to 10:00 PM

The slides for each class will be posted on course TED site and each lecture will be podcast\*. The course TED site will also include course announcements, volunteer/internship opportunities, study guides, and any other class materials.

\*Podcasting will be done provided the system works properly and many guest speakers opt not to podcast their discussion. There should be no expectation or guarantee lectures or presentations will be podcast.

## READING

### Required:

*Campaigns & Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*

John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, Keena Lipsitz

Additionally, Professor Fletcher may post relevant articles or supplements on the TED site. Please monitor it weekly for course announcements or additional readings.

Optional:

*The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*  
Sasha Issenberg

*Message Matters: The Economy & Presidential Campaigns*  
Lynn Vavreck

Suggested:

*The Last Campaign: Robert Kennedy and 82 days that inspired America*  
Thurston Clarke

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

- › 5% Assignment #1            4/24/15 (due at 5:00PM)
- › 40% Assignment #2        5/ 7/15 (due at 5:00PM)
- › 15% Assignment #3        5/28/15 (due at 5:00PM)
- › 40% Final                    6/11/15 (7:00 to 10:00 PM)

**Assignment #1 Documentary Evaluation**

On April 23<sup>rd</sup> in class, we will watch a documentary on political campaigns. You will write a two-page evaluation of the film we screen. (We will hand our more detailed instructions later). This assignment will be due the following day at 5:00pm.

**Assignment #2 Campaign Plan**

For the campaign plan, you will write a campaign plan in 7 to 10 pages (We'll hand out more detailed instructions later).

Please note you need to use original citations. So if you get the information from an aggregator of sources like Wikipedia you MUST track down the original, credible source. The paper will be graded on both substance and style. Each student must do his or her own work, adhering to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

**Assignment #2 Campaign Speech Analysis**

For the second paper, you will write an analysis in 5 to 7 pages of one particular campaign speech or debate and critique the effectiveness of the particularly performance (We'll hand out more detailed instructions later).

Please note you need to use original citations. So if you get the information from an aggregator of sources like Wikipedia you MUST track down the original, credible source. The paper will be graded on both substance and style. Each student must do his or her own work, adhering to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

**Students will be required to use Turnitin to submit both written assignments.** Turnitin is an Internet-based plagiarism prevention service, which will be used to ensure academic integrity. The portal can be accessed directly through the course website. Hard copies of assignments will not be accepted. Professor Fletcher and the Teaching Assistants will provide additional information on the proper way to upload these assignments in subsequent class meetings.

**Final Exam**

For students who have a documented finals conflict with another UCSD course we will offer an alternative final exam time. The final will be comprehensive of the materials presented and assigned readings for the entire course.

## **Extra Credit**

During the course, opportunities to intern or volunteer with a government office or political campaign will be made available to students. Any student who does eight hours of documented work for an elected official, government office, political candidate or organization that advocates for public policy/political change will have one point added to the final course score. (If your midterm, writing project, class participation, and final give you 89, your final score for the course will be 90).

While opportunities will be provided in class, students are not bound to only those presented through the course. Students should feel free to contact officials or organizations and request volunteer opportunities. However, the hours worked must be documented by date and time, along with a signed letter by a representative from that organization. Additionally, a written explanation of the work done and what was learned must be submitted. This summary and signed hours form **MUST** be submitted before the final exam begins to be eligible for extra credit.

Again, for the extra point to be counted, students must submit a written memo that includes:

--Name of official or organization

--Total hours worked (minimum of 8, but no maximum)

--Nature of work performed

--Signature and title by verifying person at office of official or organization

--Students take on volunteer/internship. This can be attached separately or below the signature of person verifying if student would rather them not see overall comments. But this section should include what was learned, observed, overall feelings and anything that relates back to the class.

**NO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ONCE THE FINAL EXAM BEGINS.**

## **CLASS MEETINGS**

Each class meeting will consist of a lecture and then a discussion section where a particular question related to the lecture will be addressed in a group discussion. Sometimes there might be two lectures and two discussion sections back to back.

Occasionally, we will have guest speakers. You may be tested on the content covered in their lectures and question and answers. While their content may or may not be on the test, you should learn from their presentation and work in specific examples cited by guests in your short answer, essays and class assignments to demonstrate an understanding of the practical realities of topics presented. Also use guest speakers as your chance to ask relevant questions about Campaigns and Elections.

At the beginning of each class Professor Fletcher will present a brief “most interesting campaign you have never hears about” segment. These will **NOT** be included in the podcast. On the final you will have a moment to share your favorite (or whatever one you remember) to gain one extra point towards your exam score.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours will vary week by week. During each class, Professor Fletcher’s office hours for the following week will be announced. A doodle schedule will be posted on the course TED site each week. Please reserve a 15-minute block on this doodle during the weekly office hours. If you schedule a time and cannot attend then please go back into the doodle and free up the time so another student can use it. The TAs will also conduct weekly office hours and make those times and location available. It is suggested you email TAs if you plan to attend their office hours so they can best be prepared to answer your questions.

## **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Professor Fletcher will consider requests for letters of recommendation on a case-by-case basis. To be considering please email Professor Fletcher the following information in **ONE** email.

- Reason for request (law school, UCDC, Capitol Fellows, job, etc.)
- Where potential letter should be sent/submitted
- Classes taken with Professor Fletcher and grade
- Extracurricular activities and anything else of value
- Political/government activism
- Work experience
- A complete draft of a letter from Professor Fletcher on your behalf.

After this has been submitted then make an appointment to meet with Professor Fletcher to discuss during office hours. Students are not entitled to a letter and please note due to large class size it is not possible to immediately turn around letters.

### **GRADE CHANGES AND EXTENSIONS**

All requests for grade changes must be made in writing, to Professor Fletcher, within a week of receiving the graded assignment. Requests more than a week from assignment being provided to the student will NOT be considered. Requests must be typed and double-spaced and provide an explanation for the request and justification. Please note that a Professor review of a grade assigned by a TA may result in either a higher or lower grade (or grade could stay the same). **There are no re-grades for the final.**

Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will only be granted in cases of documented illness or family medical emergencies. Please contact Professor Fletcher as soon as possible if you need to request one. Appropriate contact for Professor is email—not a tweet, facebook message, or note slipped under his office door.

Note: We will **NOT** grant any extensions because stolen or damaged computers. This does happen, so you should be in the habit of using the free DropBox program to automatically back up all of your work on the cloud whenever you save it so that you never lose it.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments submitted after the assigned deadline will be assessed the following penalties:

--5% reduction per day. The penalty will be assessed at 5pm each day. So if the assignment is due on Thursday at 5pm, the student will lose 5% points if submitted anytime until Friday at 5pm. After Friday at 5pm it will go to 10% points until Saturday at 5pm when it will go to 15% points, etc.

--The penalty will max out at a 20% reduction.

--The reduction is a percentage of the final grade for the assignment. So if you scored a 84% on the paper but were assessed a 10% reduction your final grade for the assignment would be a 74%.

--No papers will be accepted once the final exam begins!

\*I have never seen a paper improve at a rate greater than the one at which you lose points

## Class Schedule

### Part I. Introduction

1. Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Lecture A: Course Introduction: The Basics of Campaigns and Course Overview  
Lecture B: Campaign Plan: Developing a Campaign Strategy and Message”

### Part II. Campaign Plan

2. Thursday, April 9th  
Lecture A: “Campaign Plan: Voter Targeting, Voter ID”  
Lecture B: “Campaign Plan: Polling”
  - a. Optional. Sasha Issenberg. Chapter 2: “A Game of Margins” in *The Victory Lab*. p 36-69.
  - b. Optional. Sasha Issenberg. Chapter 9: “Models and the Matrix” in *The Victory Lab*. p 243-271.
  - c. OPTIONAL: Sasha Issenberg. Chapter 6: “Geeks versus the Gurus” in *The Victory Lab*. p 143-180.
  - d. Richard Parker. “Lone Star Blues,” *New York Times*, 02/19/2013.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/20/opinion/getting-texas-to-go-democratic.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/20/opinion/getting-texas-to-go-democratic.html?_r=0)
3. Thursday, April 16th  
Lecture A: “Campaign Plan: Fundraising and Finance Plan  
Lecture B: “Role of Political Parties and Outside Groups”
  - a. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, “Financing Campaigns” in *Campaigns and Elections*
  - b. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, “Political Parties and Interest Groups” in *Campaigns and Elections*
4. Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Campaign Documentary Screening

**ASSIGNMENT ONE: Documentary Screening Evaluation Due Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM**

### Part III: Communicating and Executing

5. Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>  
Lecture A: “Campaign Plan: Field/Grassroots Operations”  
Lecture B: “Campaign Plan: Paid and Social Media”
  - a. Optional. Sasha Issenberg. Chapter 4: “The Two Percent Solution” in *The Victory Lab*
  - b. Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. "Social pressure and vote turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102.1 (2008): 33.
  - c. Bond, Robert M., et al. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization." *Nature* 489.7415 (2012): 295-298.

**ASSINGMENT TWO: Campaign Plan DUE Thursday May 7th at 5:00 PM**

6. Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>  
Lecture: “The Role and Evolution of the Press, Internet and Social Media”
  - a. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, Chapter 7: “Media” in *Campaigns and Elections*
7. Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>  
Special Guests Discussion: Careers in Politics
8. Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>  
“The Debate, Press Conference, and Campaign Speech”

**ASSIGNMENT THREE: Speech Analysis due, Thursday, May 28th at 5:00 PM**

Part III. Changing World, Voting Rights and Current Elections.

9. Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>  
Lecture A: “Every voter counts or does it: Voting Rights, Recounts, Recalls”
  - a. “John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, Chapter 11: “Voter Participation” in *Campaigns and Elections*
 Lecture B: Election Reform Ideas: National popular vote and campaign finance reform
  - b. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz, Chapter 13: “Democracy in Action or a Broken System?” in *Campaigns and Elections*
  - c. Sasha Issenberg. Chapter 10: “The Soul of a New Machine” in *The Victory Lab*. p 273-301.
  - d. William Finnegan, “How the son of Kenyan economist became an Illinois Everyman. May 31, 2004. *The New Yorker* [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/31/040531fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/31/040531fa_fact1)
10. Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>  
Special Panel Discussion: Election 2016 Preview
11. **Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm to 10:00pm Final Exam**