

**POLI 100DA: Elections, Campaigns, and Voting**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Summer Session I 2013**

**Lectures**

YORK 3050A  
MW 2:00–4:50 PM  
Course Webpage: On TED

**Professor Lindsay Nielson**

Office Location: SSB 322  
Office Hours: M 12:00–1:00 PM, F 2:00–4:00 PM  
Email: lnielson@ucsd.edu

**Course Overview**

Elections are a crucial part of American politics—they're how we choose our government leaders and how citizens express their views on the direction the country is going. This course will introduce you to how elections work in the United States. We will study how elections are structured, how candidates run for office, and how voters decide whether to vote and who to vote for. This course will focus mainly on federal elections—that is, elections for president/vice president and the U.S. Congress. This course will assume that you have completed POLI 10 (or an equivalent Introduction to American Politics course) and are familiar with the basic structure of the U.S. government.

The study of elections presents many intriguing puzzles. Why do incumbents get reelected so often? Why do millions of people vote even though their individual votes have little effect on the outcome of the election? Why do the Iowa caucuses matter so much in presidential elections when just a tiny fraction of the country's population votes on that day? In this course we will explore these and other questions. The broad themes of the course can be described as follows:

- How does the way that elections are structured (according to the Constitution, state laws, and political party bylaws) influence who gets nominated and elected?
- How do candidates run for office? Are political campaigns effective?
- How do peoples' personal characteristics and social environments influence whether they vote and how they vote? Why do some people choose not to vote at all?

The academic study of elections is very different than the sport of following electoral politics. We'll mostly focus on what we know about elections based on academic studies of politics, but we'll also discuss recent and upcoming elections as illustrations of the themes we cover in class.

**Expectations**

I ask that you come prepared for each course lecture, and in return I'll do my best to make the lectures worth your time. I expect that you will complete the assigned readings before the beginning of class and come prepared to be an active participant in classroom discussions. This means that you will need to spend a significant amount of time preparing for each lecture. A portion of your grade will be determined by your attendance at lectures. You will also be expected to stay for the entire class period. Cell phones may not be used during class.

This course will also have a heavy writing component. I believe that learning how to write clearly, concisely, and effectively is one of the most valuable skills you can learn in college. Your writing will be graded on both content (meaning how well you understand and apply the course material) and

mechanics (meaning grammar, style, paragraph and sentence structure, spelling, and word choice). Both elements are essential to writing an outstanding paper.

### **Course Requirements**

You will be required to complete an in-class midterm exam consisting of 25 multiple choice questions and two short essays (3-4 paragraphs). This exam is designed to test how well you understand the course readings.

Instead of a final exam you will write a 10-12 page term paper creating a campaign strategy for a candidate for the House of Representatives. This paper will use what we have learned in the course and background research you will do on a district's recent electoral history, candidates, and constituents to write a paper recommending to the candidate how they can win the 2014 election. To help you write this paper, there will be three assignments due throughout the course. These assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the course outline.

### **Grading**

I reserve A's for excellent work. B's are for solid, above-average work, while C's are for work of average quality. D's indicate work that is below average, and F's indicate work that is substantially below expectations. Your grade in the course will be assigned as follows:

In-class midterm exam:	35%
Paper assignments (5% each):	15%
Term paper:	40%
<u>Course attendance:</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

The deadlines for papers and exams are not negotiable. Assignments turned in more than 10 minutes after the start of the class period in which they are due will be docked by 5%. Assignments turned in after the class period is over will be docked 10%. Each additional late day will cost you an additional 10% penalty. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy and be stapled.

Exceptions to the late policy will only be granted if you have arranged it in advance for a valid reason or if you have a genuine emergency and contact me as soon as possible. If circumstances arise that interfere with your ability to turn in your work in a timely manner, please advise me of them as soon as possible. I am much more likely to be able to work out a solution with you if you come to me as soon as the problem arises instead of waiting until the end of the course.

If you wish to appeal a grade you received on an assignment or exam, you must make a request in writing with a full and detailed justification of why you think the original grade was incorrect and attach the original assignment (you may wish to make a copy of it to keep for your records). Be specific in your justification. I will then review the assignment and assign a new grade. You should understand that a review can result in a grade that is higher, lower, or exactly the same. Grade appeal requests will only be accepted for one week following the first day an assignment or exam is passed back in class.

## **Policy on Academic Honesty**

You are expected to turn in original work in this course that is entirely your own writing. This means that there must not be any unauthorized collaboration with others on your assignments or exams, and the work you turn in must be written entirely by yourself and not by any other person or internet source. Cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in these activities will receive a failing grade and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

With the proliferation of internet sources, plagiarism has become especially problematic. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation or attribution. This can include, but is not limited to, using an idea you read somewhere else without citing the idea to that source, using a direct quote without including quotation marks and a citation, or copying text from another source and changing a few words to pass it off as your own writing. Plagiarism is completely unacceptable and will be dealt with harshly. If you are unclear on what plagiarism is or are unsure how to properly cite a source, it is your responsibility to clarify with me in advance of the assignment deadline. If you do not ask questions prior to the due date, you are responsible for the consequences.

## **Policy on Disabilities**

I am committed to providing a learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, you are responsible for making your needs known to me and seeking assistance from the university in a timely manner. Students requesting accommodations and services for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). More information on this process can be found at <http://osd.ucsd.edu>.

## **Policy on Discrimination and Harassment**

I am committed to providing a learning environment free of harassment or discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or age. If you encounter discrimination or harassment during this course, please talk to me immediately or contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (<http://ophd.ucsd.edu/>) to remedy the situation.

## **Course Materials**

The course readings will primarily come from the two books listed below. They are available at the UCSD bookstore, though you may be able to purchase cheaper copies at Amazon.com or half.com. However, please make sure that you buy the correct edition of the book, as substantial changes have been made from previous editions.

Sides, Shaw, Grossman, and Lipsitz. *Campaigns & Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice*. (ISBN 978-0-393-93262)

Flanigan and Zingale. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*. 12<sup>th</sup> Edition. (ISBN 978-1-60426-521-7)

In addition to these books, other readings will be made available as PDFs on TED. I will also post occasional short news articles or blog posts relevant to the course readings that you might find interesting and that will enhance your understanding of the course material. Please check TED frequently for these readings and for other announcements and reminders.

### Course Schedule

*Note: "C&E" refers to Campaigns & Elections. "PBAE" refers to Political Behavior of the American Electorate. Assignment due dates and exam dates are listed in bold. Readings that will be placed on TED are noted with an asterisk.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
July 1	Course Introduction/Writing Boot Camp How Elections Work	C&E Chapters 1 and 2
July 3	Campaigns Historically and Today Campaign Finance <b>District Preferences Due</b>	C&E Chapters 3, 5 C&E Chapter 4
July 8	Presidential Elections Congressional Elections <b>Assignment #1 Due</b>	C&E Chapter 8 C&E Chapter 9
July 10	Political Parties and Interest Groups Media	C&E Chapter 6 C&E Chapter 7
July 15	Voter Participation Midterm Exam Review <b>Assignment #2 Due</b>	C&E Chapter 11, PBAE Chapter 2
July 17	Vote Choice <b>Midterm Exam</b>	C&E Chapter 12, PBAE Chapter 8
July 22	Everything You Ever Needed to Know About Voter Partisanship <b>Assignment #3 Due</b>	PBAE Chapters 3-5
July 24	Public Opinion and Ideology Mass Media from the Voter's Perspective	PBAE Chapter 6 PBAE Chapter 7
July 29	Political Information <b>Deadline for Feedback on Term Paper</b>	Zaller Chapters 2-3*
July 31	Election Polls  Evaluating Campaigns and Elections	PBAE Appendix, Traugott & Lavrakas Chapters 2 & 9* C&E Chapter 13
Aug. 2	<b>Term Paper Due</b>	