When you complete this course successfully, you will...

- ...know the rules that govern elections in the United States.
- ...recognize and be able to discuss common dynamics that play out in elections.
- ...understand some of the tools political scientists use to assess how candidate funding, advertising, voting rules, and other factors affect election outcomes.
- ...have made connections between these concepts and the events and strategies you observe playing out in a particular 2014 political campaign.

1 Course Requirements

Reading. The primary textbook we will use is *Campaigns & Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice (2012 Election Update Edition)*, by John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, and Keena Lipsitz. This book is referred to simply as “Sides” in the reading schedule below. Additional assigned readings are drawn from scholarly journals and edited volumes and are available under the “Resources” section of the Sakai course site (http://sakai.luc.edu/). All readings should be completed before the class period for which they are assigned.

You will also devote time each week to reading news stories about what is going on in the race you are tracking for your Campaign Tracking Project (see below), as well as how the 2014 elections are shaping up in general.

Campaign Tracking Project. This course is scheduled during the 2014 general election campaign season. This is by design. A central goal of this course will be for you to make connections between the material we cover in class and campaigns that are playing out in real-time throughout the country. At the end of the first week of class each student will be (randomly) assigned to focus on one competitive Senate, House, or gubernatorial race. You will be expected to be the class expert on what’s going on in “your” race. This will involve doing background research on the state or district where your race is occurring, learning about the candidates’ backgrounds, and tracking their messaging strategies and how the race is covered in the media.

Your Campaign Tracking Project will culminate in a research paper where you present a description and analysis of your race. You will develop this paper in pieces through the course of the semester and submit preliminary write-ups that lay the groundwork for each section of the paper. Successfully meeting these “checkpoint” deadlines will count for 20% of your grade; the final paper will be worth an additional 30% of your grade. A complete description of this assignment and what is expected at each checkpoint is provided on Sakai. Checkpoint assignments and the final paper should be submitted as attachments through Sakai.

Exams. In order to succeed in this course you must become familiar with new terminology as well as learn about what campaign strategists and scholars see as key dynamics that can influence election outcomes. You will demonstrate some of this learning in your research paper. However, all of the terms and dynamics we
cover in the course will not necessarily apply to the particular race you are assigned. The exams are intended to assess how effectively you have learned about the full range of concepts and terms we cover in the class.

The exam on Friday, October 17 will cover the material from the first eight weeks of the class. The final exam is on Friday, December 12 (9:00-11:00am) and will cover all of the material from the semester. In each case, the exams will consist primarily of multiple choice and short essay questions. A week or so before each exam I will post examples of the types of questions you can expect to see on Sakai.

**Participation.** You are expected to attend class consistently and be prepared to contribute insights and information about the race you are tracking to our class discussions. Each day I will randomly sort the class roster. During discussions I will occasionally ask a question to the person at the top of the list—perhaps a question about what is going on in the race they are tracking—and work my way down through the class roster. If I call on you and you are not present, your grade for the course will be reduced by 1 percentage point. Additionally, I will occasionally ask you to do quick in-class reflections. These will not be “graded,” but each time you are not present to hand one in your grade for the course will be reduced by 1 percentage point. I will not deduct more than 10 percentage points through the course of the semester. However, note that this means that if you are chronically absent, your grade will suffer substantially.

## 2 Grading Policy

**Grading rubric and scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Your Course Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper Checkpoints x 10: 2%/each</td>
<td>A = 93.00% or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C+ = 77.00 - 79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam: 15%</td>
<td>A- = 90.00 - 92.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam: 25%</td>
<td>C = 73.00 - 76.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper: 30%</td>
<td>B+ = 87.00 - 89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: 10%</td>
<td>B = 83.00 - 86.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B- = 80.00 - 82.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D+ = 67.00 - 69.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D = 60.00 - 66.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scoring rubric above and the thresholds for various letter grades are non-negotiable. I will not change your numeric grade to “bump you up” to the next letter grade. For example, if your final score in the class is 86.8, your letter grade for the class will be a B, not a B+ just because you are so close.

If you have a question or concern about your grade on an assignment or exam you must contact me within 7 days of receiving the grade. For example, if an exam is returned to you at the end of a Monday class, you have until the end of the following Monday class to contact me.

**Missed Classes/Late Assignments:** The only excusable reasons for missing a class or exam or handing in an assignment late are serious illnesses and family emergencies. In either case you must both 1) notify me of your situation in a timely manner and 2) provide appropriate documentation. Because the nature of these situations varies, I do not have a hard and fast policy about what constitutes a “timely manner.” However, given the wide availability of internet access, in virtually all cases I expect you to contact me before the absence or missed assignment.

In all situations I require documentation of your reason for missing class or an assignment. This requirement extends to situations where there is a death in the family. If you would prefer not to discuss your situation with me directly you can provide documentation to your academic advisor and ask him or her to contact me to confirm that documentation has been provided. In fact, I strongly encourage you to discuss events like this with your academic advisor as they presumably have consequences for all of your classes—not just this one.
Papers (including “checkpoint” assignments) handed in late without documentation will be penalized by 10 points (out of 100)—the equivalent of a full letter grade—for each day they are late.

Office Hours/Getting Help: My regularly scheduled office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30pm-3:00pm. If you need to schedule another meeting time, email me.

3 Additional Policies and Notes

Technology in the classroom: I do not permit the use of laptops or other technology during class. If you would like to read up on the growing body of research that finds that laptops interfere with in-class learning, this is a good place to start: http://web.stanford.edu/class/linguist156/laptops.pdf.

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All assignments will be automatically run through Turnitin.com (an extremely effective plagiarism detection tool). Incidents of plagiarism or cheating on an exam (by copying from another student, use of a “cheat sheet,” or other means) will result in a grade of F (zero) on the assignment or exam in question. The behavior will be reported to the chair of your major department and to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Note that records of academic misconduct may be transmitted to medical school, law schools, and other organizations who have a legitimate reason to inquire.

Disclaimer: The schedule, policies, and assignments described in this document are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

4 Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1: August 25 - August 29: Introduction
Monday  No additional reading
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 1
Friday  No additional reading

Week 2: September 1 - September 5: The Electoral Process
Monday  NO CLASS - Labor Day
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 2
Friday  No additional reading

Week 3: September 8 - September 12: History of American Campaigns; Funding I
Monday  Sides, Chapter 3
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 4
Week 4: September 15 - September 19: Funding II; Issue Positioning
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 5
Friday No additional reading

Week 5: September 22 - September 26: Campaign Communications and Advertising I

Week 6: September 29 - October 3: Campaign Communications and Advertising II
Monday No additional reading

Week 7: October 6 - October 10: Parties and Interest Groups
Monday NO CLASS - Mid-Semester Break
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 6
Friday No additional reading

Week 8: October 13 - October 17: The Media
Monday Sides, Chapter 7
Wednesday No additional reading
Friday MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9: October 20 - October 24: Presidential Elections
Monday Sides, Chapter 8

Week 10: October 27 - October 31: Presidential Elections II; Congressional Elections I
Wednesday Sides, Chapter 9
Friday No Additional Reading
Week 11: November 3 - November 7: Congressional Elections II; Local Elections
Monday No Additional Reading
Wednesday No Additional Reading
Friday Sides, Chapter 10

Week 12: November 10 - November 14: Turnout
Monday Sides, Chapter 11

Week 13: November 17 - November 21: Voter Choices
Monday Sides, Chapter 12
Friday No Additional Reading

Week 14: November 24 - November 28: Ideas for Reform
Monday Sides, Chapter 13
Wednesday NO CLASS -
Friday Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: December 1 - December 5: Special Topics
Monday Reading TBD
Wednesday Reading TBD
Friday Reading TBD

FINAL EXAM - Friday, Dec 12 (9:00-11:00am)