

## **POSC-4216: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS SEMINAR**

**Summer 2022**

[Zoom Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-3 PM](#)

Instructor: Boris Heersink

[bheersink@fordham.edu](mailto:bheersink@fordham.edu)

[www.borisheersink.com](http://www.borisheersink.com)

Office Hours by appointment

### **Course Description**

*Aim of the Course:* In a representative democracy, elections are the most important and direct opportunity for citizens to influence the kind of policies their government will enact in their name. Yet, what elections look like, which voters get to participate, and how candidates and parties (try to) persuade voters to turn out and vote for them has changed dramatically over time. Additionally, within political science, major disagreements exist as to whether or not campaigns and elections influence electoral outcomes – and, if so, what specific electoral tactics affect voters most. With the close presidential election of 2020 behind us and the 2022 midterms approaching, this course will try to provide you with an understanding of how elections and campaigns have changed over time and how political scientists try to measure the impact of campaigns on voting behavior. It will also help you understand how the design of political institutions influences electoral outcomes, how it benefits or limits the political influence of specific groups in American society, and familiarize you with the different views that exist within political science as to the influence of campaigns on voting behavior. Combined, this course should provide you with tools to better understand elections and campaigns as they occur in real time.

### **Design and Rules of the Course**

**Please read the below sections of the syllabus carefully.**

*Covid Policies:* At the time of writing we are still facing the Covid pandemic. While we are less likely to be affected as an online-only course, there is a possibility that the university may adjust any of its Covid policies during the summer session. Make sure you stay up to date on the university's Covid policies, and any changes if they are announced.

If during the summer session you find yourself unable to attend class and engage with the course materials and assignments because of a Covid infection, please let me know as soon as you can. You will not be penalized for missing class due to health reasons – whether it is Covid or anything else – but it is important for you to keep me updated and to apply for authorized absences if you will be absent for a longer period of time. I am happy to meet with you on Zoom to discuss any material you missed in class.

If you find yourself symptomatic or exposed *and* you are on campus this summer, you should contact Fordham student health services ([health@fordham.edu](mailto:health@fordham.edu) or at 718-817-4160) and get tested.

*Class Components:* The course exists of three broad components: (1) readings and non-synchronous video lectures, (2) assignments intended to test your ability to incorporate the materials and allowing you to discuss it with other students, (3) Zoom meetings on Monday and Wednesday during which we will discuss the course materials for that day.

The non-synchronous materials will all be made available on Blackboard (under Content), divided up by class day. The daily modules include PDFs of the readings, the lecture videos, the slides used in the lecture videos, and a link to the assignments for that day.

The assignments exist of two components; a short multiple-choice test on the basis of material discussed during the lecture videos, and a link to a discussion forum on Blackboard where you can respond to my questions and other students' comments, or raise your own questions. You are expected to complete all the non-synchronous materials and assignments *before* the start of the relevant Zoom session. I.e., for the materials listed for July 6 you must finish the readings, watch the lecture videos, take the quiz, and participate on the forum **before** the start of your Zoom class on that day.

The synchronous meetings will take place during our scheduled class time. Since the videos and assignments will take up a substantial amount of scheduled class time, we will meet for 1 hour each day on **Monday and Wednesday, between 2-3:00 PM**. The Zoom link is listed on the first page of this syllabus and on the Blackboard page.

To create an atmosphere in which all students feel comfortable participating, and have the ability to achieve their full potential, civility during the discussions is vital. During our conversations we will inevitably come to talk about day-to-day politics, and it is very much possible that you will find yourself disagreeing strongly with points put forward by your fellow students (and they with you!). While you should absolutely feel free to challenge other students (or me), it is crucial that you should do so in a respectful way (and, of course, you can expect the same of your fellow students and myself towards you).

If you cannot be present for a Zoom session for understandable reasons (illness, personal circumstances clearly beyond your control, etc.) you should contact me as soon as you can (if at all possible, before the start of class). Note that in line with Fordham's attendance policy there is a maximum number of absences that would result in failing the course. Given that we find ourselves in a much more complex time than usual, I do not intend to follow this rule as it is listed, but there is a point where absences will negatively affect your final grade or could result in failing the course outright.

*Office Hours:* If you have any questions or want to chat about the course, you can schedule a Zoom meeting. Just send me an e-mail and we will schedule a meeting. You can also e-mail me with any questions or concerns. I am also available to chat after our Zoom meetings. You should not feel like you can only schedule a meeting if you have really specific

questions: it is totally fine if you just want to talk about the course (or anything else going on) more broadly.

### Grade

*Components:* Your grade is based on participation on the quizzes, message boards, and in the Zoom meetings (30%), two reading response papers (15% each), and a research proposal paper (40%).

The reading response papers are 3-page double-spaced papers in which you will have to respond to the readings of that day. Your response should include two components: the first component (roughly half of the paper) is a summary of the reading(s) you are responding to, which includes the claims the author(s) are making, the methodological approach they rely on in testing their claims, and their main conclusion. The second component concerns your assessment of the reading(s). That is, what did you make of the material? You may have questions or concerns about the way authors came about testing their claims. You may have new questions on the basis of the readings we did. The second part of your response paper is about you showing you thought about the readings and can either criticize them, or build on them with ideas for future research. The reading response papers are due on **July 13** and **July 20**.

The research proposal will exist of a 10-to-12-page double-spaced paper engaging a specific puzzle regarding campaigns and elections in relation to the readings you will read in this course. Note that this paper concerns a proposal of a research project – it is not about actually executing the project, but about producing a paper presenting a clear research question regarding campaigns and elections that *could* be executed. The grade you receive for the paper as a whole is based on an initial one-page proposal (20% of the total paper grade – due on **July 27**), and the final paper you submit at the end of the semester (80% - due **August 5**). However, you will need to have a full draft of your paper ready on **August 2** to share with other students for discussion in class on **August 3**.

Note that Fordham's Writing Center (in Walsh Library at Rose Hill and in Quinn Library at Lincoln Center) provides individualized assistance to students for writing assignments. You can make an appointment – free of charge! – to meet with someone who will read your paper and discuss it in detail with you. I strongly recommend using this system – especially for your final paper draft, but also for other written assignments before then. You can sign up for an appointment at [https://www.fordham.edu/info/20126/writing\\_center](https://www.fordham.edu/info/20126/writing_center).

*Grading Scale and Calculation of Final Course Grade:* For your assignments and participation you will receive a single letter grade which follows the point value outlined below.

Letter Grade	Points toward Final Grade
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3

B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D	1.0
F	0.0

Your final grade is based on a weighted average of each of the points earned towards your final grade based on the percentages outlined above. For example, if you received a B+ for participation, that earns you  $3.3 * 0.3 = 0.99$  points towards your final grade. Similarly, an A for your first reading response paper would earn you  $4.0 * 0.15 = 0.6$  points towards your final grade. Your final letter grade is based on adding up all these earned points and converting them through the following scale:

Total Earned Final Grade Points	Final Letter Grade
4.0 – 3.84	A
3.83 – 3.50	A-
3.49 – 3.17	B+
3.16 – 2.84	B
2.83 – 2.50	B-
2.49 – 2.17	C+
2.16 – 1.84	C
1.83 – 1.34	C-
1.34 – 1.0	D
0.99 and below	F

*Grade Complaints:* It is possible that you may be unhappy with a grade, and I am always willing to discuss your progress during the course to help you improve. If you believe the grade you received is an **incorrect** assessment of the quality of the work you produced, you can challenge your grade. If you want to do so, please email me to set up an appointment and send me a written description (approximately half a page) explaining why you believe your grade does not accurately represent the quality of the work you submitted. We will subsequently discuss your work and I will assess whether I believe your grade should be changed.

Before you contact me about your grade(s), consider the following things. First, the goal of a grade reassessment is to produce a grade that is a fair representation of your performance: this means that any errors that lowered your grade will be corrected, but any potential errors that *increased* it will also be adjusted. A regrading process can thus result in a higher grade, the exact same grade, or a lower grade than what you received through the original grading process.

Second, a grade challenge means you must make a **specific argument** about why you think the grading does not reflect the **quality** of your work. It is not enough to state that you are

confused by your grade, or that you feel that it does not reflect the amount of time and effort you put into the course. Both of those feelings can be very frustrating, but they are not arguments for why a grade is not correct and I will not entertain grading challenges based solely on these arguments. As you are assessing your work in comparison to my comments, make sure you do not just look at the things you did right but also those things you missed. Meaning, if you got an A- for something, you probably did really well in a lot of ways but you likely got some things wrong, did not include them at all, or did not deliver fully on certain components of your work. Those are the things that cost you points. Pointing out all the things you *did* do right are not an argument for why the grade is incorrect.

Additionally, students sometimes try to ‘challenge’ their grade through a roundabout way – effectively asking the instructor to defend why they received the grade they received without providing arguments for why they disagree with the grade. Please do not do this: if you think the grade is incorrect, identify what it is you think I did wrong and engage with me on that basis. If you cannot articulate why you think the grade is wrong, then that might just mean it is in fact a correct assessment of your performance.

Finally, grades are not a negotiation: if you believe I made a mistake, you should feel free to challenge the grade. But the correct use of this process is not to look at your different grades at the end of the semester and to try to up one, or multiple, grade(s) with the sole goal of collecting enough points to increase your final letter grade. If you want to ensure you get the highest grade possible I would advise you to spend your time reaching out to me with questions *before* deadlines, and not on trying to haggle about a grade afterwards.

*Plagiarism and Other Violations of Code of Conduct:* All assignments in this course fall under Fordham University’s code of conduct. Any violation (including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, and plagiarism) will result in the student being held accountable to the full extent of university guidelines. Note that this includes self-plagiarism – that is, taking (parts of) assignments you did for other courses and resubmitting them for this course. While self-plagiarism might seem like an innocent act, it means you did not do original work as required for this course. (Self-)plagiarism and other violations can lead to major negative consequences, including failing this course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

### Notes

Fordham generally provides me with a class list that includes your legal name. If you prefer to be addressed by an alternate name and/or gender pronoun, please do not hesitate to let me know. You can do so in our Zoom meetings, by email, or during an office hour appointment, whichever you prefer. Also, please correct me if I mispronounce your name or use an incorrect gender pronoun!

As a faculty member, I am – by law – a mandatory reporter and I am required to contact and provide information to Public Safety, the Dean of Students, or Fordham’s Title IX Coordinator if I am provided with any information indicating that a Fordham student has been sexually

harassed (verbally or physically), sexually assaulted, stalked, had domestic violence or dating violence occur in a relationship, or been a victim / survivor of any behavior that is prohibited by Fordham's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures. Once reported, Fordham will seek to support any student and make efforts to stop the negative behavior, prevent it from recurring, and remedy its effects. It is important for you to be aware that there are three confidential places on campus where you can seek support or guidance from Fordham staff members who are **not** mandatory reporters: clinical counselors in Counseling & Psychological Services, pastoral counselors in Campus Ministry, and medical service providers in University Health Services. You can read more about this in the Student CARE brochure or visit [www.fordham.edu/care](http://www.fordham.edu/care) or [www.fordham.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.fordham.edu/sexualmisconduct) for more information.

If you or someone you know is struggling with emotional or mental health concerns, and/or gender, sexual, or domestic violence, Fordham's Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) can provide (free) assistance. The Rose Hill office of CPS is open Monday through Friday and can be reached by phone at 718-817-3725. CPS will be providing remote meetings as well as in-person services at Rose Hill. If you, or a student you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency that requires immediate attention contact Fordham's office of Public Safety at Rose Hill at 718-817-2222 (available 24/7).

### **Course Materials**

All readings for this course will be made available online through Blackboard (in the course modules available under Content).

### **Course Syllabus**

#### **Wednesday, July 6**

Topic: Elections as (Historical) Institutions

Readings:

Amelia Hoover Green, "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps."

The Constitution of the United States.

Richard Bensel, "The American Ballot Box: Law, Identity and the Polling Place in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Studies in American Political Development* vol. 17 (Spring 2003) 1-27.

Scott C. James, "Patronage Regimes and American Party Development from 'the Age of Jackson' to the Progressive Era," *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 36, no. 1 (2006) 39-60.

## Monday, July 11

Topic: The Fundamentals vs. How Campaigns Matter

Readings:

John Sides and Lynn Vavreck, *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013) Chapters 1, 5 and 7.

Daron R. Shaw, *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) Chapters 3 and 5.

## Wednesday, July 13

**Assignment: Submit first reading response paper on Blackboard.**

Topic: Vote Choice: Are Voters Rational?

Readings:

Keith Dowding, "Is it Rational to Vote? Five Types of Answer and a Suggestion," *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* vol. 7, no. 3 (August 2005) 442-459.

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, "Blind Retrospection: Why Shark Attacks Are Bad for Democracy," working paper (2013).

Anthony Fowler and Andrew B. Hall, "Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence," *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 80, no. 4 (2018).

## Monday, July 18

Topic: Race, Gender, and Economic Class in American Elections

Readings:

Antoine J. Banks, *Anger and Racial Politics: The Emotional Foundation of Racial Attitudes in America* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014) Chapter 1.

Richard L. Fox and Jennifer L. Lawless, "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition," *American Political Science Review* vol. 108, no. 3 (2014) 499-519.

Nicholas Carnes, "Why Are There So Few Working-Class People in Political Office? Evidence from State Legislatures," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* vol. 4, no. 1 (2016) 84-109.

## Wednesday, July 20

Topic: Voting: Who Gets to Vote? And Do Non-Citizens Vote?

Readings:

**Assignment: Submit second reading response paper on Blackboard.**

Richard M. Valelly, "How Suffrage Politics Made, and Makes, America," in Richard M. Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert Lieberman (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Jesse T. Richman, Gulshan A. Chattha, and David C. Earnest, "Do Non-Citizens Vote in U.S. Elections?" *Electoral Studies* 36 (2014) 149-157.

Michael Tesler, ["Methodological challenges affect study of non-citizens' voting."](#) *Washington Post – The Monkey Cage*, October 27, 2014.

Nate Cohn, ["Illegal Voting Claims, and Why They Don't Hold Up."](#) *New York Times*, January 26, 2017.

## Monday, July 25

Topic: Get Out the Vote, Campaign Visit Effects, and TV advertisements

Readings:

Alan Gerber and Donald Green, "The Effects of Personal Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment," *American Political Science Review* vol. 94 (2000) 653-663.

Boris Heersink and Brenton D. Peterson, "Truman Defeats Dewey: The Effect of Campaign Visits in Election Outcomes," *Electoral Studies* vol. 49 (October 2017) 49-64.

Boris Heersink, Brenton D. Peterson, Jordan Carr Peterson, "Mobilization and Counter-Mobilization: The Effect of Candidate Visits on Campaign Donations in the 2016 Presidential Election," *The Journal of Politics* (Forthcoming).

Ted Brader, "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions," *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 49, no. 2 (2005) 388-405.

### **Wednesday, July 27**

Topic: Research Methodology in Political Science

**Assignment: Submit one page final paper proposal on Blackboard.**

Readings:

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods* (Sage, 2016) Chapter 7.

Boris Heersink and Jeffery A. Jenkins, "Whiteness and the Emergence of the Republican Party in the Early Twentieth-Century South," *Studies in American Political Development* vol. 34, no. 1 (2020) 71-90.

### **Monday, August 1**

Topic: Writing Day

Assignment: Work on writing your final paper. I am available to meet if you have any questions or concerns.

Readings:

No readings.

### **Wednesday, August 3**

Topic: Research Proposal Workshops

Assignment: Share complete draft of final paper with group members (on August 2).

Readings:

Read complete drafts of final papers of your group members and prepare comments (before the start of class).

**Friday, August 5**

Topic: Due date final paper.

Assignment: Submit final paper on Blackboard by 5 PM.

Readings:

No readings.