Macalester College  
Department of Political Science

POLI 294.02  
Presidential Campaigns and Elections  
Spring 2008  
Class Mtgs: W 7-10 pm  
Carnegie #204

Dr. Julie Dolan  
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Office Hours:  
MW 2:30-4:30 and by appt  
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Course Description

The course uses a combination of academic theory and focused field experiences to expose students to the complexities, inner workings and strategies employed by presidential campaigns in the United States. In particular, we will focus on the Byzantine system of state primaries and caucuses used to award presidential delegates in the United States, the complicated rules of campaign finance that govern presidential elections, the ways parties, candidates and interest groups mobilize voters, the role of the media and campaign communications, and the actual workings of the Electoral College.

Required Texts


** Additional required readings, listed on the last page of the syllabus.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation and Community Education Projects (40%)

   This course was awarded a Civic Engagement Course grant by national Project Pericles to enable students to make connections between the academic literature on presidential campaigns and elections and the reality of the process as it unfolds on the ground. As part of being a Project Pericles course, the class contains a community education component. In particular, this means we are expected to share the insights and expertise we develop with the larger community. To these ends, the class is charged with developing and implementing a series of community education projects. We will discuss these projects beginning on the first evening of class (audience, media, format, etc).
The full participation of all students is expected, both in the classroom and in creating and implementing the community education projects. Students should be on time and well prepared for all class sessions. If you are unable to attend class or have a problem completing an assignment by the due date, you must call me before the close of business (5:00 pm) the day prior to class. Your participation is essential and if you are not in class, you cannot participate.

2. Series of three short writing assignments (30%)
   Each student will write a series of 3 different short papers (no more than 3 pages in length) over the course of the semester. Since there are more than three paper topics to choose from, it is up to each student to decide which of these three assignments to select. However, no more than one paper will be accepted for any one date on the syllabus. Each assignment essentially requires you to apply a concept or theory about presidential elections and campaigns as described in the reading and to relate it to the 2008 presidential campaigns and candidates in particular. More details to come.

3. In-depth examination of some subset of presidential campaigns literature (30%)
   As our semester gets underway, both Republicans and Democrats are in the process of selecting a party nominee. Yet the field of viable candidates in 2008 is unlike any seen before and provides us with an excellent opportunity to examine the impact of gender, race, and religion on presidential nominations. Throughout the semester, we will follow the nomination contests (until nominees are selected), and drawing from the academic literature, try to make sense of their strategies, voter reactions, and outcomes. To do so, each student in the class will complete three related assignments:

   a) An annotated bibliography on some aspect of presidential campaigns (10%). Due March 26th.

   b) A synthesis and discussion of the relevant literature and an analysis of how the 2008 elections do or do not fit the literature (10%). Due May 8th.

   c) An in-class presentation that informs and educates your colleagues as to the state of the literature and situates the 2008 race within the relevant political science literature (10%). Dates to be determined.

Further details will be handed out in class at a later date.

Course Schedule

January 30  
Course Overview  
Reading: None
February 5  Super Tuesday and MN Caucuses – meet in Carnegie #05 to watch and discuss election returns

February 13  History of Presidential Nomination and Selection and Caucuses, Primaries and Delegates
Reading: Wayne, Chapters 1 and 4
Norrander, “Explaining Individual Participation in Presidential Primaries”* (see last page of syllabus)
Gregg, “First in the Nation: The Primacy of New Hampshire’s First-in-the-Nation Election”*
Rozell, Wilcox, and Madland, Chapter 2, esp. pp 46-70
Follow delegate count at www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008

February 20  Voting, Partisanship, and the Presidential Nomination Process
Reading: Wayne, Chapter 3
Iyengar and McGrady, Chapters 5 and 8 (including Appendix)

February 27  Campaign Strategy: Nomination, Interim and the Convention
Reading: Wayne, Chapter 5-6
Iyengar and McGrady, Chapters 8-9

March 5  Role of Policy Issues in Presidential Campaigns
Reading: TBD

March 12  Role of Media
Reading: Iyengar and McGrady Chapters 1-4

March 19  No class – Spring Break

March 26  Campaign Finance / Fundraising
Reading: Wayne, Chapter 2
Rozell, Wilcox and Madland, Chapter 3
Buckley v. Valeo*

*** Annotated bibliography due ***

April 2  Campaign Organization, Strategy and Tactics
Reading: Wayne, Chapter 7
Leibovich, “Early Stops on the Sweet-Talk Circuit”*

April 9  Campaign Communications
Reading: Wayne, Chapter 8
Iyengar and McGrady, Chapter 6
Video: Journeys with George (time permitting)
April 16  Voter Mobilization / Role of Interest Groups and Parties  
**Reading:** Rozell, Wilcox and Madland, Chapters 1 and 4

April 23  The General Election  
**Reading:** Wayne, Chapter 9  
Dan Allen, “Power Politics: An Empirical Analysis of the Electoral College” (Chapters 1 and 5)*

April 30  Last Day of Class: Wrap-Up and Discussion

May 8  Final Research Paper Due

Additional Required Readings and Where to Find them:


