

The 2012 Presidential Election
Prof. David Greenberg
SAS Honors Seminar

Class Time: Wednesday 1.10-4.10
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Office Hours: Wed. 10.30-12.30
Course No.: 01:090:269:01

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Index No.: 16190

Syllabus

Description. The course examines the 2012 election in its historical context. Studying the history of the campaign and its practices and institutions should encourage students to think in a more rigorous, scholarly way about a topic that many of us will be talking about anyway this fall. As a class, we'll follow the ups and downs and twists and turns of the election season. But we'll also try to understand how campaigns have come to take the form that they do. We'll use the insights of political scientists to challenge conventional wisdom and journalistic clichés, and we'll study media and communications research to understand how the election is portrayed to voters.

Course Requirements.

1. Weekly readings. Each week there will be assigned readings on the given topic. Usually the assignment will consist of a single book, but some weeks it will be a collection of articles.
2. Following the campaign in the news. Students are required to follow the daily political coverage through the kinds of sources below. There will be occasional quizzes to make sure you're reading the newspapers and doing the class reading.
 - a) *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* or *The Wall Street Journal*; **and**
 - b) one analytically serious political magazine (print or online) such as *Slate*, *The New Republic*, *The Daily Beast*, *Politico*; **and**
 - c) one political-science website such as *Monkey Cage*; *538*; *Brendan-Nyhan.com*; or *A Plain Blog About Politics*. These are serious, analytical blogs done by statisticians or political scientists and tend to avoid general punditry.

Not allowed: mass-content, low-level websites such as *Yahoo News*, *Huffington Post*, etc.
If you are unsure about whether a site is legitimate to follow, please ask me.
And of course, you may read more than this!
3. Collecting relevant articles and submitting portfolios. From these sources, students are expected to save *at least 10 articles* throughout the semester on *one* of the following topics. Write a paragraph commenting on each one.

These articles will be drawn upon in the final weeks of class as well as for the second paper.

- a) the role of race and gender in the campaign;
- b) the role of political consultants;
- c) the role of the news media;
- d) the role of political advertising;
- e) the role of the individual candidates (biography, personal style, etc.);
- f) the debates.


On the week that we discuss your topic, you will submit a *first portfolio* of the articles you have collected along with a paper about your topic based on those articles. (See Second Short Paper.) On the final week of term, you will submit a *second portfolio* of several additional articles collected since you submitted the first set of articles. This is required in order to make sure you continue the exercise even after you submit the paper and the first set.


4. First Short Paper. Due October 3. There will be an initial five-page essay, designed to evaluate facility with the readings, ability to frame an argument, and writing skill.
5. Second Short Paper. Individual due dates. A second ten-page paper will be based on the articles you collect on a campaign-related topic (see below). **It will be due the week that topic is discussed in class.**
6. Term Paper. Due December 12. The final piece of writing for the course is a ten- to fifteen-page paper that explores some aspect of presidential elections in depth.
7. Watching campaign events. Students are expected to watch the conventions, debates and other major political events of the campaign season.

Reading List.

1. Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003.
2. John Ferling, *Adams vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
3. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
4. Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*. NYRB Classics, 2008.
5. David Remnick, *The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama*. Vintage, 2011.
or Michael Kranish and Scott Helman, *The Real Romney*. Harper, 2012.
6. Alan Schroeder, *The Presidential Debates: Fifty Years of High-Risk TV*. Columbia University Press, 2008.
7. Rebecca Traister, *Big Girls Don't Cry: The Election That Changed Everything for American Women*. Free Press, 2010.
8. Gil Troy, *See How They Ran: The Changing Role of the Presidential Candidate*. Harvard University Press, 1996. *****Please buy online ASAP.*****
9. Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.
10. Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960*. Harper Perennial, 2009.

Weekly Assignments.


 Book available at Rutgers University Bookstore, New Jersey Books, or in Alexander library reserves.

 Article available on the class website at the Sakai site.

Wed., Sep. 5

The Pageant

This week will be an introduction to the class. Please come to class having read excerpts from two classic works of American political sociology, Tocqueville's Democracy in America and Bryce's American Commonwealth.


 Alexis de Tocqueville, "Election of the President," "Mode of Election," "Crises of Election," and "Re-Election of the President," in *Democracy in America*.

<http://tinyurl.com/alexis-president-01>

<http://tinyurl.com/alexis-president-02>

<http://tinyurl.com/alexis-president-03>

<http://tinyurl.com/alexis-president-04>

 James Bryce, "The President," "Observations on the Presidency," and "Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President" in *The American Commonwealth*.

<http://tinyurl.com/bryce-chapter05>

<http://tinyurl.com/bryce-chapter07>

<http://tinyurl.com/bryce-chapter08>

Sep. 4-6

WATCH: DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Wed., Sep. 12

The Nominating Conventions

This week, having just watched the Democratic Convention, we will discuss the conventions—their historic role, the media coverage of them, and the way they have framed the fall campaign.

- 📖 Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*.
- 📖 Alan Brinkley, “The Taming of the Political Convention,” in *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 249-265.
- 📖 William G. Mayer, “Chapter 10: How Parties Nominate President,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups*, Jeffrey M. Berry, and Sandy Maisel, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 185-203.
- 📖 Sean Wilentz, “Here We Go Again: An Unconventional History,” *The New Republic*, August 19 & 26, 1996, pp. 20-24.

Wed., Sep. 19

The Candidates

This week we get to know the candidates. Half the class will read a biography of Obama. The other half will read a biography of Romney. We will spend one half the class on Obama and the other on Romney.

- 📖 David Remnick, *The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama*. If possible, read the whole thing. The minimally required reading is pp. 3-98, and pp. 259-466.
- 📖 Michael Kranish and Scott Helman, *The Real Romney*

Wed., Sep. 26

No Class: Yom Kippur

Wed., Oct. 3

Case Study #1: 1800

The first half of class this week will be devoted to a discussion of one of three case studies of historic campaigns: the 1800 election. The second half of class will be devoted to developments in the current campaign.

- 📖 John Ferling, *Adams vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*.
- 📌 **First Paper Due**

Wed., Oct. 3**WATCH: 1ST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

Wed., Oct. 10

The Debates

This session falls in the midst of the debates, which we will discuss this week.

- 📖 Alan Schroeder, *The Presidential Debates*.
- 📖 David Greenberg, “Torchlight Parades for the Television Age: The Presidential Debates as Political Ritual,” *Daedalus*, Spring 2009, pp. 6-19.

Thurs., Oct. 11**WATCH: VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE****Tues., Oct. 16****WATCH: 2ND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

Wed., Oct. 17

The Early Years

This week we continue our historical study of campaigns.

- 📖 Gil Troy, *See How They Ran*, pp. 1-132.

Mon., Oct. 22**WATCH: 3RD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

Wed., Oct. 24

The 20th Century

We continue our historical study of campaigns.

- 📖 Gil Troy, *See How They Ran*, pp. 133-282.

Wed., Oct. 31

Case Study #2: 1960

Our historical survey continues with another classic work.

- 📖 Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1960*. Part I.

Tues., Nov. 6

WATCH: ELECTION DAY RETURNS

Wed., Nov. 7

Election Day Post-Mortem

The day after Election Day we can collectively analyze results.

📖 Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1960*. Part II.

Wed., Nov. 14

Case Study #3: 2008

We conclude the historical portion with a look at the 2008 race. We also use Rebecca Traister's discussion of gender as a takeoff point to look at race and gender in the 2012 race.

📖 Rebecca Traister, *Big Girls Don't Cry*.

📖 David Greenberg, "Why Obamamania? Because He Runs as the Great White Hope," *Washington Post*, January 13, 2008.

📖 Sean Wilentz, "Race Man," *The New Republic*, February 27, 2008, at <http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/race-man>

Wed., Nov. 21

Advertising

The history of campaign ads. The first half of class will be devoted to Jamieson's work. The second half we will discuss the clips you have saved.

📖 Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*.

Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 5, 7, 9-11, conclusion.

📖 Frank Rich, "Nuke 'Em," *New York*, June 17, 2012.

<http://nymag.com/print/?/news/frank-rich/negative-campaigning-2012-6/>

Wed., Nov. 28

The Handlers

Another topical week: examining the consultants who have taken on an increasingly important role in political campaigns. These readings will also be supplemented by your clips.

📖 Richard Jensen, "Armies, Admen and Crusaders: Types of Presidential Election Campaigns," *The History Teacher*, 2 (1969): 33-50.

📖 Robert Westbrook, "Politics as Consumption," Chapter V in Richard Fox & Jackson Lears, *The Culture of Consumption*, pp. 145-173.

📖 Sidney Blumenthal, "Introduction," and "Patrick Caddell," in *The Permanent Campaign* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1982), pp. 17-26, 44-75.

📖 Fred Barnes, "The Myth of Political Consultants," *The New Republic*, June 16, 1986, pp. 16-19.

Also: begin Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*, pp. 1-137. It is a long book, and you may not be able to read it all in one week.

Wed., Dec. 5

Research Session.

Meet with research librarians in Alexander Library as we work on papers.

📖 Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*, 140-290.

Wed., Dec. 12

The News Media

The role of the media. The first half of class will be devoted to Crouse's book. The second half we will discuss the clips you have saved and circulated.

📖 Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus*, 291-393.

★ **Final Paper Due**