POS 4412 - Presidential Campaigning

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2026
Class Meeting Days: MWF
Class Meeting Time: 11:30AM - 12:20PM
Class Meeting Location: CB1 O122
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: John Hanley
Title: Associate Lecturer
Office Location: 306I Howard Phillips Hall
Office Hours
Monday (in-person) 12:30-2pm

Wednesday (Zoom) 1:30-3pm https://ucf.zoom.us/j/96408736543?pwd=VK8shPIzmL3pQ30xlHaCyCb6otDSDW.1
Email: John.Hanley@ucf.edu

Teaching Assistants

Olivia Pringle

Course Description

POS 4412 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Presidential Campaigning: PR: ENC 1102. Introduces the process of candidate selection, convention behavior, actual campaign process and the transition of power. Occasional.

The President of the United States is the leader of the world's most powerful country and undoubtedly the world's most visible person. The importance of the position, the schedule of quadrennial elections, and the close competition between the Democratic and Republican parties make the process of choosing presidents a compelling spectacle with a global audience. But despite the public's familiarity with the President and the general outline of presidential elections, the process retains a high degree of mysteriousness—how is it, precisely, that a *particular* person captures the presidency ahead of all of his (her?) rivals, not to mention all of the other persons capable of carrying out the office. From a political science perspective, presidential elections pose substantial explanatory challenges: the rules and country change from election to election, and the candidates themselves bring unique qualities to each individual contest. Through study of past presidential elections and academic treatments, we will increase our familiarity with the topic, gain understanding of how institutions may affect outcomes, and become comfortable with the unpredictable and unknowable elements of presidential elections.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and assess the actions of candidates, groups, and political parties.
- Draw upon greater substantive understanding of American politics and political history, consistent with the centrality of public opinion, groups, and institutions to outcomes.
- Better advocate for ourselves and others via improved presentation skills.
  To advocate for ourselves and others, and to effectively present information.

Required Course Materials and Resources

Presidential Elections
Subtitle: Strategies and Structures of American Politic
ISBN: 978-1538183717
Authors: Polsby, Nelson W., et al.
Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield
Publication Date: 2024
Edition: 16

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Grades will be based on presentations, participation, written assignments, and two exams. These will be weighted as follows:

- Participation 20
- Group Presentations 30
- Midterms (2) 30
- Final Exam 20

100 %

Participation (20%)
Students will be permitted two unexcused absences for purposes of the participation grade. Students are responsible for generating a record of thoughtful participation.

Group Presentations (30%)
During the semester, you will be responsible for two group presentations: one about a previous presidential election, and one about the future of presidential elections. The details of these presentations will be announced in class.

Midterm and Final Exam (15-15-20%)
The examinations will be composed of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. The final will be cumulative. The dates of these exams are listed in the course schedule.

Grading Scale

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93.334-100%
A-	90-93.333%
B+	86.667-89.999%
B	83.334-86.666%
B-	80-83.333%
C+	76.667-79.999%
C	73.334-76.666%
C-	70-73.333%
D	60-69.999%
F	0-59.999%

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup Work Policy

Incomplete grades, changes in exam dates, and extensions of group presentations will be approved only by the instructor, and only upon evidence of extenuating circumstances.

Missed/Late Assignments

Missing an exam without authorization or a valid excuse will incur a penalty of no less than 20 percentage points on the exam.

Attendance

Students will be permitted two unexcused absences for purposes of the participation grade. Students are responsible for generating a record of thoughtful participation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Except when explicitly permitted, all assignments are expected to consist of your own work. Cheating on in-class written exams will not be permitted. Group presentations will be subject to questioning, which may result in a reduced grade if students lack an appropriate substantive grasp of the material.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise;

unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assessment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designated on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC

website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active-duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF's Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF Classroom has an Emergency Procedure Guide posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY**. When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND**. When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty, and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Intro and 1960 (1/12-16)

The Making of Theodore H. White's "The Making of the President 1960," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 29, No 2 (Jun., 1999), pp. 389-406

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1741-5705.00040

1/19– NO CLASS (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

Voters and 1964 (1/21-28)

Polsby et al., pp. 3-23

Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” *Critical Review* 18:1-3, 1-74.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/08913810608443650

Johnson, Lyndon B. “Remarks Before the National Convention Upon Accepting the Nomination.” August 27, 1964.

https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/241812

Reagan, Ronald. Address on Behalf of Senator Barry Goldwater: "A Time for Choosing." October 27, 1964.

https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/276336

Groups (1/30-2/4) and 1968

Polsby et al., pp. 25-46

Marantz, Andrew. “The Battle for the Bros.” *The New Yorker*. March 17, 2025.

Money and Rules and 1972 (2/6-11)

Polsby et al., pp. 47-62

Crouse, Timothy. “The Boys on the Bus.” *Rolling Stone*. October 12, 1972.

Scherer, Michael, et al. “Ron DeSantis wanted to change the way campaigns were funded. Then the fights started. *Washington Post*. December 16, 2023.

Media and 1980 (2/13-20)

Polsby et al., pp. 63-82

Cockburn, Alexander, and James Ridgeway. “Ted Kennedy’s Final Round.” *Rolling Stone*. July 25, 1980.

https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/ted-kennedys-final-round-43621/

Monday, 2/16 -- Midterm #1

Primaries and 1984 (2/23-27)

Polsby et al., pp. 85-110

La Raja, Raymond, and Jonathan Rauch. 2020. “Voters Need Help.” *The Brookings Institution.* https://www.brookings.edu/articles/voters-need-help-how-party-insiders-can-make-presidential-primaries-safer-fairer-and-more-democratic/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Conventions and 1992 (3/2-6)

Polsby et al., pp. 110-132

Beyer, Rick. “Where there’s smoke, there’s…political intrigue?” *Politico*, March 3, 2008.

Debates and 2000 (3/9-13)

Polsby et al., pp. 173-182

Video debate clips (webcourses)

Henneberger, Melinda. “Driving W.” *New York Times Magazine*. May 14, 2000.

https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/14/magazine/driving-w.html

Zelizer, Julian E. “The 8 Biggest Unforced Errors in Debate History” *Politico*. September 24, 2016.
https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/presidential-debates-errors-mistakes-gaffes-biggest-history-214279

Wednesday, 3/11 -- Midterm #2

3/16-3/20 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)

3/23 – Film, “The War Room”

Persuading Voters, Campaign Professionals, and 2008 (3/25-30)
Polsby et al., pp. 133-172

Sternbergh, Adam. “The Spreadsheet Psychic.” *New York*. October 9, 2008.
http://nymag.com/news/features/51170/

Modeling, Polling, and 2016 (4/1-8)
Polsby et al., pp. 182-194

The Electoral College and Appraisals (4/10-17)
Polsby et al., pp.195-227

Future presentations 4/20-24
Polsby et al., pp. 229-239

Monday 4/27 - Review

FINAL EXAM Wednesday, 4/29, 10am-12:50pm