This course will examine how candidates conduct their campaigns for office and how voters make their choices. We will study how candidates decide to run, how they plan their strategies, how they raise money, and how they employ political professionals. We will then move to exploring the means by which candidates communicate with voters, whether “over the air” or “on the ground.”

Course Requirements: Students will be evaluated in the course based on Midterm (30%), Final (30%), Paper (20%), Class Participation (10%), Presentations (5% each).

Project: Each student must choose a 2006 race for the House, Senate or a governorship. Profile the major candidates, explain their strategies, detail their sources of funding, and discuss the outcome. You must select your race by Week 2. The project will be due at the end of the semester. Your project should be about 10-15 pages long. You will also be responsible for two in-class presentations: the first will be delivered during Weeks 5 and 6, and will give an overview of your race, culminating in a forecast of the outcome; the second will be delivered during Weeks 11 and 12, and will explain the actual outcome.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. After two unexcused absences, any further unexcused absences will lower your grade by one-third of a letter. Please notify me in advance of any unavoidable absences.

Books


Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1: Introductory Material

Week 2: Campaign Contexts and History
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs. 1 & 3
  Herrnson, ch. 1

Week 3: Voters
  Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde, Parts I and II

Week 4: Candidates
  *Campaigns and Elections*, ch. 2
  Herrnson, ch. 2

Week 5: Campaign Finance
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs. 5-6.
  Herrnson, chs. 5-6

Week 6: Polling and Research; Message and Strategy
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs.3-4, 13-14

Week 7: MIDTERM

Week 8: Campaign Management and Political Consultants; Field Operations
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs. 11-12
  Herrnson, chs. 3-4

Week 9: Press and Free Media
  *Campaigns and Elections*, ch. 9-10
  Herrnson, ch. 8

Weeks 10 & 11: Television and Radio
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs. 7-8
  *Crowded Airwaves*, chs. 1-4, 7-8
  Television advertisements

Week 12: Campaigns and American Democracy
  *Campaigns and Elections*, chs. 15-16, 18
  Herrnson, chs. 10-11

Week 13: Conclusion