Course Description: The phrase “politics and communication” can mean many different things. This semester, it is going to mean retrospective study of the 2008 presidential campaign and prospective study of the unfolding 2012 presidential campaign, with special reference to campaign structure, function, and communication with the general public, as well as with specialized publics. Our main focus will be on the role of communication in the presidential campaign. We will examine various genres of discourse, including acceptance and keynote speeches, stump speeches, convention films, campaign ads, presidential and vice presidential debates, internet campaigning, blogs, and television news. We will also consider the interface between mass communication and interpersonal/group communication. Our focus through the first week in November will be exclusively on the presidential campaign. The last month of the course will cover important issues in campaigns and elections from a more general and theoretical point of view.


Course Evaluation: Mid-Term Exam 25% (October 18)
Group Presentation 25% (October 25-Nov. 8)
Individual Research Paper 25% (December 1)
Final Exam 25% (December 12, 2-4)
Course Requirements:

1) Mid-Term Exam. The mid-term will cover all of the readings and class lectures up to and including the day of the exam—October 18.

2) Group Presentation. During the first week, the class will be divided into nine groups—one each for the eight major contenders for the Republican nomination and a ninth for President Obama. These groups do not represent whom you favor, but rather who you have been randomly assigned to study for the semester. Each of these groups will give an in-class oral presentation according to the following schedule: Romney and Bachmann groups (October 25); Perry and Gingrich groups (October 27); Palwenty and Cain groups (November 1); Paul and Huntsman groups (November 3); and Obama group (November 8). Individual members of each group will contribute to their respective presentation by researching one or more of the following topics:

- Candidate’s standard stump speech from September 1-October 20
- Candidate’s major policy addresses from September 1-October 20
- Network and Cable TV ads produced by the candidate’s campaign
- Network and Cable TV ads produced by so-called 527 Groups
- Viral videos on the Internet
- Candidate debates
- Campaign web pages
- Political Blogs—1) dailykos.com, 2) salon.com, and 3) politico.com
- Political Blogs—1) nationalreview.com, 2) drudgereport.com, and 3) worldnetdaily.com
- Polling by the Gallup Organization
- Internal polling by the candidate’s campaign
- Fundraising methods and tactics
- The official internet campaign conducted by the candidate’s organization
- The unofficial internet campaign conducted by everyone else
- Campaign scheduling and travel
- Campaign strategy, with a focus on the message component
- Campaign strategy, with a focus on the targeted audiences component
- Campaign strategy, with a focus on the primary map and the accumulation of delegates
- Campaign news coverage on the major broadcast media: CBS, NBC, ABC
- Campaign news coverage on the major cable news outlets: FOX News, CNN, MSNBC
- Campaign news coverage in Time and Newsweek

Each person in the group is to be assigned one or more of the above topics. Each person’s job is to research that topic or those topics for the purpose of contributing knowledge and expertise to the group’s oral, in-class presentation. Each group must decide how the oral presentation is to be made. The presentation can be made by as few as one person from the group or as many as the entire group—or any number in between. The task of each group is to plan and execute a 35-minute presentation, using the most effective media and techniques available.
3) **Individual Research Paper.** You are to select a topic directly related to campaigns and elections and write a 12 page research paper in which you a) review the current state of knowledge on the topic, b) make an argument about the topic, and c) support that argument through citation of relevant research findings. To do this successfully, you will need to consult at least four books and at least six scholarly articles—a minimum of ten sources. Scholarly journals that regularly publish on topics related to campaigns and elections include *Presidential Studies Quarterly, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Quarterly Journal of Speech, Political Communication, Journal of Communication, Political Science Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Language and Politics*, among many others. The electronic databases “Communication and Mass Media Complete” and “JSTOR” are the best places to begin.

If you are a graduate student, then this research paper should be 20 pages.

4) **Final Exam.** The final exam will cover the readings and class lectures since the mid-term exam, with a heavy emphasis on the book by Stephen J. Wayne, *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?*

**Exam Date and Time:** December 12: 2:00-4:00 pm

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**Syllabus**

**Week 1**

August 23  
Introduction to Political Campaign Persuasion

**Building Blocks of Presidential Campaigning**

August 25  
Voters  
READ: PWSH, 1-24; Wayne, 23-55.
### Week 2

**August 30**  
Groups  
READ: PWSH, 25-50; Wayne, 56-87.

**September 1**  
Rules and Resource  
READ: PWSH, 51-92

### Week 3

**September 6**  
The Nomination Process  
READ: PWSH, 93-146

**September 8**  
The Campaign  
READ: PWSH, 147-208

### Week 4

**September 13**  
Presidential Campaigns as Communication  
READ: Smith, 1-36

**September 15**  
Rules as Rhetorical Constructions  
READ: Smith, 37-76

### Modes of Presidential Campaign Communication

### Week 5

**September 20**  
Acclaiming, Attacking, and Defending  
READ: Smith, 79-92

**September 22**  
Campaign Speeches  
READ: Smith, 93-112
Week 6

September 27  Campaign Journalism
READ: Smith, 113-127

September 29  Advertising Candidates
READ: Smith, 128-146

Week 7

October 4  Televised Presidential Debates
READ: Smith, 147-166

October 6  Using New Media
READ: Smith, 167-186; Wayne, 200-228

Stages of the Campaign

Week 8

October 11  Surfacing Stage
READ: Smith, 189-206

October 13  Nomination Stage
READ: Smith, 207-222; Wayne, 173-199

Week 9

October 18  Mid-Term Exam Today

October 20  Consolidation and Election Stages
READ: Smith, 223-264
Week 10

October 25  Day #1 of Group Oral Presentations:  Romney and Bachmann

October 27  Day #2 of Group Oral Presentations:  Perry and Gingrich

Week 11

November 1  Day #3 of Group Oral Presentations:  Palwenty and Cain  
Read:  P&W, 5-50.

November 3  Day #4 of Group Oral Presentations:  Paul and Huntsman

Week 12

November 8  Day #5 of Group Oral Presentations:  Obama

November 10  Democratic Elections:  What’s the Problem?  
READ:  Wayne, 1-22; PWSH, 209-240

Week 13

November 15  Has Money Corrupted Our Election Process?  
READ:  Wayne, 88-114

November 17  No Class Today.  I will be at the National Communication Association Convention in New Orleans.

Week 14

November 22  News Media:  Watchdog or Pit Bull?  
READ:  Wayne, 115-147

November 24  No class.  Thanksgiving holiday.
Week 15

November 29 Are American Parties Still Relevant or Representative? READ: Wayne, 148-172

December 1 Elections and Government in America READ: Wayne, 229-257; PWSH, 241-252

December 12 Final Exam: 2:00-4:00