

Political Science 115/193

Fall 2007

Dr. Sanders

Meredith 212

X3172

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The Presidential Nomination Process/Caucus Internship

MWF 8:30-9:45 – Meredith 203

COURSE:

Before we elect a President, the political parties must choose their candidates. By the time we vote in November of 2008 the choice, for better or for worse, will most likely be between two individuals, the candidates of the two major parties. So the process by which those parties choose those nominees is central to the workings of our democracy. That process has changed over time from one where party leaders and elites made the decision to one where, presumably, the public decides. Some would question the role the public actually plays, others would question the wisdom of such a change, and still others would question the effectiveness of the entire endeavor. In addition, since the early 1970s, the process has operated in a fashion that gives the Iowa caucuses a central role. Iowans – or at least most of them – may like this, but again, others would argue this is not a good thing.

In this class, we will examine the method by which we choose the two people from whom the Electoral College will choose our next President. (The use of the Electoral College to make that decision is a topic for a different class!) And we will take advantage of our location in Des Moines, to pay particular attention to the role that Iowa plays in that process. We will examine the rules that structure the nomination process, how voters make decisions, what campaigns do to try and win votes, and the role that money, the media and the Internet play in shaping the process and its outcome. And all of you will have practical experience in the caucuses to help test ideas, expand understanding and deepen our appreciation for the strengths and weaknesses of this process. Drake has a commitment to helping students become engaged citizens. In this class you will be

engaged in one aspect of citizenship in the United States, the selection of the next President and, at least as important, you will have a perspective from which to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of this particular type of engagement.

This is a new course for me as well. I did teach classes on the nomination process in both 2000 and 1996 (I was on sabbatical in 2004), and I teach classes on the general election (at both the Presidential and Congressional level) on a regular basis. In fact, I have a new book, *Losing Control: Presidential Elections and the Decline of Democracy*, that just came out in April of this year, which focuses on that broader general election process (though there is one chapter in the book devoted to the nomination process). And I have supervised countless internships in political campaigns and with other political organizations over the years. But I have never had a single class that combines “classroom examination” of the issues raised by this process with the practical understandings that are developed in internship positions. I am excited for the possibilities that this presents. I hope you are as well. I have tried to structure the class in such a way as to make this interaction of practical and theoretical effective. But I may have been misguided in how this will work. And so I will treat the syllabus as tentative in the sense that if we discover that things are not working well, we can try to make adjustments to make it work better. Obviously, I do not expect this to happen – if I did I would change the syllabus now! But I will try to check with you about these matters and you should feel free to let me know if there are things you think that we might do differently.

REQUIREMENTS

You will receive two separate grades for the class, three credits for POLS115 and three credits for POLS193, so some of the work will “count” toward one grade and some will “count” toward the other. I will try to delineate that clearly in what follows.

1. Regular attendance, preparation for, and participation in class discussions. You are expected to have the readings done by the day on which they are assigned. Please note that at times it may seem that we are falling behind the syllabus. However, unless I tell you otherwise, keep up with the reading as assigned. Some of these “lags” are by design. And we will, at some point, catch up. In addition, I hope to take advantage of the Iowa caucuses to bring appropriate visitors to the class to further enhance our experience. I know, from the nature of the caucuses, that many of these visits will be scheduled at the last minute. I will, whenever possible, try to give you some advance notice (if only by email) so that you can prepare for any visitor who comes. The class schedule of three times each week for an hour and fifteen minutes is designed with this in mind. I will take

attendance (If you are absent, I will assume you are not prepared). This will count for 15% of each grade.

2. Essays. There are a series of five essays over the course of the semester that will ask you to evaluate many of the arguments of the authors we are reading and/or various aspects of the nomination process in light of those readings. Specific essay questions will be posted on Blackboard in the Assignments folder at least one week before they are due. Each of these essays will be worth 12% of your POLS115 grade.

3. Take-home final exam. There will be a take-home final exam essay for POLS115. It will be worth 25% of that grade.

4. Campaign Blogging. In Blackboard, we will use the blogging tool to set up a site where you will examine various topics from the perspective of your internships. Depending upon the topic, the blog will focus on that topic for somewhere between one and three weeks. With each topic, there will be readings that will help guide your posts. So, for example, when we are discussing campaign finance, we will also read articles about how campaigns deal with the issue and you will blog about the role of money in the organization for which you are working. (If you do not intern in an organization for which this is a concern, there will be alternative topics for you to discuss.). These Blackboard blogs will be internal, only viewed by members of the class. However, we will do more with these blogs. Drake has an "Iowa Caucus" project in this election cycle. Professor Caufield is running that project. One student in the class has already agreed to serve as an intern for her as his caucus related internship. His job - with your help! - will be to take the most interesting and useful blogging stories, anecdotes and insights about your campaign and post them on the public site where anyone can learn from them. (No one's writing will be publicly posted without his or her permission.) But it will go even further. This public content will be used by a website called "firstinthenation.com" to provide their Iowa postings. I have been working with colleagues at the University of New Hampshire, the University of Nevada at Reno, the University of South Carolina and (just added when they moved up) the University of South Florida) to provide a comprehensive site for citizens to see what is going on in all of the early caucus/primary states. We are still hoping to create a private link on that site to allow students in our classes and projects to work with students at the other schools in the project. (So for example, students interning with Hillary Clinton in Iowa would be able to coordinate with interns from the University of New Hampshire and cover similar issues in those different states). We are not sure yet if we have the funding to keep such an infrastructure going. But even if we do not, we will be able to provide Iowa content for both the Drake Caucus Project and this website. I will not grade the individual posts that you make. Nor will your grade depend upon how many of your posts end up in public rather than our private Blackboard blog. Rather, your grade here will be based on your regular blogging, and that blogging being thoughtful and responsive to both the campaign

environment and to what others are writing. If you meet those expectations, you will have an “A” for that portion of the grade. And I will be sure to let you know if you are falling short of those expectations. The campaign blogs will be worth 60% of the POLS193 grade.

5. Final summary paper. For POLS193, your initial reported grade will be IP – in progress - because we cannot finish until the caucuses finish. One week after the caucuses end (and the date of the caucuses is still, as you may know, up in the air), you will hand in a final paper that will reflect on the caucus process and your participation in it. I will provide more detailed instructions when we get closer to the end of the semester. In addition, I would like, early in the spring semester, to arrange a public forum where we will have a panel of some of the members of the class sharing their experience with a wider Drake audience. The final paper will be worth 25% of the internship grade. Those who volunteer to be on the panel will receive “extra credit.” (Those who attend the forum but are not on the panel will also receive “extra credit” though not as much as those who are on the panel.)

A Note on Academic Honesty:

For all assignments, you are expected to hand in work that represents your own work. I take this issue very seriously. Here is the department’s policy on academic honesty (you can also find this statement on the department’s webpage at:

http://www.drake.edu/artsci/PolSci/PolSci_Home_Page.html#Honesty:

“Scholars in the field of politics, like all scholars, are expected to practice intellectual honesty and to uphold the scholarly standards of the discipline. Plagiarism, the deliberate appropriation of the work of others represented as one's own, not only may constitute a violation of the civil law, but also represents a serious breach of professional ethics. Such misconduct (or other forms of cheating) will lead to disciplinary action.

Cheating is defined as an act, or attempted act, of giving or obtaining aid and/or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements including examinations. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting another's ideas, phrases, or discourse as one's own.

The penalty for cheating or plagiarism will vary from incident to incident. The possible penalties include a reprimand, grade penalty, dismissal from the course, and a recommendation for dismissal from the University.

Responsibility for dealing with cases of academic dishonesty begins with the faculty member who identifies an instance of academic dishonesty. Examples of such cases include cheating on a test by copying from another student or using disallowed materials, incorporating into written assignments materials written by others without giving them credit, and otherwise improperly using information written by others (including that which might be stored on computer disks).

Sometimes plagiarism is the result of carelessness or ignorance. As a general rule, provide enough information so that a reader can identify and refer to all the sources you have used in writing a particular work. Here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Word for word quotations: When you incorporate into your work, you must use quotation marks around the borrowed words and you must identify the source.
2. Paraphrase: If you have relied on another person's ideas or train of thought but changed the actual words used or the order of the ideas you still must acknowledge the source.
3. Borrowed ideas: When your ideas or opinions have been shaped by what you have read or lectures you have heard, you must acknowledge your source.
4. Material and Organization: If you rely on factual material gathered by another person, or if you have relied on another person's way of organizing common material, you must acknowledge your source.
5. Exceptions to the rule: You need not footnote information that is common knowledge ("George Washington was the first President of the United States") or an opinion or idea expressed by many people ("television has changed the election process") or dictionary definitions.
6. Err on the side of over-acknowledgement: Be generous and open in giving credit for any source of help.

A student who wishes to appeal a professor's action in a case of cheating or plagiarism begins with a discussion with the professor. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the faculty adviser is consulted. The next step, if one is required, is to invite the department chair to review the facts as presented by both sides, probably through a meeting with both of them, and to render a judgment. A student (or faculty member) wishing to appeal this judgment should refer to the Administrative Procedures Handbook of the College of Arts and Sciences.

READINGS

There are eight books available from the University Bookstore. They are:

Butler, R. Lawrence, *Claiming the Mantle*

Cook, Rhodes, *The Presidential Nominating Process*

Lau, Richard and Redlawsk, David, *How Voters Decide*

Nivola, Pietro and Brady, David, editors, *Red and Blue Nation? Volume One*

Pfau, Michael, Houston, Brian, and Semmler, Shane, *Mediating the Vote*

Thurber, James and Nelson, Candice, editors, *Campaigns and Elections American Style*
Second Edition

Wayne, Stephan, *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?* Third Edition

Williams, Andrew and Tedesco, John, editors, *The Internet Election*

In addition, there will be a couple of articles handed out in class.

Finally, you should regularly follow the news from two newspaper sources, one a national paper – preferably either the New York Times or Washington Post, for a national overview of the process as it unfolds, the other The Des Moines Register, for the best, most comprehensive coverage of the Iowa caucuses.

ASSIGNMENTS

As noted above, all of the assignments listed below are tentative. I do not expect to have to change them. But if the flow of the class requires it, we will make adjustments.

I. An Overview of the Nomination Process:

August 27: Introduction to the Class

August 29: Cook, chapters 1,2,3; Butler, chapters 1,2.

August 31: No class. I will be out of town.

September 3: No class. Labor Day.

September 5: Cook, chapters 4,5,6.

Start Blogging Topic #1: Campaign Planning: Thurber and Nelson, chapters 2,3.

September 7: Wayne, chapter 7.

September 10: No additional reading.

September 12: Essay #1 due: *A "First-Take" Evaluation of the Nomination Process*

September 14: End of Blogging Topic #1.

II. The Party Environment:

September 17: Wayne, chapter 6; Nivola and Brady, chapter 3.

Start Blogging Topic #2: Reaching the Voters Through Grassroots Activity: Thurber and Nelson, chapters 10,11; Wayne, chapter 2.

September 19: Nivola and Brady, chapter 2.

September 21: Classroom visit from Morris Fiorina (author of Nivola and Brady, chapter 2!)

III. The Voters:

September 24: Lau and Redlawsk, chapters 1,2,3,4.

September 26: Lau and Redlawsk, chapters 5,6,7.

September 28: No additional reading

October 1: Lau and Redlawsk, chapters 8,9,10,11,12.

October 3: Essay #2 due: *Campaigns and Voters*.

October 5: End of Blogging Topic #2.

IV. The "Traditional" Media:

October 8: Pfau, Houston and Semmler, chapters 1,2.

Start Blogging Topic #3: Campaigns and the Press: Thurber and Nelson, chapter 9.

October 10: Pfau, Houston and Semmler, chapters 3,4.

October 12: Wayne, chapter 5.

October 15: No class. Mid-Semester Break.

October 17: Pfau, Houston and Semmler, chapter 5; Nivola and Brady, chapter 5.

October 19: End Blogging Topic #3.

October 22: Essay #3 due: *Campaign Coverage*

Start Blogging Topic #4: Campaign Advertising: Thurber and Nelson, chapters 7,8.

October 24: No class. I will be out of town.

October 26: No class. I will be out of town.

October 29: "The Effects of Political Advertising on Young Voters" (handout) and "Political Advertising Effects and America's Racially Diverse Newest Voting Generation." (handout)

October 31: Williams and Tedesco, chapter 5.

November 2: No class. I will be out of town. End Blogging Topic #4.

V. Money

November 5: Wayne, chapter 4.

Begin Blogging Topic #5: Raising Money: Thurber and Nelson, chapters 5,6.

November 7: Butler, chapter 3.

November 9: No class. I will be out of town.

November 12: Williams and Tedesco, chapter 1.

November 14: No additional reading.

November 16: Essay #4 due: *Campaign Finance Reform*.

November 19: End Blogging Topic #5.

November 21: No class. Thanksgiving Break.

November 23: No class. Thanksgiving Break.

VI. The Internet:

November 26: Williams and Tedesco, chapters 2,3.

Start Blogging Topic #6: Campaigns and the Internet: Thurber and Nelson, chapter 12.

November 28: Williams and Tedesco, chapters 4,6.

November 30: Williams and Tedesco, chapters 7,8.

December 3: Williams and Tedesco, chapters 9,10.

December 5: Williams and Tedesco, chapters 11,12; Wayne, chapter 8.

December 7: End Blogging Topic #6.

December 10: Essay #5 due: *Does the Internet Really "Change Everything?"*

Begin Blogging Topic #7: Campaign Ethics: Thurber and Nelson, chapters 13,14.

VII. The Nomination Process: An Overview II.

December 12: Butler, chapters 4,5,6,7,8.

December 17: End Blogging Topic #7

December 19: POLS115 Take-Home Final Exam Due in my office (Meredith 212) by 4:00 pm: *Does the Nomination Process Work?*

Begin Final Blogging Topic: The Campaigns: Coming Down The Homestretch. (Those of you who are able to remain involved in your internship over the break can continue to blog concerning what is happening as the caucus comes to a close. I realize some of you

will be home and away from the campaign this entire time – so this blogging topic is optional. You should, wherever you are, continue to follow the caucuses in the press, as you will need that information for your final paper.

One week after the Iowa caucuses: POLS193 Final Summary Reflection Paper Due.

TBA: Forum: Panel Discussion of the Iowa Caucuses.