This semester’s version of the Campaigns and Elections course will be different than in the past. The course will combine a broad examination of the subject of campaigns and elections with a close and real-time examination of the 2012 elections. It will provide an opportunity to apply concepts and findings from political science to this year’s campaign as it develops. A substantial portion of class time will be devoted to lecture and discussions on the current campaign. Each student will participate in a regional team examining presidential battleground states and key Senate races; the teams will periodically make oral reports to the class. As a course unfolding in real time, some shorter reading assignments will be announced during the semester. These readings will usually be newspaper or Internet articles; they will be posted on Blackboard and announced in advance of classes devoted to the same topics as the articles.

Books to be purchased:


**SEMESTER OUTLINE**

Aug. 28  Introduction to the course

Aug. 30  Following the 2012 elections

Reading: *Conventional Wisdom and American Elections (CW)*, Ch. 7

Sept. 4  The history of presidential elections

Reading: *Campaigns & Elections (C&E)*, Ch. 3
Sept. 6  Presidential elections
       Reading: C&E, Ch. 8; CW, Ch. 5, 12
Sept. 13  Congressional elections
       Reading: C&E, Ch. 9; CW, Ch. 11
Sept. 20  Political parties and interest groups
       Reading: C&E, Ch. 6; CW, Ch. 9
Sept. 25  Candidates: Barack Obama
       Reading: CW, Ch. 10; additional reading to be announced (TBA)
Sept. 27  Candidates: Mitt Romney
       Reading: TBA
Oct.  2  Presidential Debates
       Reading: TBA
Oct.  4  Discussion of the first presidential debate of 2012
       Assignment: watch presidential debate on Oct. 3
Oct.  9  Campaign issues
       Reading: CW, Ch. 2
Oct. 11  Campaign issues of 2012
       Reading: TBA
Oct. 16  Campaign finance and the power of money
       Reading: C&E, Ch. 4
Oct. 18  The media in campaigns
       Reading: C&E, Ch. 7; CW, Ch. 8
Oct. 23  Campaign ads
       Reading: CW, Ch. 6; additional reading on electronic reserve (ERES)
Oct. 23  First paper due
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>Voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading: C&amp;E, Ch. 11, 12; CW, Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Regional team reports on battleground states and Senate races</td>
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<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Election Day! A preview</td>
<td>Reading: TBA</td>
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<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>Analysis and discussion of the 2012 election results</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Reading: TBA (and watch election night coverage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>Regional team reports on results in battleground states and Senate races</td>
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<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td><strong>No class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>Implications of the 2012 elections for the future of American politics</td>
<td>Reading: TBA</td>
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<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>Second paper due</td>
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<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses of the American electoral system</td>
<td>Reading: C&amp;E, Ch. 13</td>
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<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Reforming the American electoral system?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Reading: additional reading on ERES</td>
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<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>Heading into 2013</td>
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**DEC. 19**   **TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE**

Grades for POS 337 are on an A-E basis, but the course can be taken on a S-U basis. Grades for the course will be based on quizzes, two short papers (the first due before the election and offering your reasoned predictions, the second due after the election and examining what you got right and what you got wrong), a take-home final, and an evaluation of your work in your regional team (reflecting both individual effort and team effectiveness). The grade will be computed as follows:

- **Quizzes** – 20%
- **Paper 1** – 20%
Paper 2 – 20%

Final – 20%

Regional team – 20%

Please note the following:

1. All assignments must be completed before you can receive a grade for the course.
2. Students are reminded that all written work handed in must be their own. Cheating on quizzes or plagiarism on papers or the take-home final will be severely punished.
3. Persistent absences without excuse will be taken into consideration in grading.

My office hours on the main campus are Tuesdays and Thursdays right after this course (11:45-12:45) in the Rockefeller College Contact Office, located in Humanities 16. I am also available at the downtown campus; my office there is Milne 216 and office hours are Wednesdays from 2:30-3:30. My email is:

bmiroff@albany.edu