



School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations

Political Science and International Relations Programme

POLS 364: The Media and Election Campaigns: A Comparative Survey

TRIMESTER 2 2011

11 July to 12 November 2011

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 11 July to 14 October 2011

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2011

Study week: 17–21 October 2011

Examination/Assessment period: 21 October to 12 November 2011

Note: Students enrolled in this class must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Course Coordinator:	Dr Kate McMillan
Room:	MY 532
Office Hours:	Wednesday 11-12
Lecture time:	Wednesday 9.00-10.50 am
Lecture location:	Cotton LT 122

Course delivery

The course will be delivered via one two-hour lecture slot each week. Students are expected to attend all lectures. Students will be expected to read a set of assigned readings before attending each class. Blackboard will be utilised throughout the course and students will be expected to check Blackboard regularly.

Communication of additional information

Any additional information will be communicated to students in lectures, on Blackboard or via email. All email correspondence will be with students via their vuw student email addresses, as listed in Blackboard. It is each student's responsibility to check their vuw accounts regularly.

Course Prescription

How much influence do election campaigns have on election outcomes? Under what rules are those campaigns conducted? What influence do the media have on election campaigns and outcomes?

These questions will be studied with reference to recent election campaigns in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand. 60% internal assessment, 40% examination.

Course content

Elections represent a critical juncture in democratic politics. How much influence do election campaigns have on election outcomes? Under what rules are those campaigns conducted? How do the media report campaigns, and what influence do they have on election campaigns and outcome? The course will examine these questions through case studies of recent election campaigns in three liberal democratic states: New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Comparisons will also be drawn with Australia. Topics covered will include structural influences on campaigning such as electoral and party systems, electoral finance law and media systems, and party and candidate-level campaigning techniques. An additional focus will be the effect of digital and other media technologies on evolving election campaign strategies. A detailed outline of each week's lectures and readings will be posted on Blackboard in the week before lectures begin, and provided with the syllabus to students in the first lecture.

Learning objectives

Students passing the course should be able to:

- Understand and analyse how electoral systems, campaign finance laws and media systems affect election campaign strategies and outcomes in our case study states;
- Identify international trends in election campaigning and how they manifest in our case study countries;
- Identify and analyse some of the major ways in which post-modern forms of election campaigning affect democratic politics in our case study states.

Expected workload

Students are expected to dedicate 200 hours to studying for this course. Of this, 2 hours a week should be spent attending lectures (24 hours in total) and 5 hours a week preparing for class (60 hours total). The rest of the time should be dedicated to working on their in-class assessment and preparing for the final exam.

Essential texts:

A POLS 364 book of readings will be available for purchase (see below) in the first week of trimester.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 4 to 22 July 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Recommended Reading:

Stephen Levine and Nigel Roberts, (eds), *Key to Victory: The New Zealand General Election 2008*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2009.

Chris Rudd, Janine Hayward, Geoffrey Craig, *Informing Voters? Politics, Media, and the New Zealand Election 2008*, Pearson Press, Auckland, 2009.

Assessment requirements

(see below for details)

<u>One</u> blog entry (800-1000 words) and 5 minute in-class presentation:	10%
<u>One</u> electorate profile and media strategy (1500 words)	20%
<u>One</u> essay (2000 words)	30%
<u>One</u> three hour, closed book final examination	40%

The *blog entry and class presentation* are designed to develop students' familiarity with the campaign strategies and tactics of each of New Zealand's political parties and the media coverage of those campaigns. The blog entry develops their ability to collect and present relevant information in a digital online format. The oral presentation assists them to develop, and tests, their oral presentation skills. The *electorate profile and candidate media strategy* is designed to develop students' awareness of the theory and practice of electoral campaign strategy. It tests their ability to conduct original research, and to apply theory in a practical exercise. The *essay* is designed to deepen students' understanding of variables that affect campaign strategies and outcomes. It provides them with an opportunity to examine these variables in one or more of the case study states. It tests their ability to conduct original research and to construct empirically-based, theoretically-informed arguments in an essay form. The *final exam* is designed to test students' knowledge of the class materials and their ability to write informed, structured essays in a short time period.

The blog entry and class presentation

(Due dates to be arranged in first class)

Each student will be required to write one blog entry and give one 5 minute presentation. The blog entry and presentation will either be on the main political stories in the media that week, or on the political communications of a particular political party and the media's response (if any) to that party's political communications during that week. The blog entry should include hyper-links to other relevant sites, and can include pictures and embedded videos. It should be somewhere between 800-1000 words and will contribute 10% to the final grade. Topics and dates for the blog entry and presentation will be allocated in the first class. Detailed marking criteria will be provided in the first week of class.

The electorate profile and media strategy

(Due date 5.00pm Friday 19 August)

Each student will be required to write an electorate profile and media strategy for a candidate standing for election in an electorate seat in the 2011 New Zealand general election. Students may choose a candidate from any party and one who is an incumbent or an aspirant; the only requirement is that the candidate must have registered their intention to contest the seat in November's election. The electorate profile should include information on the geographical and demographical features of the electorate, the voting history of the electorate, an assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of their candidate and of the opposing candidates; an assessment of the issues likely to be important to the electorate, and how their candidate stands on those issues.

Information from the New Zealand Parliament's electorate profile website will be invaluable: (http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/MPP/Electorates/3/d/9/DBHOH_Lib_EP_ChristchurchEast_TOC_1-Christchurch-East-Electorate-Profile.htm).

The media strategy requires students to identify which media outlets their candidate should focus on during the campaign and why. Detailed marking criteria will be provided in the first week of class.
Word length: 1500 words

The essay

(Due date 5.00pm Friday 23 September)

Essay questions will be posted on Blackboard in the first week of class. Detailed marking criteria will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

Word length: 2000 words

Final exam

The final exam will be a closed book, three hour exam.

The examination period is 21 October to 12 November 2011

Penalties

The essay must be submitted on or before the due date. An extension will only be granted to those who meet the university's *aegrotat* rules, viz. a medical certificate, or personal bereavement, or critical personal circumstances involving the health of a close relative, or exceptional circumstances beyond your control.

Late essays must be handed to the course organiser or to the Programme Administrator who will record on the essay the date and time it was received before handing it to the course organiser. Students will be penalised for late submission of essays – a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days. Work that is more than 8 days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

Mandatory course requirements

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- a) Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work):

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| • Blog and presentation: | On arranged date |
| • Electorate profile and media strategy | 5.00pm 19 August |
| • Essay | 5.00pm 23 September |

- b) Sit the final examination

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.