



POLS

3123

Section H1
Fall 2025

THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE (CRN: 5644)

Time: MWF 1pm-1:50pm; **Location:** 214 Young Hall; **Credit:** 3 hours
Prof.: Carl Cavalli; **Office:** 338 Hansford; **E-mail:** carl.cavalli@ung.edu
Office Hours: MW 3-5³⁰pm, TR 4⁴⁵-5¹⁵pm, by email or appointment

This is the presidency...I didn't think folks wanted a lot of that crap. It was a terrible mistake.

- Michael Dukakis

Course Description:

Prerequisite: POLS 1101

This course covers the presidential selection and election processes, raising several theoretical questions about elections and examining the empirical evidence available to answer those questions. In particular, the issues of campaign finance, media coverage, and candidate selection are covered.

Required Readings:

Texts:



Wayne, Stephen J. 2024.
The Road to the White House
2024, 12th Edition



Busch, Andrew E., &
John J. Pitney. 2025.
The Comeback.

Web Sites:



Google News/Politics

<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>

POLITICO: 2024

<https://www.politico.com/news/2024-elections>

(We will also use several
other sites as sources)

Additional material: see <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/3123bib.htm>

ONLINE: Home – <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/3123.htm>, D2L (“eLearning”) – <https://ung.view.usg.edu>, Turnitin – <http://turnitin.com>

Course Objectives and Format:

Outcomes: Students will understand the **history and functioning** of presidential elections, explore **issues** involved in these elections from analytical and practical viewpoints, and be aware of other **actors** that influence, provide resources to, and regulate presidential elections.

This is a hybrid course which will meet part of the week, with online activities filling out the week. We will use D2L online (also known as *eLearning*), but I like to keep things simple. We will not use any “modules”, etc. Unless otherwise noted, all activity and communication will take place via the announcement and discussion sections. In class, we will engage in as much **discussion** possible. To that end, *you need to read the assignments before their due date*. Be able to *discuss* and answer *questions* about them. The texts lay out the basics. We will start each new topic (see Schedule) with the appropriate readings. We will also follow the 2024 presidential election to get a “current” view. Therefore, you must also *stay informed* of the progress of these events. We will follow current events mainly as covered in the *Google News* (<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>) web site.

In addition to assigned readings, we will review *Google News/Politics* articles (or ones from other sources) most weeks. *You will present* and lead **discussions** of these online. Together, we will select articles that complement class topics¹. So in a real sense, you will help shape course content! Of course, you **all** are responsible for **all** assigned articles, text, and any other materials. In presenting articles, I would like you each to assume a particular role (e.g., candidates, party strategists, the press). This helps us gain particular insights into different perspectives on electoral and partisan issues. A list of roles appears at the end of this syllabus.

For **most weeks** (see Schedule), the class meets **Monday/Wednesday only**. **Online discussion replaces most Friday classes:** We generally will begin new topics and readings *after* each Wednesday class. You are **required** to post comments on that material to our D2L (“eLearning”) discussion site. You are **required** to post at least one **substantive response** (1. *not* just “I liked...”, or “I didn’t like” or similar words; 2. *analytical*, not judgmental) to discussion/notes I will post on D2L each week *and* at least one **substantive original comment**. Treat online discussions as required readings – you are responsible for and may be tested on them. There may be videos to view, or other activities assigned as part of these discussions.

Exams	Written exercises	Other		90+ = A
Exam #1	15% Bibliography/Outline	5% Online Discussions	10%	80 to 89 = B
Exam #2	15% Project	10% Articles/Role-Playing	5%	70 to 79 = C
Final	15% Presentation	10% Participation/Attendance	5%	60 to 69 = D
	Revision	10%		Grand Total:
Total:	45%	35%	20%	100%

There are **two ‘mid-term’ exams and a final**. Each is 15% of your grade. They consist of two essay questions. A few days *before* the exam, I will give you four essay questions. On the *day* of the exam, I will select two of these questions for you to answer. *Please do not miss exams* (you know *our* schedule *now*, so plan *your* schedule well ahead). *I will not give makeups unless you 1) notify me or the department in advance (no exceptions); and 2) verify a family/medical emergency in writing*. **Note:** I will *not* give any makeups *after* the graded exams are *handed back* in class. A **group project** of 18-24+ pages (depending upon group size), due no later than *November 14th*, is another 10% of your grade. The format and topics are covered on our web site, but you must consult me before proceeding. To prepare you for the project, an **annotated bibliography** is due by *October 24th*, and an **annotated outline** is due by *October 31st*. Together, these are worth 5% of your grade. A **revision** worth 10% of your grade is due *during finals week* (see the schedule). *Do not turn in late papers!* If I accept them (and I may not!), you will lose either 5% or 1 point of your paper grade (whichever is *greater*) for each *day* late. Your **online posts** are another 20% of your grade. Finally, a **presentation** of your project during the last week is another 10%.

I do not **grade** on a curve (You earn what you earn...I *hope* you all earn “A”’s!). A typical class average is about a mid- to upper- “C” (“C” is *average* — *not* below average...“B” is *above* average). Just completing the requirements most likely earns a “C” (70-79). “B” (80-89) requires effort *beyond* just requirements. “A” (90-100) requires *extraordinary* performance. *Notes on “attendance”:* 1. The **UNG attendance policy**

¹ Each week, we will select articles for discussion for the *following* week’s class. Links to articles will be posted in the appropriate D2L discussion topic.

(see the latest UNG *Student Handbook*, or *Bulletin*) applies to this course; 2. Any D2L **announcements** are considered sufficient notice. So, *attendance matters*, and please check your email and D2L often.

Course Schedule:

Legend: **Wayne** = *The Road to the White House 2024*; **Busch** = *The Comeback* (see [3123 Home Page](#)). **Numbers** following the names are chapters. **Other names** refer to articles. **Italicized titles** refer to videos (see [Additional Readings and Videos](#)). **Articles** = Google News articles (to be selected in class—see updates on our [3123 Home page](#)). Items in **Bold type** are activities or assignments.

[Light cells: class days] **Dark cells: outside content** **Red cells: exams** **Red text: Project** **Grey cells: off days**.

Monday: Discuss, videos, other		Wednesday: Discuss, Role Playing		Outside: D2L discuss due noon Mon.	
08/11	"Hello, my name is...", Course info	08/13	Wayne Preface, 1	08/15	Wayne 1 (cont'd); Drop/Add ends
08/18	Pepe & Issacharoff ; Discuss	08/20	Camp. Finance: Wayne 2 ; Discuss	08/22	Environment: Wayne 3 ; Discuss
08/25	Environment 2024: Busch 1	08/27	Discussion: The Electoral Arena	Outside	Nomination: Wayne 4, 5
09/01	—Labor Day—	09/03	Discussion; Exam questions	Outside	Nomination 2024 - Dems: Busch 2
09/08	<i>Primary</i> (1960)	09/10	—Exam #1 (material thru 9/05)—	Outside	Nomination 2024 - Reps: Busch 3
09/15	<i>So You Want to Be President</i> (1984)	09/17	Discussion; RP articles	Outside	Post-Primary: Wayne 6
09/22	<i>Trump's Road to the WH</i> (2016)	09/24	Discussion; RP articles	Outside	Post-Primary 2024: Busch 4
09/29	<i>Convention videos</i>	10/01	Discussion; RP articles	Outside	General Elec. - Strat./Tact.: Wayne 7
10/06	<i>Convention videos</i> (cont'd)	10/08	Discuss; RP arts; Exam questions	Outside	General Election - Media: Wayne 8
10/13	<i>Media videos</i> [TBA]; End w/draw Fri.	10/15	—Exam #2(material thru 10/10)—	Outside	General Election - 2024: Busch 5
10/20	Project Workshop	10/22	Discussion; RP; Biblio. due 5p Fri.	Outside	Conclusion I - Understand: Wayne 9
10/27	Project Workshop; My Bday is Thur.!	10/29	Discussion; RP; Outline due 5p Fri.	Outside	Conclusion II - 2024: Busch 7
11/03	Project Workshop; Discussion	11/05	—Out Partying...I mean...attending a conference—		
11/10	Discussion	11/12	Discussion; RP; Project due 5p Fri.	11/14	Reform: Wayne 10
11/17	Presentations 1,2 (Rev. due 12/1, 5p)	11/19	Presentations 3,4 (Rev. due 12/1, 5p)	11/21	Presentations 5,6 (Rev. due 12/1, 5p)
12/24	—Thanksgiving Break (Turkey! Football!! Relatives who stay too long!!! I can't wait!)—				
Cancellations: we will pick up where we left off—and add Friday classes if needed. Final Exam: Dec. 05, 12:40pm to 2:40pm					

POLS 3123 Roles:

Article presentations and other class discussions will use *Socratic Dialogues*, requiring class members to assume various roles during discussions.

What is a Socratic Dialogue? The Socratic Dialogue format uses role playing, hypothetical case studies, and a roving inquisitor to compel panelists to confront what they would do in situations where the “right” choice is not clear. The question “What would you do?” is different from “What do you think?” in that it drives a participant to reveal how he or she would confront a specific problem. The exercise is designed to identify the perceptions and decision-making processes of all sides and to enable participants to better understand both their own positions and the imperatives driving others’ actions. As panelists wrestle with the hypothetical situations, the drama created helps illuminate complex issues in an enlightening way. [Viewer’s Guide, *Beyond Black and White: Affirmative Action in America*. 1999. PBS. [WWWdocument]. URL <http://www.pbs.org/pov/tvraceinitiative/beyondblackandwhite/viewer.html#socratic>]

Presidential Candidates	Party & Campaign Specialists	Outside Actors
Republican Presidential Candidates	Republican Campaign Strategists	Interest Groups
Democratic Presidential Candidates	Democratic Campaign Strategists	The Press
Independent Presidential Candidates	State Party Leaders/Activists	The Public

STAY INFORMED: UNG Political Science and International Affairs on social media! Blog: <http://blog.ung.edu/psia-news/>



CHEAT = FAIL. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an automatic zero for the exam or assignment, a zero for participation and attendance, AND forfeiture of all extra credit. At my discretion, it may ALSO result in academic integrity charges and an “F” for the course.

UNG Integrity Code: “I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those that do.”

All students in this class are bound by the above Integrity Code. For information on Academic Integrity as defined by UNG, see the *UNG 2013-2014 Undergraduate Catalog* (http://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=252#Academic_Integrity_Policy). See also <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UNG Academic Integrity policies and will not be tolerated:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is prohibited by the student code of conduct. This includes ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, and all other A.I., and applies to all written/online work.

For additional policies, see: <http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php>

Accessibility Statement: If you need this document in another format, please email me (carl.cavalli@ung.edu) or call 706-864-1872.



Accommodations for disabilities: <https://ung.edu/student-accessibility-services/>

The University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and the Office of Student Accessibility Services. In this case, contact Student Accessibility Services, in the Stewart Student Success Center, Room 233 (706-867-2782, accessibility-dah@ung.edu).