

PADM-GP.4451.001

Elections in Action

Fall 2023

# Instructor Information

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# Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Wednesday, 4:55 PM - 6:35 PM
* Class Location: 40 W 4th St (Tisch Hall) Room LC15 Loc: Washington Square

# Course Prerequisites

* None

# Course Description

Elections in Action is for those interested in learning how a campaign works from start to finish. Whether one is working a local or a national campaign, the structure is very similar. This seven session course will provide an overview and training in modern day campaign planning and implementation. This will include understanding the components of a campaign, preparing a candidate, directing staff, the role of media, fundraising and Get Out the Vote strategies (GOTV).

Students will read, analyze and provide written reflections on articles and case studies. Guest speakers (campaign managers, staffers and candidates) will be invited to class to share their campaign expertise and lessons with students as well. At the end of the course students will have to create and present a campaign plan.

# Course and Learning Objectives

The primary course objective is for you to gain a greater understanding of campaigns and elections. This includes an in-depth understanding of the when, where, why, how and to what effect candidates, media, and voters shape strategies and outcomes. Specifically, by the end of this course, you should:

1. Learn, examine and analyze different stages of an electoral campaign
2. Create/design a campaign plan
3. Learn about and utilize various tools used during electoral campaigns

The course will be conducted in a seminar/facilitator format. In general classes will include some lecture, guest presenters, small group activities, and discussion. This format allows for best use of student knowledge and experience and is dependent on student participation.

## Learning Assessment Tool

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| --- | --- |
| **Graded Assignment** | **Course Objective Covered** |
| Electoral District Analysis | #1 |
| Field Plan Memo | #1, #2 |
| Group Campaign Presentation | #1, #2, #3 |
| Reading Reflections | #3 |
| Election District “GOTV” Plan | #3 |

# Required Readings

* + ***Winning Your Election, the Wellstone Way***, Jeff Blodgett and Bill Lofy

# Assessment, Assignments and Evaluation

All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade. Students will be evaluated on their understanding of the core principles presented throughout the course. Readings are to be done before class and assignments are due the following week. Reflections on articles or case studies are 1-page memos summarizing the article and or prompt assigned. Strategy memos assignments are 2-3 page documents outlining direction or a plan of action. All articles and prompts will be accessible in Brightspace. The final assignment will be a group campaign project. This will be your only group project. The course evaluation includes the following:

|  |
| --- |
| (15%) Electoral District Analysis: Analyze a chosen district at a specific level of government. Research the last three cycles of critical datapoints, including fundraising, turnout, and win numbers. |
| (15%) Reading Reflections |
| (20%) Group Campaign Presentation |
| (15%) Campaign Field Plan: Given a set amount of time and clear targets, how would you organize a field plan? |
| (15%) Election District “GOTV” Plan: Present a final GOTV plan for a chosen race. |
| (20%) Attendance/Participation |

# Course Overview

## Week 1 (October 25th)

**[Read in advance]** Article: “Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections”

* + Topic: Types of campaigns
    - Issue & Legislative Campaigns, Independent Expenditures

 How they work and why they matter

* + - Elements of an Electoral Campaign

 Getting on the ballot

 Messaging

 Building a team

 Mapping your path

## Week 2 (November 1st)

**[Read in advance]** *Winning Your Election* Chapter 2: Writing a Campaign Plan and Laying out a Path to Victory.

* + Topic: Ingredients of a campaign and how to manage a campaign (and a candidate),

Creating a Message, Launching the Campaign

* + - How to deal with campaign components and think about the systems needed for each component.

*\*Assignment* ***Due Nov 8th:*** *Electoral District Analysis Memo*

## Week 3 (November 8th)

**[Read in advance]** *Winning Your Election* Chapter 9: Raising Money and Knowing How to Spend It

* + Topic: Fundraising / The financing of campaigns
    - Why it matters
    - Central elements: call time, fundraising engagement
    - Focus on financial campaign management
    - How to understand campaign filings

*\*Assignment* ***Due Nov 15th:*** *Reflection 1 pager Steve Israel: Confessions of a Congressman Prompt TBA on Brightspace*

## Week 4 (November 15th)

**[Read in advance]** *Winning Your Election* Chapter 4: Identifying your base, Swing Voters, and Opponents through Voter Targeting

* + Topic: Creating a field plan and determining a win number
    - Previous elections
    - The Voter File
    - Finding “your people”
    - Endorsements and why they matter
    - Elements of a successful & less than successful campaign

*\*Assignment* ***Due* Nov 22nd:** *Field Plan memo and supporting data*

## Week 5 (November 22nd)

**[Read in advance]** *Winning Your Election* Chapter 5: How to Build your Base and Use It for Direct Voter Contact

* + Topic: Building and activating your coalitions
    - What the message?
    - What a successful campaign looks like in the early, middle, and late stages before Election Day.
    - Case Studies of success vs. failures

*\*Assignment* ***Due Nov 29th****:* Reflection 1 pager: “An Oral History of Election Night 2016 at MSNBC.” Prompt TBA on Brightspace

## Week 6 (November 29th)

**[Read in advance]** *Winning Your Election* Chapter 14: Turning Out Our Voters: Getting Out the Vote

* + Topic: Get Out the Vote (GOTV)
    - How to go from a win number to winning a campaign
    - Setting up your GOTV operation
    - Final week of the campaign
    - Staff/volunteer positions
    - Surrogates: where and how to activate

*\*Assignment due* ***Due Dec 5thth****: GOTV plan memo*

## Week 7 (December 6th)

* + Election Day
    - Driving the campaign to victory

 From canvassing to GOTV to Election Day

 Logistics of the day

 Accounting for the expenses

* + Final Presentation Prep
    - Campaign teams will be organized and scenarios will be distributed. Each group will assign roles to team members and presentations on the campaign plans will be conducted in class. **DUE Dec 13th in class**.

*\*Extra Credit Assignment* ***Due Dec 8th****: Reflection 1 pager:* Daniel Moskowitz “Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections.” *Prompt TBA on Brightspace*

## Week 8 (December 13th)

* + Final: In Class Group Presentations

# Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| **A** | 4.0 points |
| **A-** | 3.7 points |
| **B+** | 3.3 points |
| **B** | 3.0 points |
| **B-** | 2.7 points |
| **C+** | 2.3 points |
| **C** | 2.0 points |
| **C-** | 1.7 points |
| **F** | 0.0 points |

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

* + (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
  + (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs

of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

* + (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
  + (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses

are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete.

Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate, but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

* + (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a

graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

* + (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal

expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

* + (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate

student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

# NYU Classes

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the NYU Classes site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website or in class.

# Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/academic-oath). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

# Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) [Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click on the Reasonable

Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980) or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

# NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.