

## SYLLABUS

HSTRY 288/HSTAA 290  
**Elections as History**  
University of Washington  
Autumn 2016  
MW 1:30-3:20 – ART 006

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Every four years—including this year—the battle to win the U.S. presidency captures the attention of American voters, reporters, and observers all over the world. There are few historical events as consuming of public attention, and as exhaustively analyzed. In this seminar, we will place today's candidates and debates in historical context by exploring the evolution of presidential campaigns and candidates since the late nineteenth century. We address how shifting demographics, market changes, and social issues changed the composition of the major national parties over time, how successive generations of “new” media reshaped how to run and win, and the personalities and social movements that remade the political landscape. Through readings of primary and secondary sources, group discussion and project work, and original research, our work in this seminar will also give you practice in the basic skills of critical reading, data analysis, and communication (both verbal and written) that are central to the practice of history.

### **READINGS**

Required texts are available for purchase in the University Bookstore and on reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library.

1. Brett Flehinger, *The 1912 Election and the Power of Progressivism*
2. Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression*
3. Joe McGinniss, *The Selling of the President 1968*
4. Anne Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling: What it Will Take for a Woman to Win*
5. *HSTRY 288/HSTAA 290 Course Pack* containing articles, chapters, and primary sources listed on this syllabus. Table of Contents with detailed references found at the end of this syllabus.

I expect students to come to each class prepared to be called upon, to discuss all readings, and to place readings in conversation with one another. Please read ahead on weeks when we have lighter loads or a research week. Readings listed for a given week should be completed by the date under which they are listed on the syllabus.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. Thoughtful, historically informed, and courteous engagement in every class discussion, reflecting completion of assigned readings (30%).
2. Writing and posting two reader's reflections totaling at least 150 words per week to the online discussion board (30%). Monday's reading reflection should be posted no later than **9AM on Monday morning**; Wednesday's reading reflection **to be posted no later than 9AM on Wednesday morning**.
3. Making a 30-minute appointment for an in-person meeting with Prof. O'Mara during her office hours at least once during the quarter to discuss academic interests and professional goals (required; credit/no credit).
4. Working in "campaign strategy" teams to create a short in-class presentation to be presented on **Monday, November 21** (10%).
5. One two-page research paper proposal (required; credit/no credit) due in class on **Monday, November 28**.
6. One final 8-10 page research paper (30%) due **Wednesday, December 14 at 10PM**.

**\*\* EXTRA CREDIT:** Watch and write a review of a documentary or theatrical film about modern U.S. electoral politics. (The film must be different than those we watch as a group. A suggested filmography is at the end of this syllabus; if you have a different film you would like to review, please discuss with me first.) Post review to the class discussion board. You can earn up to 2% extra credit per film, with a maximum of two films per student. Sign up with me to review; first come, first served on choice of films. **\*\***

There are no midterm or final exams. See the end of this syllabus for detailed information about assignment guidelines and expectations.

## THE POLITICS OF THE CLASSROOM

As informed, voting-age adults, you likely have well-formed political opinions and identify as a Democrat, Republican, a member of a third party, or an independent. There are places to express these positions; this classroom is not one of them. Your comments in class should approach matters of politics and policy in ways that are respectful of others' opinions and contextualize these issues historically. Informed debates based on the readings are encouraged; partisan editorial commentary is not, and will adversely affect your participation grade.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **W Sept 28 Introduction: the practice of politics, and the practice of history**

*Introductions*

*In-class exercise on sources and storytelling*

*Class goals and syllabus discussion*

### **M Oct 3 Ritual and partisanship in nineteenth century elections**

Jeffrey L. Pasley, "The Cheese and the Words"

### **W Oct 5 Political citizenship without the vote**

Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830-1930"

Frederick Douglass, "Oration, Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester," July 5, 1852

### **M Oct 10 Populism and the press in the 1896 campaign**

Mary Lease, "In Defense of Home and Hearth"

Speeches to the 1896 Democratic National Convention: William Jennings Bryan, Ben Tillman,

David Bennett Hill (audio of Bryan found online at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354>)

William D. Harpine, "Playing to the Press in McKinley's Front Porch Campaign"

### **W Oct 12 The progressive campaign of 1912**

Fleehinger, *The 1912 Campaign and the Power of Progressivism*, pp. 3-93, 106-113, 130-133

**M Oct 17 NO CLASS** (campaign strategy group meeting [mandatory] during class time; head start on Wednesday reading)

### **W Oct 19 Interest groups and the public image**

Brian Balogh, "Mirrors of Desires"

Thomas J. Heflin, "Warning Against the 'Roman Catholic Party'"

### **M Oct 24 Franklin Roosevelt and his critics**

Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, pp. 3-81

### **W Oct 26 Franklin Roosevelt and his critics**

Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, pp. 82-123, 242-268

**M Oct 31    The Solid South**

Kari Fredrickson, “Setting the Postwar Agenda” and “The Dixiecrat Presidential Campaign”  
Harry S Truman, “Message on Civil Rights,” February 2, 1948  
George Lipsitz, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness”

**W Nov 2    NO CLASS** (campaign strategy group meeting [mandatory] during class time;  
head start on next week’s reading)

**Mon Nov 7    Redefining conservatism and liberalism**

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “The Restoration of Radical Nerve”  
David Greenberg, “The California Conservatives: Nixon as Populist”

**Wed Nov 9    Were the polls right?**

Sarah Igo, “Polling the Average Populace”  
*Discuss election night coverage by different press outlets, review polling data*

**Mon Nov 14    The television president**

Theodore H. White, “Round Two: The Television Debates”  
McGinniss, *The Selling of the President*, pp. xi-61, 171-186  
*In-class film: Primary (1960)*

**Wed Nov 16    The television president**

McGinniss, *The Selling of the President*, pp. 62-168  
*In-class source exercise: campaign advertising at [www.livingroomcandidate.org](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org)*

***Optional but encouraged event, evening of Wed Nov 16:***

**The 2016 Election in Global Context**, a panel discussion featuring Professor O’Mara with  
Profs. Ray Jonas, Vicente Rafael, and Adam Warren of the UW History Department, Walker  
Ames Room, Kane Hall, 6:30PM

**Mon Nov 21    The legacy of George Wallace**

Dan T. Carter, ““Stand Up For America”” and “Nixon, Wallace, and the Southernization of  
American Politics”  
*Campaign strategy group presentations*

**Wed Nov 23    The Southern Strategy**

Kevin Phillips, “The Future of American Politics”  
*In-class film: Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story*

**M Nov 28     New media**

Timothy Crouse, “On the Bus,” and “Coming to Power”  
Hunter S. Thompson, “September”

**W Nov 30     New Democrats**

Matt Bai, “I Do Not Think That is a Fair Question”  
William Galston and Elaine Kamarck, “The Politics of Evasion”

**M Dec 5        Madame President**

Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling*, pp. 1-88  
Jon Keegan, “Blue Feed, Red Feed,” <http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/#/hillary>

**W Dec 7        What’s next?**

Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling*, pp. 89-254  
*Discussion of final projects and course evaluations*

**ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

THE PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS:

**Class Discussion.** In colloquia such as this one, consistent and respectful engagement in discussion is the key to your success. To receive high marks for discussion, you must be both a thoughtful commentator *and* a good listener. This is discussion, not oration; I grade on quality of commentary, not quantity. I regularly will call on students, so always be prepared! Obviously, if you are not in class you cannot show off your mastery of the material and your penetrating analysis of the issues at hand; each unexcused absence will lower your class discussion mark by 1% of the total class grade.

**Discussion Board.** Posting substantive and thought-provoking comments to the online discussion board is an important component of your participation grade. It also is your opportunity to home in on issues in the reading that you find particularly interesting and provocative, and for you and your peers to set our discussion agenda. These may be comments, or they may be questions that you would like to raise for classroom discussion. Comments must be posted no later than 9AM on the day of class in order to allow your fellow students to read them in a timely fashion. I also welcome additional links to substantive contemporary political commentary you find online, but postings must be historically informed. I will take down partisan posts. You can post as early and as often as you like during the week, but you must post at least once prior to the deadline in order to receive credit for the week’s work.

**Group Presentation.** I will group the class into small strategy groups who each will assess the political strengths and weaknesses of a man or woman who ran for president or vice president during the twentieth century, drawing from primary and secondary sources on this individual that are available online and in the library. I will assign a candidate to each group. Your work product will be a ten-minute, timed presentation drafted as if it is a “pitch” to party leaders who are considering whether this candidate would be a fitting nominee.

#### THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

\*\* Paper length is based on double-spaced text with 12-point Times New Roman font and standard margins. Papers must be footnoted. Refer to the Chicago Manual of Style or another widely-used style manual for guidance on proper documentation. All papers should be proofread and spell-checked, and pages must be numbered. Electronic submittals must be in Word (editable) format only.\*\*

**Research prospectus.** This is a two-page document. On the first page, you will write a prose outline that states your research topic, describes the questions you will explore, and explains the broader relevance of the topic to American political history. On the second page, you will list primary and secondary sources to be consulted in researching and writing this paper. This list should be in standard bibliographic form, adhering to the Chicago Manual of Style’s guidelines for bibliography. It should list at least eight sources in total. The prospectus is ungraded but is REQUIRED in order to pass this class.

**Final Paper.** Immigration, inequality, morality, corruption, taxes, gender, civil rights: certain issues and themes have been perennial features of modern presidential elections. Your final assignment is an 8-10 pp. research paper that tracks the history of a particular election-year issue over time. You may choose the issue and present it to me in your research prospectus. You may start as early as relevant but should pay particular emphasis to the twentieth century. Discuss how partisan structures and demographics affected the issue, how candidates exploited the issue, how the issue waxed and waned in importance to the electorate, and the role of changing media in shaping both message and strategy. The essay should use both primary and secondary source materials from the UW Libraries and reputable online sources. The paper should be submitted electronically no later than 10PM on Wednesday, December 14.

#### EXTRA-CREDIT FILMOGRAPHY:

Here are suggested films for review; only one person may review each film. Sign up with me at any time in the quarter to do so. The latest date you may post a review is Monday, December 12.

*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)

*Citizen Kane* (1941)

*All the King’s Men* (1949)

*A Face in the Crowd* (1957)

*The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

*The Candidate* (1972)  
*Bob Roberts* (1992)  
*The War Room* (1993)  
*A Perfect Candidate* (1996)  
*Wag the Dog* (1997)  
*Primary Colors* (1998)  
*Bulworth* (1998)  
*The Contender* (2000)  
*Frost/Nixon* (2008)

## **CLASS POLICIES**

**LATENESS AND ABSENCES:** It is critical that you make a point to attend every class session. I will not require a doctor's note because of incapacitation because of illness, but I ask for written notification of absence prior to the missed class if at all possible. Scheduled absences due to prior university obligations or very significant family events should be discussed with me as early in the term as possible. Please keep in mind that, even if an absence is excused, your missing class makes increases the difficulty in earning a high participation grade. For assignments, your grade on an assignment will be reduced by 1% **every five minutes** it is late.

**ELECTRONICS:** The seminar format depends on face-to-face dialogue and a singular focus on the topic at hand. It also is a 90-minute respite from the Internet and all its distractions. Thus, if you rely on an electronic device (laptop, tablet) for note-taking, you may use one, but the WiFi must be turned off. Phones should be on silent/do not disturb mode.

**GRADING STANDARDS, PAPER-WRITING GUIDELINES, AND OTHER POLICIES:** I have a number of handouts and links available on my web site at <http://www.margaretomara.com/resources>. Please read and refer to these as needed.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** In all assignments you are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined by the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. In an age of internet-based research and writing, the standards for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can become unclear, and I strongly encourage all students to read the statements and guidelines found on my website that outline acceptable practices and procedures. For clarification of these standards and disciplinary penalties, see <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/conduct/honesty.html>.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the UW Disability Resources for Students Office. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the professor at the start of the quarter so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need in this class.

## **COURSE PACK: TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Jeffrey L. Pasley, "The Cheese and the Words: Popular Political Culture and Participatory Democracy in the Early American Republic," in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, ed. Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 31-56.
2. Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830-1930," *The Journal of American History* 77: 3 (1990), pp. 864-85.
3. Frederick Douglass, "Oration, Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester," July 5, 1852.
4. Mary Lease, "In Defense of Home and Hearth," c. 1892, in W.E. Connelley, ed., *History of Kansas, State and People* 2, (1928), 1167.
5. Speeches to the 1896 Democratic National Convention: William Jennings Bryan, Ben Tillman, David Bennett Hill (audio of Bryan found online at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354>)
6. William D. Harpine, "Playing to the Press in McKinley's Front Porch Campaign: The Early Weeks of a Nineteenth-Century Pseudo-Event," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30: 3 (2000), pp. 73-90.
7. Brian Balogh, "'Mirrors of Desires': Interest Groups, Elections, and the Targeted Style in Twentieth Century America," in *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 66-138.
8. Thomas J. Heflin, "Warning Against the 'Roman Catholic Party'," Speech in the U.S. Senate, *Congressional Record* (January 28, 1928), 1st Session, 70th Congress, vol. 69, pt. 2, 1654-55, 1658.
9. Kari Fredrickson, "Setting the Postwar Agenda" and "The Dixiecrat Presidential Campaign," in *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 118-186.
10. Harry S Truman, "Message on Civil Rights," February 2, 1948.
11. George Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics," first published 1998, reproduced in *Charleston Syllabus: readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence*, edited by Chad Williams, Kidada E. Williams, and Keisha N. Blain (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2016), pp. 207-212.
12. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Restoration of Radical Nerve," in *The Vital Center* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949), pp. 131-156.
13. David Greenberg, "The California Conservatives: Nixon as Populist," in *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), pp. 1-35.

14. Sarah Igo, "Polling the Average Populace," in *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 103-149.
15. Theodore H. White, "Round Two: The Television Debates," in *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Atheneum House, 1961), pp. 279-295.
16. Dan T. Carter, "Stand Up For America" and "Nixon, Wallace, and the Southernization of American Politics," in *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, second edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1995, 2000), pp. 294-370
17. Kevin Phillips, "The Future of American Politics," in *The Emerging Republican Majority* (originally published 1969) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 539-556.
18. Timothy Crouse, "On the Bus," and "Coming to Power," in *The Boys on the Bus* (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 3-46.
19. Hunter S. Thompson, "September," from *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973), pp. 370-389.
20. Matt Bai, "'I Do Not Think That is a Fair Question,'" from *All the Truth is Out: The Week Politics Went Tabloid* (New York: Knopf, 2014), pp. 118-162.
21. William Galston and Elaine Ciulla Kamarck, "The Politics of Evasion: Democrats and the Presidency," Working Paper, Progressive Policy Institute, September 1989.