In this course we will examine the American presidential election process in both historical and procedural perspective. How are presidential elections conducted? We will examine the process from early fundraising, to the primaries and caucuses of the nomination phase, to the general election. We will look at past contests in the “modern” era with an eye toward what has changed and why. How do recent contests compare to past election years? Through readings, discussions, and multimedia we will examine both the past and current state of affairs of the American presidential election process and ask whether the process works well or is in need of reform.

**Online Class**

**Instructor:** Artemus Ward  
**E-mail:** aeward@niu.edu – Best way to reach me.  
**NIU Office:** Zulauf Hall 405  
**Office Hours:** M W 11am-noon; 1pm-2pm and by appointment.

**Required Texts:**


Recommended (for your interest and enjoyment only):


Required Lectures:

There are a number of PowerPoint lectures that are required at various times over the course of the semester. The topics will vary but will be related to aspects of the American presidential election process as well as specific elections. These lectures are required material and there will be midterm and final exam questions based on them.

Required Films:

**Chicago 10** (2007). In this documentary about the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and subsequent trial of protesters charged with conspiracy to riot, writer/director Brett Morgan used actual courtroom transcripts to create animated dramatizations of the trial of the Chicago 10, and added archival footage and interviews to produce a multi-textured film that reveals what happened when politics went very wrong. 110 minutes

**Journeys with George** (2002). NBC News producer Alexandra Pelosi, assigned to cover George W. Bush's run for the Presidency in 2000, carried a small video camera with which she recorded events along the way. Bush is well aware of Pelosi's project, frequently mugging for the camera, sometimes turning it on her, teasing her about her relationship with another reporter. Despite early setbacks in New Hampshire and Michigan, Bush is able to overtake his chief rival, Senator John McCain (R, AZ), who eventually drops out of the race and throws his support to Bush. Pelosi also records the thoughts of several colleagues, including reporters from The Financial Times of London, Newsweek, and two journalists from The Houston Chronicle and The Dallas Morning News who have already covered Bush as governor of Texas. Pelosi occasionally talks about her own ambivalent attitude toward politics (her mother, Nancy Pelosi, is a Democratic
congresswoman from California), the media circus that accompanies any campaign in the television era, and life as a single woman in her late twenties with no romantic prospects. 79 minutes.

**Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election** (2002). Independent filmmakers Richard Ray Pérez and Joan Sekler direct the political documentary Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election. Narrated by Peter Coyote, this 50-minute film examines the controversial occurrences in Florida during the 2000 presidential election leading up to the eventual administration of George W. Bush. The filmmakers examine what went wrong before, during, and after the disputed election recounting, and the actions of the Supreme Court. 50 minutes.

**Stealing America: Vote by Vote** (2008). Filmmaker Dorothy Fadiman meticulously documents the systematic 'theft' of votes over the past decade by interviewing completely credible eye witnesses to outright election fraud and unacceptable disruptions in security measures, including incidents in Ohio and Florida, considered presidential election swing states. 90 minutes

**Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story** (2008). Stefan Forbes’ documentary profiles popular political insider Lee Atwater, who managed three Republican presidential campaigns, consistently introducing false information about the opposition. Atwater, who thought of politics as war, is considered the godfather of modern negative campaigning. He wrote the primer on practices still in play today. 86 minutes.

**Recommended Films:**

**Primary** (1960). One of the best campaign films, Drew Associates’ Primary, was present at the birth of American direct cinema documentaries. Freed from the bounds of tethered camera and sound device with the newly invented sync sound Nagra tape recorder, Drew and his band of young, soon-to-be-legendary
cameramen—Albert Maysles, DA Pennebaker and Richard Leacock—got unprecedented access to Senators John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey, crisscrossing wintry Wisconsin in search of Democratic primary votes in 1960. 60 minutes. 120 minutes.

*So You Want to be President* (1984). In 1984, Senator Gary Hart was the long-shot, youthful challenger to the Democratic establishment. Longtime Washington, DC filmmaker Sherry Jones provides a start-to-finish, seemingly all-access pass to his insurgent presidential campaign. Hart makes his own calls, packs his own bags, and goes door-to-door. Before his early upsets of Walter Mondale, he's virtually ignored. Then he's swept up and ultimately flattened by the media and the expectations game. 120 minutes.

*The War Room* (1993). A look inside the 1992 presidential race, D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hedgus' documentary The War Room explores the backstage side of national politics by examining the day-to-day operations of Bill Clinton's campaign staff. 96 minutes.

*By the People: The Election of Barack Obama* (2009). A year before Barack Obama announced his candidacy for the presidency on Feb. 10, 2007, filmmakers Amy Rice and Alicia Sams began to roll cameras on the young senator. Over the next 19 months, they found themselves travelling all across the country, chronicling the daily ups and downs of the campaign trail as experienced by Obama, his family, his staff and volunteers. While Obama's meteoric rise to the White House has been well documented in the press, few have witnessed the behind-the-scenes story of the passionate campaigners who helped a young African-American freshman senator attain the nation's highest office. 116 minutes.

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**Course Requirements:**

**On-Line Participation**

You are required to go on-line each week through Blackboard, and read the messages posted to the discussion board. You are also required to post in 6 different weeks of the course. Hence, making a post every other week will suffice. In these weeks you should post at least one (and not more than two) messages of your own, either responding to someone or making your own thread, about that week's course material and/or current events that relate to the course. Do this by Sunday night at the end of each week. The participation grade will be calculated by averaging the % of quality posts you make (out of 6 weeks) with the % of posts that you read. The final participation grade will be posted at the end of the course.
Midterm Exam

There will be one midterm exam. It will be an objective test consisting of multiple choice and true/false questions about the course material covered to that point: readings, lectures, and films. There will be 25 questions worth 4 points each for a total of 100 points. You will have 30 minutes maximum to complete the exam once you start. It will be available through Blackboard for a 24-hour period. Make sure you use a reliable computer to take the exam as it cannot be made up under any circumstances.

Research Paper

The research paper requires you to choose one campaign of an American presidential candidate and explain why they won or lost. It can be either a candidate for a party nomination or a candidate for a general election. Make your selection by going to the Discussions section of Blackboard and post the campaign of the candidate that you have chosen to research – for example: 1952 Adlai Stevenson. Each student must choose a DIFFERENT campaign. Therefore, candidates will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. The first person to post that they have chosen the X campaign for Y candidate, gets to research that candidate’s specific campaign. Be sure to check the discussion board to ensure that your choice is not already taken. Note: if a second student turns in a research paper that another student was the first to sign up for, the second student’s paper can earn no higher than a C. Your paper should be structured in the following way:

- **Introduction** – In 1-2 paragraphs explain why the candidate won or lost. State your argument and briefly explain your reasons/evidence. Tell the reader what your paper will show.
- **Biographical sketch** – In 1-2 paragraphs discuss the candidate’s place of birth, childhood, education, and pre-presidential candidacy career.
- **Nomination/General Election** – This will comprise the body of the paper. If the candidate lost or won during the nomination phase, discuss the race for the party nomination including opponents, fundraising, staff, advertising, debates, primaries won/lost, delegate counts at the convention, and convention speech, among other things. For candidates who lost or won at the general election stage, include some brief information on the nomination phase (1-page or so) but focus instead on the post-convention campaign including fundraising, advertising, opponent, issues, and debates. Include electoral and popular vote totals and ideally a map or table that shows states won/lost.
- **Conclusion** – What have we learned from this candidate’s campaign? What could the candidate have done differently in order to win or what was key to their victory? Did subsequent campaigns learn from this campaign’s mistakes or successes?
- **Bibliography** – Be sure to include a list of all material cited in your paper,
with proper citation format.

Your paper must adhere to the following requirements:

a. The paper must be 5-6 pages long and contain at least four different sources such as books or articles that relate to your topic. These sources can be on-line and can be suggested sources linked from the syllabus and/or sources you locate on your own. They must be discussed and cited in your essay and also listed in your bibliography. While you may use any book or article, in order to earn an “A” on the paper all four sources must be scholarly books or articles in academic journals. Toward this end I strongly recommend using JSTOR or another scholarly database to find articles in political science and other related areas. Papers that rely on popular sources such as newspaper articles and websites can only earn a “B” at best. Papers that rely on general webpages such as Wikipedia can only earn a “C” at best. Note: course lectures and the required books and readings for the course do NOT count as a source toward this requirement but can certainly be consulted and cited where appropriate.

b. As with all papers, the paper for this class must be type-written or word-processed, double-spaced, with normal fonts (usually 12 pt.) and margins (at most one inch all around). Make sure that you properly attribute and cite whenever you use information from a source such as a book, article, webpage, or film. Your paper must contain citations. You may use any accepted citation format such a within-text-cites, footnotes, or endnotes. Your paper must include a works cited/references/bibliography at the end of your essay. You must use an accepted bibliographic style. Consult a resource such as the Chicago Style manual or similar work if you are unsure of proper citation/bibliographic formats. This is particularly crucial for internet sources. Simply providing the web address (URL) is not sufficient.

c. Before you start writing this or any essay, ask yourself: What is my overall argument/thesis? Am I supporting my position with reasons and/or evidence? Am I structuring my discussion so that it is as clear and comprehensive as it can be? Have I provided examples and explanations for each argument that I advance? What are the possible counter-arguments that my critics might bring up and how would I respond to those criticisms?

d. In grading your essays I will consider whether you have (a) developed a clear and thoughtful thesis, (b) supported your thesis with a well-reasoned and well-organized discussion, (c) taken into account opposing points of view, (d) demonstrated your familiarity with course materials, and (e) followed the paper requirements including length, sources, and the rules of proper grammar, spelling, and citation/bibliographic format. Note: JSTOR is not a source and should not be cited in your bibliography. It is a highly recommended search engine which allows you to locate specific
You must submit your papers through SafeAssign on Blackboard.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be the same format as the midterm except that it will contain material only covered AFTER the midterm.

**Grading System:**

Final grades will be determined by the following scale:

- 94-100 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 70-74 = C
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Course Policies:**
1. Extracurricular Activities – It is your responsibility to notify me in advance of any activities that will disrupt your course participation. If your activities make it impossible for you to fully participate in this course, you should consider withdrawing.

2. Late Work – Anything turned in late will be marked down one-third grade for every day it is overdue. Exceptions are made only in the most extraordinary circumstances and I will require some sort of documentation to make any accommodation.

3. Cheating and Plagiarism – PLAGIARISM, SIMPLY DEFINED, IS TAKING SOMEONE ELSE’S WORDS OR IDEAS AND REPRESENTING THEM AS BEING YOUR OWN. It is specifically prohibited by University regulations, which state:

   Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

   A faculty member has original jurisdiction over any instances of academic misconduct that occur in a course which the faculty member is teaching. The student shall be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the department chair. If the facts of the incident are not disputed by the student, the faculty member may elect to resolve the matter at that level by levying a sanction no greater than an F for that course. The faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct shall receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating final disposition of the case, which will be placed in the student’s judicial file. In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed by the student or if the faculty member feels a sanction greater than an F in the course is appropriate (such as repeated offenses or flagrant violations), the faculty member shall refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct making use of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report. Additional sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the University Judicial System. With regards to finding the student either responsible or not responsible for his or her action, the ruling of the Judicial Hearing Board shall be binding. In cases where there is either a finding of responsibility or an admission of responsibility by the student, any recommendations by the hearing board regarding the course grade are non-binding on the instructor, who remains solely responsible for assigning a course grade, consistent with the policies set forth in the course syllabus.

4. Undergraduate Writing Awards – The Department of Political Science will recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Winners are expected to attend the Department’s spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and $50.00. Papers, which can be submitted by students or faculty, must be supplied in triplicate to a department secretary by the end of February. All copies should have two cover pages – one with the student’s name and one without the student’s name. Only papers written in the previous calendar can be considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year’s competition even if the student has graduated.
5. Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities – Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center. Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center if they have not done so already. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.

6. Department of Political Science Web Site – Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to http://polisci.niu.edu.

Course Calendar:

Week 3

- Reading: Presidential Campaigns. Ch.42-46.

Week 4

- Lecture: Political Parties

Week 5

- Lecture: Presidential Nomination Process

Week 6

- Lecture: Financing Presidential Campaigns
Week 7

- Lecture: The Electoral College – The Undemocratic Way America Elects its President

Week 8

- Reading: Presidential Campaigns. Ch. 47.

**The Midterm exam will be available on-line for a 24-hour period beginning on Wed Oct. 16 at 6pm.**

Week 9

- Reading: Presidential Campaigns. Ch. 48-50.

Week 10

- Lecture: 1992 Presidential Election
- Reading: Presidential Campaigns. Ch. 51-53
- Recommended Film: The War Room (1993), 96 min. Available on Hulu Plus if you are a member or you want a free trial: [http://www.hulu.com/watch/354336](http://www.hulu.com/watch/354336)

Week 11
• Film: *Journeys with George* (2002), 79 min. Youtube:
  2. Part 2 [http://youtu.be/l6QqFm9jk1A](http://youtu.be/l6QqFm9jk1A)
  3. Part 3 [http://youtu.be/-DL5V8mZMJK](http://youtu.be/-DL5V8mZMJK)

• Lecture: 2000 Presidential Election
• Reading: *Presidential Campaigns*: Ch.54

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**Week 12**

• Lecture: 2004 Presidential Election

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**Week 13**

• Lecture: 2008 Presidential Election
• Film: *Stealing America: Vote by Vote* (2008), 90 min. [http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/](http://www.stealingamericathemovie.org/)

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**Week 14 Thanksgiving Break**

• No Class.

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**Week 15**

• Lecture: 2012 Presidential Election
• Film: PBS’s Frontline: *The Choice 2012*, 108 min. Youtube: [http://youtu.be/7MXOr3KELqE](http://youtu.be/7MXOr3KELqE)
  o Reading: *Presidential Campaigns*: Postscript

*Final papers due Wed Dec 4. Upload to SafeAssign.*

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**Week 16**
Final exam will be available on-line for a 24-hour period beginning on Tuesday December 10 at 6:00pm.