

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or any other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first-year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	FSEM 100 – RELEVANT SUFFIX		
COURSE TITLE:	U.S. CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS		
SUBMITTED BY:	Rosalyn Cooperman, Poli Sci	DATE:	11 March 2016
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one- to two-sentence description of this course. The description will be entered in Banner and will also be used in other publications about the first-year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This course examines the electoral process in contemporary American politics. The electoral process is how we carry out a fundamental aspect of republican democracy – allowing citizens to select representatives of the people to make decisions on our behalf. This course will introduce students to the basic rules and structure of the American electoral system of presidential and congressional elections. Students will evaluate the strategic decisions of candidates, political parties, the media, and organized interests. And, students will consider the decisions of voters and to what extent their decisions are influenced by campaigns.

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM’s basic components, explaining *specifically* how it will meet the common FSEM student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and arguing why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement. Please point to specific readings, assignments, and exercises and show how they will meet the learning outcomes.

This course meets, if not exceeds, the FSEM’s basic components as it requires students to undertake research on the U.S. electoral process with the most recent presidential and congressional elections as the frame of reference. Students will read broadly about the US electoral process from scholarly articles, news articles, and blog posts from journalists and political scientists. The assignments for the course will also require students to undertake original research, develop, edit, and revise their writing, and, gain confidence and practice in refining oral communication skills. Students will complete these assignments at times by themselves and at other times within a small group setting. The attached syllabus provides more information about the nature of assignments and required work for the course.

The topic of US campaigns and elections lends itself easily to an FSEM course. The topic of elections is highly exploratory given all of its moving parts. Voters, candidates, political parties, organized interests, and the media all interact with one another in ways that are constantly undergoing change even as many of fundamental rules of the electoral process remain the same. For example, candidates have always run under party labels but the policy stances embraced by parties and candidates has changed (and continues to do so) over time. Similarly, the advent of social media and creation of multiple media outlets and platforms has fundamentally changed how candidates communicate with voters and how voters receive and absorb messages. We will explore these and many other developments in the campaigns and elections FSEM.

Finally, the inclusion of a campaigns and elections course in the FSEM offerings will be a welcome addition for first semester students. UMW is located between our state capital and our nation’s capital; our students have local and national politics in their back yards. Many of their parents work within the satellite of government which gives students a working knowledge of our political system and how it operates. This course will provide interested students with an opportunity to deepen their knowledge about the US electoral process and critically evaluate their own preferences regarding the positions they hold, the candidates they prefer, and how our electoral democracy functions, more broadly.

SYLLABUS. *Attach a complete course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to Will Mackintosh (wmackint@umw.edu) by 5 PM on September 25, 2014. All submissions **must be in electronic form.**

U.S. Campaigns and Elections
FSEMxxxx, Fall Semester 2016, CRN xxxx
Monroe xxx, 9-9:50am, MWF

Professor Rosalyn Cooperman
Monroe 339
Office Phone: 540.654.1513

Office Hours: TBD
& by appointment
Email: rcooperm@umw.edu

Course Goals and Objectives

This course examines the electoral process in contemporary American politics. This process is how we carry out arguably the most fundamental aspect of our democracy: allowing citizens to choose their representatives. In this course we will focus on what political science can tell us about electoral politics. The course has four learning objectives. Students will:

- understand and evaluate the basic rules and structure of the American electoral system;
- analyze the strategic decisions of candidates, political parties, the media, and interest group, and then apply your understanding to advise a specific candidate;
- consider the decisions of voters, and whether those decisions are affected by campaigns; and,
- know more about campaigns and elections than the vast majority of pundits who frequently but unfortunately open their mouths on cable news.

Additionally, the course has goals that are a broader part of students' first year experience that are outlined below.

First Year Seminar goals

- Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments.
- Improve development and organization of written arguments.
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process.
- Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)

There are University-mandated modules on research, speaking, and writing that are required of all FSEM students. Links to these modules will be made available on Canvas and on the course website. As a participant in this course, the University requires you complete certain tasks, including watching a brief video presentation that speaks to certain skills and competencies you should develop, followed by a short quiz to assess retention of central ideas. For the purposes of this course these modules are ungraded, however, successful completion of all the modules will result in the assignment of extra credit points in calculating a student's final course grade. These research modules will be posted to Canvas with deadlines specified in the syllabus.

Required Materials

We will read the following two books that are available for purchase at the UMW Bookstore. Alternatively, there is at least one copy of each of the assigned texts on reserve at the Simpson Library.

Issenberg, Sasha. 2013. **The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns**. New York: Broadway Books.

Sides, John and Lynn Vavreck. 2013. **The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election.** Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

All other readings are available on Canvas or by direct weblink as indicated in the syllabus. Students are also expected to follow the media coverage of the 2016 presidential and congressional elections. There will be some time allocated each class period for questions and comments about campaign news. Your assignments will also require you to read regular news coverage regarding the campaigns. Any of the national news outlets will cover the basics of the campaign; more sophisticated and thoughtful analysis of the campaigns may be found on websites for Politico or *National Journal*.

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation: This course is a seminar and *every* class member is expected to participate actively; frequent, thoughtful student participation is a central requirement. Students should bring the assigned reading to class for ease of reference in discussion. Most class discussions will be led by students, so it is essential that students complete the assigned reading before each class meeting. The classroom is a forum for inquiry and the exchange of different ideas. Students are not monolithic in their beliefs; I expect that students will bring a range of ideas to class discussion. I also expect that different viewpoints will be aired in a thoughtful and civil manner. If any student feels they cannot express their opinions freely or that they are not being treated respectfully they should see me immediately. Any behavior that prevents students from participating actively, either listening or contributing to class discussion, will have a strong, negative impact on a student's overall course grade. Students with more than 2 unexcused absences will see their *final* course grade adjusted downward. Class participation is worth **10 percent** of students' final course grades.

2. Critical analysis posts: Students will be required to participate in events related to the campaigns and provide analysis of the elections and its various parts. Students will have multiple opportunities to meet this requirement by completing activities like attending and writing about a candidate's debate, debate watch party, or rally. Students will also be required to critically analyze the 2016 presidential campaign with posts on the course blog page. Students will write a minimum of **FIVE posts** but may opt to write more to boost their grade. Students must complete **at least TWO** posts before the midterm (**DATE**) and **THREE** after the midterm. Each reading response should be about 250 – 300 words (typed, proofread, edited, and spellchecked, normal margins and font) and should be posted to Canvas **by or before the start** of class. Late responses will not be accepted. More information about these posts will be provided at the start of the semester. Critical analysis posts are worth **10 percent** of students' final course grades.

3. Semester long research project: The main project for this course requires students to select a U.S. Senate candidate and compile a portfolio on the candidate and his or her contest. By the end of the semester students will have a detailed understanding of U.S. Senate campaigns and how congressional campaigns intersect with the campaign for president. Additional information for each assignment will be provided at the start of the semester. Students *may not* write on the same Senate candidate or contest; signups are on a first come, first serve basis. Your choice must be approved by me. Together, the research project is worth **80 percent** of students' final course grade. On the day an assignment is due the entire class period will be devoted to student presentations on the given assignment followed by a discussion of relevant trends and themes related to each assignment. The in-class presentations do not carry a specific grade; however, an outstanding presentation will **raise the memo grade by 1/3 letter grade** just as a poorly executed presentation (or non-presentation) will **lower the memo grade by 1/3 letter grade**. Each portion of the research project, including due dates, is described below:

a. Profile of U.S. Senate candidate, 15 percent of course grade, **due DATE**

Students will write a 1000-1250 word profile of his/her U.S. Senate candidate. The profile will include an assessment of the candidate including any previous political experience as well as a discussion of the electoral context of the race within the state that will have a profound effect on the outcome of the contest. Along with the profile, students must hand in a bibliography that includes a complete citation (author, date of publication, title of

book or article, journal title or publisher) for each source. Detailed information about this assignment will be provided to students at the start of the semester. Students will present their US Senate candidate profiles in class on the due date of the assignment.

b. Campaign finance memo of U.S. Senate candidate, 15 percent of course grade, **due DATE**

Students will write a 1000-1250 word memo about his/her U.S. Senate candidate and their campaign finances. The profile will include a detailed analysis of where and from whom the candidate is raising funds and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's fundraising profile. Students must access the candidate's campaign finance reports to complete this assignment, either by accessing reports directly through the campaign finance portal for candidates and PACs at the Federal Elections Commission (www.fec.gov), or via The Center for Responsive Politics (www.openscreets.org). Detailed information about this assignment will be provided to students at the start of the semester. Students will present their campaign finance profiles in class on the due date of the assignment.

c. Strategic memo for U.S. Senate candidate, 15 percent of course grade, **due DATE**

Students will write a 1000-1250 word memo about strategies the U.S. Senate candidate should undertake to win his or her contest. This assessment will consider the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, campaign finance profile, electoral dynamics of the state and opposition candidate. Detailed information about this assignment will be provided to students at the start of the semester. Students will present their strategic memos in class on the due date of the assignment.

d. Campaign ad for U.S. Senate candidate, 15 percent of course grade, **due DATE**

Students will create a campaign ad (between 90 to 120 seconds, max) for the U.S. Senate candidate that will be recorded and presented to the class. The ad may be a positive ad in support of the candidate or a negative ad in opposition to the candidate's opponent. The campaign ad must be content based with a verifiable message. Students will work with the UMW Speaking Center to create a campaign ad. Detailed information about this assignment will be provided to students at the start of the semester. Students will present their ads in class on the due date of the assignment.

e. Post-election analysis of the U.S. Senate candidate's campaign, 20 percent of course grade, **DUE DATES**

Students will write a 1250-1500 word memo that provides a critical analysis of the outcome of the U.S. Senate candidate's campaign. Based on the election outcome, students should assess the relevant factors that led to the campaign victory or loss. Detailed information about this assignment will be provided to students at the start of the semester. This paper will have two due dates: students **must** hand in a draft of this paper for an initial grade and then hand in a revised version for a revised grade. Students will present their post-election analysis in class on the due date of the assignment.

Recap of semester long research project required assignments and their value:

1. Candidate profile memo, 15 percent
2. Campaign finance memo, 15 percent
3. Strategic memo, 15 percent
4. Candidate campaign ad, 15 percent
5. Post-election analysis, 20 percent

I do not tolerate late work nor do I grant extensions on assignments unless we miss class due to the University's closure. All work is due at the **start** of class on the assigned due date. Students will lose a **full letter grade** for each day the assignment is handed in late (e.g., an assignment due Weds handed in via email on Thursday loses a full letter grade (so B to C for one day; B to D for two days). And, any assignments handed in more than 48 hours late will receive a **zero**. Students who fail to hand in an assignment will also receive a **zero**.

For each of the written memos *save for the post-election analysis where a revision is required* students will have the opportunity to revise their memo after receiving an initial grade and feedback on their writing. Revisions are *optional, not mandatory*. Any revisions must be handed back to Professor Cooperman within **1 week** of receiving the initial grade. I will not accept revisions for any memo once the one week grading window has passed – no exceptions. For any memo revision students must provide the original memo and a revised memo. Students who miss the initial assignment will not be able to hand in a “revised” memo. A revised memo will be weighted more heavily. Your overall grade on a revised memo will be comprised of your grade on the first draft (40%) and the final draft (60%).

The semester long research project is much more structured than many of you will have here at UMW but the goal of all FSEMs, and this course in particular, is to help students get their research, writing, and speaking sea legs. Regardless of major, your academic experience in college will be much more enjoyable and successful if you understand how to research, write, and speak well.

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Resources (ODR) has been designated by the University as the primary office to assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the ODR and require accommodations for this class, please come see me as soon as possible and definitely before the first exam. Any information you share with me is strictly confidential.

If you have not made contact with ODR and have reasonable accommodation needs (note-taking assistance, extended time for exams) I will be happy to refer you. The ODR will require appropriate documentation of disability.

Honor Code

Mary Washington’s Honor Code governs all work in this course. Students’ signatures on any and all coursework convey a pledge of neither giving nor receiving aid on work. I take the Honor Code seriously and will pursue action against any student who violates its tenets. Students having questions regarding the application of the Honor Code to a particular assignment should consult with me.

FSEM Basis for Grades and Grading Rationale

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| 1. Class participation – 10 percent | 2. Critical analysis posts – 10 percent |
| 3. Candidate profile – 15 percent | 4. Campaign finance memo – 15 percent |
| 5. Strategic memo – 15 percent | 6. Campaign ad – 15 percent |
| 7. Post-election analysis memo – 20 percent | |

University of Mary Washington uses the following grading system:

A	Unusual Excellence	(93 or higher = A; 90 – 92 = A-)
B	Work Distinctly Above Average	(87 – 89 = B+; 83 – 86 = B; 80 – 82 = B-)
C	Work of Average/Medium Quality	(77 – 79 = C+; 73 – 76 = C; 70 – 72 = C-)
D	Work of Below Average Quality	(67 – 69 = D+; 60 – 66 = D)
F	Failure/No Credit	(0 – 59 = F)

Students who receive a cumulative grade of **73 or below** on assignments before the midterm will be judged **unsatisfactory** on the midterm evaluation.

Week One: Introduction, Course Overview

No class Friday, 2 September – Cooperman to academic conference

Gelman, Andrew, and John Sides. 2009. “Stories and Stats: The Truth about Obama’s Victory Wasn’t in the Papers.” *Boston Review* (September/October). See also the responses to our article and our replies.

http://bostonreview.net/BR34.5/ndf_election.php.

The U.S. Constitution (<http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html>): - Article I, Sections 1-3 - Article II, Section 1 - amendments: 1st, 12th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th

Week Two: The American Electoral System

No class Monday, 5 September – Labor Day

Issenberg – Prologue, Chap. 1

McDonald, Michael P., and John Samples. 2006. “The Marketplace of Democracy: Normative and Empirical Issues.” In Michael P. McDonald and John Samples (eds.), *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics*. Washington DC: Brookings Press. pp. 1-24.

On-line readings TBD

Week Three: Modern Campaign Strategy, Part 1 (The Decision to Run)

Library Research Session with Peter Catlin

Candidate Profile Due

Lawless, Jennifer and Richard L. Fox. 2012. “Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics.” Women & Politics Institute: American University. **Canvas**, saved as “Men Rule.”

Maisel, L. Sandy. 1982. *From Obscurity to Oblivion: Running in the Congressional Primary*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. Chapter 2 (“The Decision to Run”).

Institute of Politics. 2009. *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at 2008*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 1 (“The Decision to Run for President”).

Week Four: Modern Campaign Strategy, Part 2 (Agendas, Positions, and Message Development)

Issenberg – Chaps. 2-3

Sides and Vavreck – Chaps. 1-2

Geer, John G. 2006. *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (“The Need for Negativity” and “Assessing Negativity”).

Week Five: Modern Campaign Strategy, Part 3 (Choosing and Mobilizing Voters)

Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. New York: Scott, Foresman, & Co. Chapter 1 (“Perceptions of the Constituency”).

Gernter, Jon. 2004. “The Very, Very Personal Is the Political.” *New York Times Magazine*. 15 February. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/15/magazine/15VOTERS.html>.

Bai, Matt. 2004. "The Multilevel Marketing of the President." *New York Times Magazine*. 25 April.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/25/magazine/25GROUNDWAR.html>.

Exley, Zack. 2008. "The New Organizers: What's Really Behind Obama's Ground Game."
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html.

Week Six: Financing Campaigns

Campaign Finance Memo Due

For a sense of how much money is raised and spent, explore these data from the 2012 presidential campaign:
<http://www.opensecrets.org/pres12/index.php>

Corrado, Anthony. 2005. "Money and Politics: A History of Federal Campaign Finance Law." In Anthony Corrado, Thomas E. Mann, Daniel R. Ortiz, and Trevor Potter (eds.), *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*. Washington DC: Brookings Press.

The updated limits on contributions are at the Federal Elections Commission's website:
[http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_general.shtml#How much can I contribute](http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_general.shtml#How_much_can_I_contribute).

Students should understand the basic facts of the case and the Court's decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. See SCOTUSblog's case page for *Citizens United*:

<http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/citizens-united-v-federal-election-commission/>

Week Seven: Relevant Political Actors (Parties, Interest Groups, and Elites)

Franz, Michael M. 2008. *Choices and Changes: Interest Groups in the Electoral Process*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapters 3, 6, and 8.

McGinnis, Joe. [1969] 1988. *The Selling of the President*. New York: Penguin. Chapters 1-2.

Johnson, Dennis W. 2001. *No Place for Amateurs*. New York: Routledge. Pg. 3-13.

Week Eight: The Media

No class Monday, 17 October – UMW Fall Break

Crouse, Timothy. 1973. *The Boys on the Bus*. New York: Random House. Chapter 1 ("On the Bus").

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Paul Waldman. 2003. *The Press Effect*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 2 and 3 ("The Press as Amateur Psychologist, Part I and Part II").

Hayes, Danny. 2009. "Has Television Personalized Voting Behavior?" *Political Behavior* 31: 231-60.
http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/dwhayes/personalization_PB.pdf.

On-line readings TBD

Week Nine: Congressional Campaigns

Strategic Memos Due

Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1996. *Senators on the Campaign Trail*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press. Chapter 3 ("Primary Challenger Campaigns").

Jacobson, Gary C. 2005. "Modern Campaigns and Representation." In *The Legislative Branch*, Ed. Paul J. Quirk and Sarah A. Binder. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

On-line readings TBD

Week Ten: Presidential Campaigns, Part One

Shaw, Daron R. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3 and 4.

Issenberg, Chaps TBD

Sides and Vavreck, Chaps TBD

Week Eleven: Presidential Campaigns, Part Two

Campaign Ad Due

Issenberg, Chaps TBD

Sides and Vavreck, Chaps TBD

General discussion of 2016 presidential and congressional elections

Week Twelve: Presidential Campaigns, Part Three

Gelman, Andrew, and Gary King. 1993. "Why Are Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes Are so Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23(4): 409-51.

Stimson, James. 2004. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4 ("The Great Horse Race").

CAWP material on gender based differences in voter turnout

Fiske, Susan T., Hilary B. Bergsieker, Ann Marie Russell, and Lyle Williams. 2009. "Images of Black Americans: Then, "Them," and Now, "Obama!" *Du Bois Review* 6(1): 83-101.

Week Thirteen: Presidential Campaigns, Part Four

Weds, 23 Nov & Fri, 25 Nov – UMW Thanksgiving Break

Week Fourteen: Campaign Outcomes – Now What?

Post-Election Analysis Memo Due

On-line readings TBD

Week Fifteen: Do Campaigns Matter?

Campbell, James E. 2001. "When Have Presidential Campaigns Decided Election Outcomes?" *American Politics Research* 29(5): 437-460.

Bartels, Larry M., et al. 2000. "Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence

On-line readings TBD

Week Sixteen: No final exam – thanks for a wonderful semester of learning