

This course is an examination of presidential nominations and elections, with a focus on the 2008 election. Topics include voter decision making, media coverage, campaign finance, delegate selection rules, the Electoral College, and kindred concerns.

Each of the three analytical, cumulative exams, the research paper assignments, and class participation (in part, other assignments and (un)scheduled quizzes on the assigned reading to reward those who do and understand the readings) constitutes roughly 20 percent of your course grade.

Ultimately your grade turns on my impression of how well you have done in this course. What impresses me? Think of this course as your job and approach it with professionalism. Take this course seriously and let me know that. How? Attend class; be prepared for class—read the assignments for understanding, be ready to ask and answer questions, take an informed role in discussions; arrive early to class; remain for the entire class; be attentive in class without distracting me or your classmates with cell phones, text messages, side conversations, bathroom trips or any other reason for coming-and-going, and so forth; take exams when scheduled and complete assignments when due; demonstrate your understanding on the exams, quizzes, and research paper assignments.

After three unexcused absences I drop you from the course. An excused absence is almost exclusively restricted to religious reasons, certain university activities, documented medical conditions, or documented family emergencies. Absences for religious reasons or for university extracurricular activities necessitate communication with me in advance. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, see me in advance. Each of you must meet with me for 15 minutes in the first weeks of the semester. Sign up for an appointment time during the first day in class. Be punctual.

All readings should be on reserve in Fondren. The books ordered through the bookstore include Wayne, *The Road to the White House 2008*, 8th ed (abbreviated W,WH in readings below); Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2004 and 2006 Elections* (AAR); and Wayne, *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?* 3d ed. (W,Any Way?) Also required but not listed below: you are expected to supplement the listed readings with media accounts of the ongoing politics of the 2008 presidential election. Understand that assigned readings listed here for specific pages in Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde include the endnotes (not listed here) associated with those pages. You will be evaluated in part on your knowledge and understanding of the current presidential campaign.

There may be changes in the readings and assignments below. This course requires use of Blackboard at <http://cmsbb.systems.smu.edu/>.

- Th, Aug 23 * Introduction: The '08 Presidential Election: Candidates, Campaign, and Sources
- F, Aug 24 * 9:30-11 am, 2:30-4 pm meetings
- M, Aug 27 * 9:30-11 am, 2:30-3:45 pm meetings
- T, Aug 28 * The '04 Presidential Election: I, AAR, Part 1. '04 Presidential Election, 1-14; AAR, c.1. The Nomination Struggle, 15-33; assignment to be handed in during class: syllabus quiz on Blackboard
- W, Aug 29 * 9:30-11 am, 1:30-3 pm meetings
- Th, Aug 30 * The '04 Presidential Election: II, AAR, c.2. General Election, 34-48; AAR, c.3. Election Results, 49-72; scheduled class quiz on '04 election
- T, Sep 4 * W,WH, c.1. Presidential Selection: A Historical Overview, 1-31
- W, Sep 5 * 9:30-11 am, 2:30-4 pm meetings
- Th, Sep 6 * W,WH, c.2. Campaign Finance, 32-74
- F, Sep 7 * 2:30-4 pm meetings
- M, Sep 10 * 9:30-11 am, 2:30-4 pm meetings
- T, Sep 11 * W,WH, c.4. Party Rules and their Impact: The Legal Environment, 116-136
- Th, Sep 13 * W,WH, c.5. Campaigning for the Nomination, 137-172; W,Any Way?, c.7. The Nomination Process: Whose Is It Anyway?, 162-185
- T, Sep 18 * W,WH, c.6. Spring Interregnum: Consolidating Victory and Posturing for the Election, 173-211
- Th, Sep 20 * W,WH, c.7. Organization, Strategy, and Tactics, 214-253
- T, Sep 25 * Review
- Th, Sep 27 * Exam One**
- T, Oct 2 * Exam 1 review; W,WH, c.8, Media Politics, 254-297; W,Any Way?, c.8. Campaign Communications, 186-212
- Th, Oct 4 * W,WH, c.3. The Political Environment, 75-114
- T, Oct 9 * W,Any Way?, c.2. The Popular Base of American Electoral Politics, 21-49
- Th, Oct 11 * AAR, Part 2. Voting Behavior in the '04 Presidential Election, 73-78; & AAR, c.4. Who Voted?, 79-106; **research paper on assigned topic, 1,000 words**
- T, Oct 16 * AAR, c.5. Social Forces and the Vote, 107-133
- Th, Oct 18 * AAR, c.6. Candidates, Issues, and the Vote, 134-159; AAR, c.7. Presidential Performance and Candidate Choice, 160-181
- T, Oct 23 * AAR, c.8. Party Loyalties, Policy Preferences, and the Vote, 182-206
- Th, Oct 25 * W,Any Way?, c.6. Are Political Parties Still Representative?, 138-161
- T, Oct 30 * W,Any Way?, c.9. Elections and Government, 213-239
- Th, Nov 1 * no class meeting
- T, Nov 6 * Exam Two**
- Th, Nov 8 * Exam 2 review; W,Any Way?, c.1. Democratic Elections: What's the Problem?, 1-20; W,Any Way?, c.3. How Representative Are American Elections?, 50-78
- T, Nov 13 * W,Any Way?, c.4. Has Money Corrupted Our Electoral Process?, 79-107; W,Any Way?, c.5. News Media: Watchdog or Pit Bull?, 108-137
- Th, Nov 15 * W,WH, c.9, Understanding Presidential Elections, 300-342; **research paper on assigned topic, 1,000 words**
- T, Nov 20: No class meeting (Fall Break); Th, Nov 22 * No class meeting (Thanksgiving holidays)
- T, Nov 27 * W,WH, c.10, Reforming the Electoral System, 343-375
- Th, Nov 29 * AAR, Part 4. The '04 and '06 Elections in Perspective, 299-303; and AAR, c.11. The '04 and '06 Elections and the Future of American Politics, 304-324
- T, Dec 4 * Review
- Th, Dec 6 * no class meeting (Thanksgiving holidays makeup class day, follow Monday class schedule)
- W, Dec 12 * Exam Three * 8-9:20 am**