PO 325/IR 302: Campaigns and Elections Around the World

Boston University, Spring 2019

Last revised: September 27, 2019

Professor: Taylor C. Boas
Email: tboas@bu.edu
Office location: 232 Bay State Rd., rm. 311B
Office phone: 617-353-4214
Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11 a.m–12 noon

Lecture location: CAS 227
Lecture time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:10–11 a.m.

1 Course Description

The media lavish vast amounts of attention on electoral campaigns in the United States, but how do these events play out beyond our borders? This course will examine electoral campaigns in comparative perspective, with examples drawn from Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru), Western Europe (France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, U.K.), Eastern Europe (Russia and Ukraine), Asia (Japan and the Philippines), and Africa (Kenya). In the first part of the course, we examine how campaigns change over time, whether they are becoming more professionalized or “Americanized,” and what role international political consultants play in this process. In the second part, we examine how campaigns vary across countries according to party and electoral systems, campaign finance regulations, the prevalence of vote buying, the nature of the mass media, and use of the Internet and social media. The third part of the course examines how campaigns affect voters. Here we will focus on news coverage, television advertising, and get-out-the-vote campaigning. The course will take a multi-media approach to all of these questions, supplementing course readings with documentary films and clips of televised campaign advertising.

I assume that students enrolled in this course have some background in political science, but not necessarily in comparative politics or campaigns. Those who are primarily interested in American politics are as welcome as those who focus on other regions.
2 Requirements

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and participation: 15%
Response paper 1: 15%
Response paper 2: 15%
Group presentation: 10%
Group paper: 15%
Final exam: 30%

Required Readings

For each week of the course, I have assigned about 60–80 pages of readings. Some reading selections are drawn from the following required book, which is available for purchase at the BU Barnes & Noble and is also available online through Mugar Library:


All other readings are available electronically. The easiest way to access these is via an electronic copy of this syllabus (on Blackboard, or at [http://people.bu.edu/tboas/campaigns_syllabus.pdf](http://people.bu.edu/tboas/campaigns_syllabus.pdf)). Click on the hyperlinks in the reading list below. If you are not on campus, you may need to connect via the VPN or enter your BU ID and password. A couple readings are available only through Blackboard; these are noted below.

Response Papers

At the end of each of the first two parts of the course, students are required to write a 5–6 page paper (double spaced) that addresses themes raised in lecture and course readings. I will distribute paper prompts for these papers 2–3 weeks before the due dates listed on the syllabus. Late papers are penalized a third of a letter grade (e.g., B+ to B) per day, including weekends and holidays.

Group Presentation and Paper

The final project for this course will consist of a 15-minute presentation and a 10–12 page paper, both of which will be prepared by groups of 3–4 students working jointly. The same grade will be given to all students in the group. For both the paper and presentation, group members will put themselves in the shoes of a political consulting firm, offering advice to a specific candidate or party in an electoral campaign outside of the U.S. that is either underway at the time of the course or has recently occurred (i.e., during the prior semester). We will discuss this assignment in more detail and choose groups early on so students have plenty of time to prepare, and—for those studying upcoming elections—to follow the campaigns over the course of the semester.
Final Exam

A final exam, covering all of the course material, will be held during the scheduled exam period: Monday, December 16, 9–11 a.m.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work and to accurately and honestly give credit for information, ideas, and words obtained elsewhere. Plagiarism will be dealt with strictly according to the Academic Conduct Code[1] please review the website for examples of what counts as plagiarism so you know how to avoid it. If you have questions or concerns about how to properly cite outside sources, please let me know and I will be happy to assist.

The Internet makes it quite easy, and tempting, to cheat by copying and pasting material that you found online, or by buying a paper that someone else wrote. But it also makes it much easier to get caught. I have caught plagiarizers in the past and am always on the lookout. Don’t do it. You will make the semester much better for both of us.

3 Schedule and Required Readings

Note: Each entry contains a hyperlink to the electronic reading, where available.

3.1 Part I: International Influences and Changing Campaigns

3.1.1 Wednesday, Sept. 4. Americanization, Modernization, and Success Contagion.


3.1.2 Friday, Sept. 6. International Influences on Campaigning.


3.1.3 Monday, Sept. 9. Consultants Abroad: Sawyer-Miller in Chile.


3.1.4 Wednesday, Sept. 11. Consultants Abroad: Sawyer-Miller in Chile, continued.


3.1.5 Friday, Sept. 13. Consultants Abroad: Sawyer-Miller in Peru.


No readings; watch *Our Brand is Crisis* (2005) in class.
3.1.7 Wednesday, Sept. 18. Consultants Abroad: Greenberg Carville Shrum in Bolivia (movie).

No readings; finish watching Our Brand is Crisis (2005) in class.

3.1.8 Friday, Sept. 20. Consultants Abroad: Greenberg Carville Shrum in Bolivia.


3.1.9 Monday, Sept. 23. Consultants Abroad: Americans in Russia.


Michael McFaul, “Time: Scoop or Dupe?” Moscow Times (July 17, 1996).


3.1.10 Wednesday, Sept. 25. Russia’s “Political Technologists.”


Michael McFaul, “Political Charades,” Moscow Times (September 30, 2005).

3.1.11 Friday, Sept. 27. Consultants Abroad: Russians in Ukraine.


3.2 Part II: Cross-National Variation in Campaign Styles

3.2.1 Monday, Sept. 30. The Effects of Party and Electoral Systems.

3.2.2 Wednesday, Oct. 2. Overview of Countries for Group Project.

No readings

3.2.3 Friday, Oct. 4. Campaigns in Sweden and Spain.


3.2.4 Monday, Oct. 7. RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS; Campaigns in Japan.


3.2.5 Wednesday, Oct. 9. Populist Campaigns: Italy.


3.2.6 Tuesday, Oct. 15. Populist Campaigns: Brazil and Peru.


3.2.8 Friday, Oct. 18. Campaign Finance and Corruption: Brazil.


3.2.11 Friday, Oct. 25. Mobilization and Vote Buying: Argentina and the Philippines.


3.2.12 Monday, Oct. 28. Violence as a Campaign Strategy


3.2.14 Friday, Nov. 1. The Mass Media and Elections: Mexico.


Monday, Nov. 4: No class (Professor out of town)

3.2.15 Wednesday, Nov. 6. The Mass Media and Elections: Brazil.


3.2.16 Friday, Nov. 8. New versus Old Media: Brazil and the United Kingdom.


3.3 Part III. How do Campaigns Affect Voters?

3.3.1 Monday, Nov. 11. RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS; Media Effects: Mexico.


3.3.2 Wednesday, Nov. 13. Media Effects: Brazil


3.3.3 Friday, Nov. 15. Media Effects: United Kingdom.


3.3.4 Monday, Nov. 18. Advertising Effects: Mexico and Brazil.


Scott Desposato, “The Impact of Campaign Messages in New Democracies: Results From An Experiment in Brazil,” unpublished manuscript, University of California, San Diego.

3.3.5 Wednesday, Nov. 20. Advertising Effects: Chile.


3.3.6 Friday, Nov. 22. Get-out-the-Vote: United Kingdom.


3.3.7 Monday, Nov. 25. Get-out-the-Vote: Sweden and France


3.4 Part IV. Group Presentations

3.4.1 Monday, Dec. 2. Group presentations

3.4.2 Wednesday, Dec. 4. Group presentations

3.4.3 Friday, Dec. 6. Group presentations

3.4.4 Monday, Dec. 9. Group presentations

3.4.5 Wednesday, Dec. 11. Group presentations / Conclusion; GROUP PAPERS DUE IN CLASS

3.5 Monday, Dec. 16, 9–11 a.m.: Final Exam