

STETSON UNIVERSITY
Program in American Studies and Department of History

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Office Hours: MW (most F) 1-2:30, TuTh 11:30-12:30, and most afternoons 2:30-5
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AMST/HIST 363J/JS (CRN#: 5482)
Fall 2012
TuTh 10-11:15
Sampson 223

Political Campaigns and Cultural Ideologies in Recent US History, 1960-Present

an American Studies and History course, with Journalism Attribution, and a Social Justice Junior Seminar

Course Description

This course will explore the issues, ideologies, and history surrounding the year 2012 elections, especially on the national scene. Our inquiries will emphasize how the United States has arrived at its current political climate and will focus on elections as ways for citizens to decide on—or become distracted from—current public questions. I have become particularly fascinated with elections because they sharply exhibit the ideological commitments of an American populace thoroughly polarized, in policy positions and values orientations. The election is a window into the culture; and understanding the culture will give a better grasp of the politics of elections. As a Journalism Attribution course, we will explore how the news of the campaigns is communicated in the mass media; in the language of American Studies and History, the writings of contemporary journalism will serve as our primary-source course texts for study of contemporary history.

Please fill out a card so I can begin to get to know your academic interests right away.

Course Requirements and Grading

-Attendance in class, involvement in discussions, EXPs, 3 Events, and 10 one-page Essays	} }	20% of final grade
-One Research Project including preparatory work		20%
-Two Mid-Term Exams		20% each
-Final exam		20%

Extra Credit

- Attend campus, community, and campaign events, write a journal-type entry, and report your experiences to class; for example, attend Values Day events, September 25.
- Arrange to make a class presentation on your research report, timed for connection to a day's topic, or at end of semester.
- Write an article for publication in a local outlet (The Reporter, The Beacon, ...) or further afield, geographically or digitally: go beyond reading other people's journalism by producing your own! See my publications for examples of public intellectual writing (citizen response to cultural and political issues using academic insight to shed light on public questions); lists of publications available on the American Studies web page, under Faculty, then to Resume/Vita, pp. 7-9 (or go directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american/media/vital.doc>), and paper copies available in 218 Sampson.

The Academic Success Center provides academic and disability resources for all Stetson University students. Students who anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of a course should meet with the course instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Academic Success Center, Stacy Collins, scollin1@stetson.edu, 822-7127; 209 E. Bert Fish Drive (behind Pi Phi sorority house); www.stetson.edu/asc. The student, course instructor, and the ASC will plan how best to coordinate accommodations.

I assume academic honesty. Anything less will be taken seriously at the department and university levels. Your work for this class must be your own, with quotations and references to the work of others clearly cited. On this topic and for ways to improve writing, you have resources on the American Studies web page and at www.stetson.edu/honorsystem; the Writing Center (Maggie Herb, 220 Flagler, 822-7714, mherb@stetson.edu; writinglab.stetson.edu); the Writing Program (www.stetson.edu/writingprogram); and the Academic Success Center, which also provides free tutoring to review principles, learn study strategies, and enhance knowledge.

Small classes are a privilege: make use of it! Because so much of this course involves exchange of ideas in class and consideration of subtle values, your *attendance and participation* are crucial parts of your learning, and they make up a significant part of your grade. There are many forms of participation, including careful listening, reviewing notes after class, essay writing, and, especially for the development of your oral communication skills, questions and discussion in class. Much of class time will build on your reading and will link to projects and films. More than three unexcused absences will be reported to the administration and put your grade in jeopardy. The class-time *Explorations* (EXPs) will be student-led presentations for review of course readings, leadership of discussions, and pursuit of further insights; they are also exercises in the skill of oral communication, and contributions to the learning experience of all course members. Please choose small groups (about 4-7 per group) for each EXP, choose key readings for your fellow students with discussion questions, present an overview with your theme(s) about the material, and be prepared for questions.

Experience at least three *Events* (in person, online, on TV, in other media) and contribute to a News Day class; see sections of Wayne's book that will be particularly helpful background for your journalism research: on Media: 248-259; on Debates: 261-168; and on Advertising: 269-280. Everyone needs to include exit-poll interviews as one of their three Events: there will be no class that day (Nov 6: Election Day, so also, no excuse for not voting!); please physically go to a polling place (go digitally to Volusia County Department of Elections; find precinct locations at http://www.voterfocus.com/ws/Pfinder/Pl_county.php?county=VOLUSIA), and commit to two hours of exit interviewing (this is, in effect, your "class time" and homework for the day).

The one-page Essays are places for you to capture your thoughts, practice writing, and prepare for class; in class, they can serve as a basis for comments and questions. The essays can allow you to test out ideas, even serving as early drafts for explorations and papers. I encourage you to write, even if only briefly, every time you do some work for the class (before or after class, after reading, or after a project). In addition to this general advice, there are *ten one-page Essays* due as part of your participation grade—that is, about one per week (allowing for a few crazy weeks!). Turn them in during the week of the material discussed; *Essays submitted late will contribute to a lower Participation grade*. Write a paragraph on one typed page in response to the class material; include 1) a fair-minded *report* on what you've learned and 2) your *reflections* in response to its facts and interpretations. This *type* of assignment will also be a *way to make up for excused absences*.

The work of the *Research Project* will grow during the semester, and these *writing steps* on your own research project are separate from the ten one-page essays on the shared course material:

- Step 1, One Key Book: during the first month, think of topics and questions related to the course and that you find interesting; you may find a live issue in relation to your life, coursework, major, career goals, or avocational interests. In history, cultural studies and related fields, books are the premier cultural products for good quality research and evaluation; find a book on your topic, one that will help you answer your questions; *turn in the citation of your book, with a paragraph explanation about why you find it interesting, how it relates to the course, and what it is arguing about your topic.*,
- Step 2, The Book in Relation to Supporting Material: in the next few weeks, use the library and other resources to consult sources, including primary and secondary sources, to supplement your book; find at least two of the following: book reviews, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, government documents, web pages, newspapers and magazines, audio-visual material, and/or interviews; *turn in a one-paragraph statement of the relation of these sources to your book*; and
- Step 3, The Final Paper: Your paper should at least be a report and evaluation of your book and your supporting materials; what does the book cover, what are its sources and methods, what does it do well and what does it overlook, what is its point of view, how does its coverage and point of view relate to the course material and to the supporting material, and what is your view of its interpretations. During the last week of classes, *turn in your final written research paper of 10 typed pages*—earlier is welcome!

The *mid-terms* will be essay questions that ask you to analyze the material of the course. The *final exam* will also be in essay format; one part of it will be a "second mid-term" and the other will be comprehensive.

To encourage improvement in your writing, please turn in your earlier writing with each successive assignment. To avoid waste and clutter, please print on used paper or on two sides of new paper and turn in only your paper, clipped, without any folders or binders. In grading oral and written work, I will emphasize your understanding of the material, the persuasiveness of your argument, and your clarity of presentation. Please see the *American Studies Web Page* for many postings designed to help you do your best work in the course and in life in general. In particular, click on Faculty > my name > Teaching, or go

directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/americanstudies/pcteaching.php> to see the Learning Guides, namely, the guides to learning, writing, research, grading, and speaking. On the same department web page, at the Learning By Doing link > Work to Learn/Learn to Work, or by going directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/americanstudies/worktolearn.php>, see, at the bottom of that page, documents that reach beyond this course and may contribute to your future work: an overview of What Students Can Learn from American Studies and the American Bar Association’s Guide to Legal Education.

Books for Purchase

Dionne, Why Americans Hate Politics

Gillon, The Pact: Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, and the Rivalry that defined a generation

Wayne, Road to the Whitehouse 2012, 9/e

Fiorina, et al., Culture War?

Bishop, The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart

Blackboard: This computerized bulletin board has copies of course documents and new and related material: “Content” has references to particular assignments, and “Information” has general information.

On Reserve: the course books are on reserve, available at Library Circulation Desk.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Requirements</u>
Aug 23	Old New, New History	Introductions
Aug. 28	To the Left...	Dionne, through ch. 1
Aug 30	To the Right...	Dionne, chs. 2-3
Sep 4	Stoking Values Differences	Dionne, chs 4 and 8
Sep 6	News Day	EXP 1: Student Essays on history and news
Sep 11	Republican dilemmas	Dionne, chs. 9-11
Sep 13	beyond polarization?	Dionne, chs 12-13
Sep 18	Two Children of the 60s	Gillon, chs 1-2, 4 (3 recommended); research step 1 due
Sep 20	What Revolution?	Gillon, chs 5-6, 8 (7 recommended)
Sep 25, no class:	Stetson Values Day (are Stetson’s values reflected in the values expressed in the campaigns?)	
Sep 27	Campaigning and Governing	Gillon, chs 9-10, 12 (11 rec’d)
Oct 2	News Day	EXP 2: Student Essays on history and news
Oct 4	Missed Opportunities	Gillon, 14, 16-17 (13, 15 rec’d)
Oct 9	Campaign Drivers	film: Winner-Take-All Politics; midterm
Oct 11-14:	no classes for Fall Break	
Oct 16	Campaigning and Elections I: preparation for EXP 3, with suggested readings: Wayne ch 1 (through p. 29), 36-43, 81-108, 134-139, 146-147, 176-187 and 193-195 (188-193 recommended), 199-202, 218-225, 306-320, 348-363	
Oct 18	Campaigning and Elections II: preparation for EXP 3, with suggested readings: Wayne ch 1 (through p. 29), 36-43, 81-108, 134-139, 146-147, 176-187 and 193-195 (188-193 recommended), 199-202, 218-225, 306-320, 348-363	
Oct 23	How the Bumble Bee Flies	EXP 3 on Wayne
Oct 25	Styles of Thinking, Values Differences, and Polarization	Croce, “James, Inquiry, & Conviction”
Oct 30	One Nation, Culturally Divided	meet to discuss White
Nov 1	Varieties of Cultural Polarization	reading day; research step 2 due
Nov 6	Election Day	Voting and Exit-Poll Interviews
Nov 8	Exaggerating the Divisions	meet to discuss Fiorina
Nov 13	Cluster Nation	meet to discuss Bishop
Nov 15	Varieties of Cultural Polarization	reading day
Nov 20	Pulse of the Nation	interviews on polarization and the election
Nov 27	Varieties of Advocacy	comparing reading and interviews
Nov 29	Facing Polarization: Now What?	EXP 4: debating interpretations: White, Fiorina, Bishop
Dec 4	News Highlights	journalism review: election dissection
Dec 6	Recent Political History and Campaigns	review; research step 3 due