
The School for New Learning, DePaul University – Wright College, Chicago City Colleges
Bridge Program

HC 266 Pacs, Chads, and Precincts: A Focus on the 2008 elections

CCC: Political Science 201
SNL: H4, H1C, H1B, H2G, H2H, H1X

Fall 2008

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Location: Wright College, 9/8, 9/15, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, 10/13,
O' Hare Campus, DePaul University, 10/20, 10/27, 11/3, 11/10, 11/17

Times/Dates: Mondays, 6 – 10 pm

Our Bliki: pacsandchads

Course Description

Our course examines the election process from the inside out: what really goes on during an election year and what are the ramifications of those behind-the-scenes activities. Topics include: voter registration, corruption and reform, the federal bench, the rationality of voters, television and propaganda, heroes and myths in government, and news and the internet in an election year. We expect students to participate in some political race this fall, and we will compare what the pundits say about the election process with our own experiences. We have also lined up a number of speakers, among them, the alderman for Wright College's district, Judge James P. Flannery, and some precinct captains. This course will be lively, informative, and relevant.

About the Bridge Program

The Bridge Program is the result of a shared commitment to the success of adult students held by Wright College, Truman College and DePaul University's School for New Learning. The Bridge Program offers students a unique learning experience that couples Chicago City College and DePaul resources, allows students an opportunity to experience the university environment at their own pace, and helps adult students transition smoothly to DePaul University. Bridge classes are team taught by professors from the Chicago City Colleges and DePaul. Bridge students receive extensive advising from both institutions. Chicago City College students pay Chicago City College tuition and earn both Chicago City Colleges and DePaul credit hours.

SNL Competences

Chicago City College students enrolled in this class will earn credit both for Political Science 201 at the City Colleges and for two competences in the SNL program. SNL students enrolled in this class can earn credit for up to three of the following SNL competences.

H-1-B: Can explain how two or more of the factors of race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, or religion interact to shape communities.

1. Defines "community" and identifies a community that embodies the definition.
2. Discusses two or more of the following: race, ethnicity, nationality, class or economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.
3. Explains how the attributes of a community (listed in #2) interact.
4. Examines the impact of these interactions on the community.

Students demonstrate this competence by describing the community they have selected and explaining how its attributes (race, ethnicity, etc.) interact to shape past, present, or future circumstances of the community. In this instance "communities" refers to demographic realities rather than the behavior of individual persons (a phenomenon that is addressed in H-3-B). Students may approach this competence from a variety of perspectives, including history (such as the impact of slavery on southern towns), economics (such as the impact of industrialization on rural communities), and sociology (such as the impact of an aging population on a neighborhood), to name a few.

Students who elect this competency should address the questions of demographic behavior on voting (e.g. age, community, and race) in at least two reflection papers. Students may also use this topic for their final paper.

H-1-C: Can explain the emergence, maintenance, or evolution of an economic or political system.

1. Identifies a political or economic system and describes its elements.
2. Explains how the system functions and how it has changed over time.

Students demonstrate this competence through an understanding of the origins, functioning, and change over time of an economic or a political system. An economic

system refers broadly to a system of production, exchange, and distribution of resources that are critical for the survival of a whole society. A political system is the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a government or a state.

Students who elect this competency should discuss the history and process of voting as a system in at least

Two reflection papers. This topic may also be used for the final paper.

H-2-G: Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.

1. Specifies a medium of mass communication or an information technology and articulates its scope.
2. Describes the role that this medium or information technology plays in society.
3. Evaluates the impact of this medium or information technology on society or on one's perceptions of societal norms and issues.

Students demonstrate this competence by evaluating the effect of a medium of mass communication or information technology on society. The demonstration should include definitions of all the terms – mass media or information technology, society, role, and impact.

For this competency, students should choose a topic such as the internet versus grass roots organization on the election results or the use of mythology of heroes in the mass media and its impact on voting. At least two reflection papers should deal with some aspect of this topic and they may elect this topic for their final paper.

H-2-H: Can work with community partners to implement a service learning project.

1. Spends a minimum of 20 hours engaged in social action or service.
2. Analyzes the value of social involvement from both one's own and the community partner's perspective.
3. Demonstrates an understanding of the larger social, political, or cultural implications of the service-learning site.

Students demonstrate this competence by becoming active and knowledgeable volunteers within a reciprocal learning setting outside the classroom. In cooperation with a public benefit organization (either a private nonprofit or government agency), students will develop, carry out, and reflect upon the implications of a social action or service project.

Students who elect this competency must spend at least twenty hours as a volunteer on some political campaign; note that this is one of the requirements for the course so that students can better understand the campaign process. At the end of their work, students are asked to present to the rest of the class their thoughts and ideas about their work. In addition, they focus on their work in at least two reflection papers.

Power and Justice

H-4: Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural, or economic groups in the United States. REQUIRED

1. Describes the unequal power relations between at least two racial, social, cultural, or economic groups in the U.S.
2. Discusses the historical, sociological, or economic dynamics under which these groups came to be in conflict.

Students demonstrate this competence by analyzing the historical, sociological or economic dynamics that lead to inequalities in power among groups in the United States. To the extent possible, we hope that students will relate this to their experiences as well as their responsibilities as a citizen. In many ways this competence is about democracy in action; for example, how groups have negotiated and attained power and voice in a complex and diverse society. Since, however, inequalities persist in this country, it is important to understand the ways in which some groups have been systematically denied economic, social, and political justice.

Students who elect this competency will discuss the unequal power relations as they pertain to such things as districting laws, media campaigns, distribution of monies, and voter registration. To demonstrate this competency, students will need to write at least two reflection papers on their experiences negotiation power as well as how the candidate for whom the student works recognizes and negotiates the political power structure. This could also be the topic of the final paper.

Learning Experience

In this course the following teaching and learning techniques are used: workshops, discussions, short lectures, small group work, movie analyses, collaborative learning, creative projects, conferences, at home and in class assignments, critical reading, learning from others through peer editing, and lots of writing and reading.

Required Texts

Rick Shenkman. *Just How Stupid are We? Facing the Truth about the American Voter*. New York: Basic Books, 2008

Selections of readings provided by your instructors from the following:

Mark Wollaeger. *Modernism, Media and Propaganda*. Princeton, 2006.

James Oliver Robertson. *American Myth, American Reality*. New York, 1980.

Thomas Bailey. "The Mythologies of American History," *JAH* (June 1968) 5-21.

Marda Dunsley. *Pen and Swords: How the American Mainstream Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. New York, 2006.

And a variety of internet sites

Course Requirements/Evidence the Students Will Submit

In this class, you will complete the following:

- Eight reflection papers
- One final presentation on work done for an election
- One final paper
- Short class and homework assignments
- A final portfolio of your work this semester that documents your attainment of the course competences; this should be on your bliki page

Reflection assignments:

These should be about two pages and preferably should be posted to the Bliki, so that other students may read the postings. The content is dependent upon the competencies that you want to complete for this course. (See above for some suggestions.)

Portfolio: Your portfolio gives you the chance to demonstrate and reflect upon what you have learned over the quarter. Your portfolio may include one and should include two and three below:

1. You may choose to include in your portfolio revisions of your reflection papers. If you choose to include revisions, please add a note at the end of your revision indicating what you changed and why.
2. Make a case for which of the “Course Competencies” and/or “Expected Outcomes” you have achieved by explaining how your work and learning in the class has fulfilled these competencies and outcomes. You may do this part of the portfolio either in paragraphs or in a table. Please see below for the “Course Competencies” and “Expected Outcomes” from the syllabus.
3. A brief essay (about two pages) in which you step back and reflect upon what you have learned in this class. Consider not only what you have learned about the topics we have covered, but also what you may have learned about yourself or others, what you have learned about college and learning and how what you have learned does or does not apply to your life.

Attendance

A great deal of the work and learning of the course will take place in class. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that you come to class, be prepared and participate. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. While you should do your best to keep up, it is always better to come to class under prepared than to skip class because you did not do all of the

work. If you must be absent, contact us as soon as possible, so we can make sure you do not get behind. *All work must be handed in on time, whether you are in class or not.*

Method of Evaluation/Criteria for Assessment

Your class grade will be based on the extent to which your papers, active class participation and successful, timely completion of reflection papers and other assignments indicate your mastery of your course competences.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum Possible Points</u>
Eight reflection papers (0/3/5)	40
Presentation on the individual election work	20
Final paper	20
Various assignments throughout the quarter	20
Portfolio	10
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	110

Final grades will be calculated according to this scale:

90-110 points = A

80-89 points = B

70-79 points = C

60-69 points = D

59 points or less = F

Plagiarism

In college, knowing why, when and how to cite sources is vital. By using sources appropriately, you participate in the scholarly community as you relate your ideas and experiences to those of others. When citations are lacking or incorrect, you weaken your paper by failing to clearly make those connections. You also leave yourself open to charges of plagiarism which can have serious academic consequences. We follow both the DePaul's and the City College's plagiarism policies.

Chicago City College's Plagiarism Policy: "The City Colleges of Chicago are committed to the ideal of truth and honesty. In view of this, students are expected to adhere to high standards of honest in their academic endeavor. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind are serious violations of these standards and will result, minimally, in the grade of 'F' by the instructor" (City Colleges of Chicago Student Policy Manual, 22).

DePaul University Plagiarism Policy: "DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and

academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.”

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

n.b. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact either of us privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact us as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class). If you are a DePaul student, make sure that you have contacted the:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in SAC 220, or
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290 Student Center 307

Don't Panic

This class is cumulative, with assignments building upon each other, so if you find yourself confused, stuck or falling behind let us know right away so we can address the problem before it becomes unmanageable.