Course Overview:

In 1952, advertising guru Rosser Reeves convinced Dwight Eisenhower that airing TV commercials on popular programs would reach more voters than other forms of advertising. Eisenhower's opponent, Adlai Stevenson, in contrast, was quoted as saying, "The idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal is the ultimate indignity to the democratic process." Needless to say, he was a two-time loser to Eisenhower! Therefore, as with consumer product marketing, political advertising via television was initiated emphasizing the USP or "unique selling proposition," the key feature that would differentiate the product (candidate) from the competition.

This 6 week course will highlight the marketing principles and strategies utilized to run political campaigns in the U.S. Although the course primarily will focus on the stages of Presidential races, including polling, fundraising, communication strategies, media, and television commercial evaluation, the marketing techniques employed can be applied to congressional, state and local elections. Students will analyze campaign case studies, specifically from the 2012 Republican primaries, the 2012 general election, the 2008 Democratic Primary and general election. Guest speakers will enhance the learning experience by providing their individual expertise on the specified topic. Regarding fundraising, for example, the New York Tri-State Finance Director for Obama for America demonstrated the marketing tactics employed in that arena. Other speakers have included former Indiana Senator Evan Bayh, newly elected Senator Cory Booker, and Hillary Clinton’s pollster and consultant, Mark Penn. Finally, there will be a team project where each group chooses any Presidential political campaign and analyzes the effectiveness of the communication strategies utilized for both the winner and loser.
Course Objectives:

1. To provide strategic insight into and understanding of political marketing strategy and communication and demonstrate the similarities to consumer marketing techniques.

2. To enhance student’s ability to evaluate the effectiveness of political advertising.

3. To increase student’s knowledge of both the political media planning process and the use of traditional and new media.

Readings

1. Required

   • Kaskowitz, Gary. Brand it Like Barack! How Barack Obama sold himself to America and what you can learn from this (Indianapolis: Dogear, 2010), 1st Edition
   • Additional reading materials will be handed out in class, but the cases will be included in the course pack.

2. Recommended


Websites

   • http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008
   • http://www.techpresident.com
   • Politifact.com
• Current candidate websites
  • http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php (campaign resources)
  • http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/elections/index.html (historic polling data)
  • http://www.historycentral.com/elections (historic election resources)
  • http://www.campaignsandelections.com
  • http://www.politicsresources.net/election.htm#america (varied political resources)
  • http://www.livingroomcandidate.org (presidential campaign commercials)

*This is a working syllabus and subject to change*

Grades (Based on Spring 2013)

- Written exercises (3 of 5): 15%
- Class participation: 30%
- Case Studies: 15%
- Project: 40% (Type A)

- Attendance is mandatory and will be checked at the beginning of each class.
- Written exercises based on the reading will be assigned each week, as per syllabus, advanced handout or Canvas. Students are required to hand in at least 3 but will be expected to participate in class discussion for all 5. **Everyone is to prepare the exercises due for the first class.**
- Class participation is a critical portion of the final grade, and students will be judged on the quality of their comments.
- 3 cases will be discussed, as per syllabus, and each student must submit at least 1, but, again, everyone will be expected to participate in class discussion, regardless of whether he/she prepared written answers.
- Students are **NOT** permitted to use iphones, blackberries, cell phones, etc during class, and when guest speakers are present, all laptops, ipads, etc. must be turned off.
Course Outline - Based on Spring, 2013 and subject to change.

All readings and write-ups are to be completed before the assigned class date. Cases and written exercises are to be handed in at the beginning of class. (Keep an extra copy for class discussions).

I. Introduction/Polling – March 26th

- Course Parameters
- Overview of the Electoral Process
- Polling/data analysis – types of surveys, strengths/weaknesses, how used, etc.
- Readings
  - Burton & Shea, “Campaign Craft,” Ch 3 & 5
  - Kaskowitz, “Brand it Like Barack,” Ch. 1 & 7
  - Websites: Fivethirtyeight.com, pollster.com, realclearpolitics.com, pollingreport.com

Written Exercises: (can do in bullet form)

- Based on focus group research, Governor Mitt Romney’s chief pollster, Neil Newhouse, determined that the campaign emphasize President Obama’s handling of the economy (since only 20% surveyed thought the country was on the right track) and what Romney would do to fix it. Romney’s family members wanted equal emphasis on how the Governor had helped average people throughout his career, but the focus group research didn’t support that. Do you think that this major decision should have been based on focus group research, alone? Should quantitative polling/research have also been conducted? Please give specific rationale to support your response.
- Governor Jeb Bush is considering running for President in 2016. From a marketing perspective, what polling/research techniques should he utilize as he begins his campaign?
- How did President Obama’s campaign take advantage of opposition research during the campaign in regards to garnering support among women?
II. Marketing/Communication Strategy – April 2nd

- Candidate branding, message, key issues
- Targeting: Demographic and Psychographic
- Group Selection for Project
- Guest Speaker: Cory Booker – Mayor of Newark, N.J. and U.S. Senatorial candidate

- Readings:
  o Burton & Shea. “Campaign Craft,” Ch. 6
  o Kaskowitz, “Brand it Like Barack”. Ch. 2-6, 8-11.
  o Case Assignment #1: Please answer the following questions from both of these cases:

  1. “Barack Obama: Organizing for America 2.0”, pages 1-6
     a. How did Obama's background and experience influence his communication strategies for the '08 election?
     b. Why was his target audience and message emphasis for his on-line organizing efforts during both the primary and general election so successful?
  2. “Obama versus Clinton: The YouTube Primary”.
     a. What were Senators Obama and Clinton’s respective brand strengths and challenges going into the campaign?

- Written Exercises:
  o Florida Senator, Marco Rubio, has asked your advice about how he should brand himself as a potential Presidential candidate. What will you tell him are the key elements he should focus on in successfully branding himself as a candidate?
  o David Axelrod, Obama’s senior strategist, stated that their campaign had been given a “gift” regarding Romney’s weak brand identity. Do you think Romney could have improved his brand image? Please support your answer.

III. Fundraising – April 9th
• Role of Donations
• Strategy and Tactics: - Direct mail, voter contact, internet, telemarketing, events, etc.
• Guest Speaker: Brad Thompson – NY Tri-State Finance Director, Obama for America
• Readings:
  o Burton & Shea, “Campaign Craft,” Ch. 7, 10
  o Kaskowitz, “Brand it Like Barack,” Ch. 17-18
  o Website: Http://www.4president.us/
  o Case Assignment #2 – “The Obama Campaign Strategy”.
  o (written exercises and handouts – TBD)

IV. Media- April 16th

• Media strategy, tactics, execution
• Traditional and new media
• Role of media consultant
• Guest speaker – Teddy Goff – Obama for America’s Digital Director for the 2012 campaign
• Readings:
  o Baker, “Political Campaigns & Political Advertising,” Ch. 3
  o Burton & Shea, “Campaign Craft,” Ch. 8
  o Case Assignment #3 – “Obama vs. Clinton: The YouTube Primary.”
  o (written exercises and handouts – TBD)

V. Communication Analysis and Evaluation – April 23rd

• Political Advertising Techniques – Power of TV
• Effect of “Earned” Media – debates, news coverage, etc.
• What makes an effective ad
• Guest speaker – Seiji Carpenter – VP of David Binder Research and conducted advertising/concept research for 2012 Obama Campaign
• Readings:
  o Baker, “Political Campaigns & Political Advertising,” ch. 6 & 7
  o Burton & Shea, “Campaign Craft, “ Ch. 9
  o Kaskowitz, “ Brand it Like Barack,” Ch. 12-16
  o (written exercises and handouts TBD)
• Website – Attackwatch.com
VI. Presentations – April 30th

- Specific criteria will be provided during 2nd class
- Each group will comprise 3 – 4 students