

POSC 3355: SEX, SCANDALS, AND ELECTIONS

Fall 2017

Class meeting time: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:15 pm

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Bittner

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Office: SN2040

Office Hours: Tues 12-1:30 and Tues/Thurs 3:30-4:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Politics can be dirty. We've seen sex scandals (e.g. Lewinsky, Spitzer, Packwood, Craig, Foley, Weiner); Congressional & Judicial Scandals (e.g. House Banking Scandal, Abscam, Keating Five, Koreagate; Clarence Thomas Affair); and power scandals (e.g. Watergate) in the American context. The Canadian context is not scandal-free either (e.g. Sponsorship Scandal; Airbus Affair; Shawinigate; Robocall Scandal; Senate Scandal). Do scandals matter? What impact do scandals have on citizen trust? On candidates? On political campaigns? How does media coverage affect the impact of corruption and scandals?

It seems as though fairly sensible advice is available on Twitter:



But how much does doing the above four twitter-prescribed actions actually affect elections? This course considers the above and other questions related to political scandal and corruption in election campaigns. We will focus mainly on American elections and campaigns, course will assess literatures related to voters, public opinion, campaigns, and scandals. By the end of the course, students will be able to better navigate campaigns and elections, and in particular, will be able to marshal voting behavior literature and theoretical perspectives to understand the impact of past scandals and the potential impact of future scandals for voters & electoral democracy.

REQUIRED READINGS & TOOLS

1. Books:

Thompson, John B. 2000. Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age. UK: Polity Press. (referred to below in “the game plan” as “Thompson”)

2. Articles and book chapters:

Required readings are listed in the syllabus below, and are downloadable from the Memorial University library website (links are provided in the syllabus). For book chapters not available online through the library, PDFs will be stored online in D2L for you to access (<https://online.mun.ca>).

3. Classroom Response tool: TopHat (tophat.com)

TopHat will be used for three major purposes in this class: a) to understand how you respond to campaign issues and questions applicable to Canadian and American contexts; b) to track attendance and reward participation; c) to provide immediate feedback to the instructor about which concepts need further discussion and which are well-understood.

Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings. These required readings will supplement lectures and discussion in class.

A QUICK NOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE AND CLASS CONDUCT:

I am available in office hours (Tuesdays from 12-1:30 and Tuesdays and Thursdays after class, 3:30-4:30) and by appointment. If you want to get in touch with me via email, you are free to do so at abittner@mun.ca, and you should receive an answer within 48 hours.

I will be using your MUN email addresses to correspond with you if I need to get in touch with you outside of class, and I would encourage you to check your MUN email frequently to make sure you don't miss out.

Throughout the course, I want you to do your own thinking. I want you to think about the readings, where there are strengths and weaknesses, and where you think the dialogue is missing something. Everything is contentious, nothing is set in stone. I don't expect anybody to agree with everything, and I'd like to encourage you to discuss your thoughts, in an environment where we are all open-minded, respectful, and considerate of one another.

THE GAME PLAN

Sept 7 **First Class: Introduction & Overview of Course**

UNIT ONE: WHAT IS A SCANDAL? WHAT IS CORRUPTION?

Sept 12 Thompson. Chapter 1 "What is a Scandal?"

UNIT TWO: HOW DO AMERICAN ELECTIONS WORK?

Sept 14 & 19 Shea, Daniel M. Chapter 2 "The Theoretical Underpinnings of Elections" in Let's Vote: The Essentials of the American Electoral Process (available online in D2L)

O'Connor, Karen & Larry J. Sabato Chapter 12 "Voting and Elections" in American Government, Roots and Reform (available online in D2L)

UNIT THREE: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND HOW CAMPAIGNS MATTER

Sept 21 Thompson Chapter 4 "The Nature of Political Scandal"

Sides, John, Daron Saw, Matt Grossmann, Keena Lipsitz. Chapter 5 "Modern Campaign Strategies" in Campaigns and Elections. (available online in D2L)

UNIT FOUR: POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

Sept 26 Gidengil, Elisabeth, Andrew Blais, Neil Nevitte, & Richard Nadeau. 2004. Chapter

Sept 28 4 "Can Canadians Get By with Less Information" in Citizens. (available online in D2L)

Delli Carpini, Michael, & Scott Keeter. 1996. "Political Knowledge, Political Power, and the Democratic Citizen" & The Consequences of Political Knowledge and Ignorance in What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters. (available online in D2L)

Oct 5 Hand out research essay assignment, discussion of requirements

OCT 10 THANKSGIVING BREAK

October 12 MIDTERM

UNIT FIVE: INFORMATION RECEPTION & IMPACT OF NEGATIVE INFORMATION

October 17, 19 John G. Geer & Lynn Vavreck. 2014. "Negativity, Information, and Candidate Position-Taking" in Political Communication, 31:2, 218-236. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2013.828140>

Thorson, Emily. 2016. Belief Echoes: The Persistent Effects of Corrected Misinformation. Political Communication. 33(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1102187>

Hochschild, Jennifer, and Kathrine Levine Einstein. 2015. Chapters 3 & 4 of Do Facts Matter? Information and Misinformation in American Politics. (available online in D2L)

October 24 Library session

- SIX:**
Oct 26 & 31
- MEDIATED SCANDALS**
- Sides, John, Daron Saw, Matt Grossmann, Keena Lipsitz. Chapter 7 "Media" in Campaigns and Elections. (available online in D2L)
- Thompson Chapter 2 "The Rise of the Mediated Scandal"
- Sipes, Carrie. "Men, Mistresses, and Media Framing: Examining Political Sex Scandals" in Dagnes, Alison, ed. Sex Scandals in American Politics. (available online in D2L)
- Puglisi, Riccardo & James M. Snyder, Jr. 2011. "Newspaper Coverage of Political Scandals" in The Journal of Politics 73(3); 931-950. <http://10.1017/S0022381611000569>
- Brendan Nyhan (2015). Scandal Potential: How Political Context and News Congestion Affect the President's Vulnerability to Media Scandal. British Journal of Political Science, 45, pp 435-466. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9584628&fileId=S0007123413000458>
- SEVEN**
Nov 2 & 7
- SCANDALS AND CANDIDATE IMAGE**
- Mitchell, Dona-Gene. 2014. "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? Assessing How Timing and Repetition of Scandal Information Affects Candidate Evaluations" in Political Psychology 35(5): 679-701. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/pops.12095/abstract>
- McDermott et al. 2015. "Talking the Talk but Not Walking the Walk: Public Reactions to Hypocrisy in Political Scandal." American Politics Research 1-23. <http://apr.sagepub.com/content/43/6/952.short>
- EIGHT:**
Nov 9 & 14
- SCANDALS AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**
- Basinger, Scott J. & Brandon Rottinghaus. 2012. "Skeletons in White House Closets: A Discussion of Modern Presidential Scandals" in Political Science Quarterly 127(2): 213-239. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2012.tb00725.x/abstract>
- Peterson, David A.M. & Beth Miller Vonnahme. 2014. "Aww, Shucky Ducky: Voter Response to Accusations of Herman Cain's 'Inappropriate Behavior'" in PS: Political Science and Politics 47: 372-378. http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPSC%2FPSC47_02%2FS1049096514000237a.pdf&code=6e7abd309f579660954f7b01a59f9543
- NOVEMBER 14: RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT DUE**
- NINE**
Nov 16
- SCANDALS AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS**
- Basinger, Scott J. 2012. "Scandals and Congressional Elections in the Post-Watergate Era" in Political Research Quarterly 66(2):385-398. <http://prq.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/08/07/1065912912451144.abstract>

TEN

Nov 21 & 23

SEX SCANDALS

Thompson Chapter 5 "Sex Scandals in the Political Field"

Dagnes, Alison. "Introduction" in Dagnes, Alison, ed. Sex Scandals in American Politics. (available online in D2L)Sachleben, Mark. "A Framework for Understanding Sex Scandals in Comparison" in Dagnes, Alison, ed. Sex Scandals in American Politics. (available online in D2L)Maule, Linda S & Robert K. Goidel. 2002. "Adultery, Drugs, and Sex: An Experimental Investigation of Individual Reactions to Unethical Behavior by Public Officials" in The Social Science Journal 40(2003): 65-78. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362331902002598>Sonner, Molly W. & Clyde Wilcox. 1999. "Forgiving and Forgetting: Public Support for Bill Clinton During the Lewinsky Scandal" in PS: Political Science and Politics. 32(3): 554-557 http://www.jstor.org/stable/420644?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contentsGrover, Steven L & Marcus C. Hasel. 2015. "How Leaders Recover (or Not) From Publicized Sex Scandals" in Journal of Business Ethics 129:177-194. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-014-2146-3>Zaller, John. 1998. "Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science" in PS: Political Science and Politics. 31(2) 182-189. http://www.jstor.org/stable/420248?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents**ELEVEN:**

Nov 28 & 30

VOTERS, TRUST, LEGITIMACY, AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACYWarren, Mark. 2010. "Is Low Trust in Democratic Institutions a Problem of Corruption?" in Michael Genovese & Victoria Farrar-Meyers, ed. Corruption and American Politics (available online in D2L)Andrew Wroe, Nicholas Allen and Sarah Birch. 2013. "The role of political trust in conditioning perceptions of corruption." European Political Science Review, 5: 175-195. http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1755773912000094

Thompson, John B. Chapter 8 "The Consequences of Scandal"

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation (10%) – TopHat

Using TopHat on your wireless device (laptop, tablet, or mobile phone) you will be able to interact with me and the rest of the class. During each class I will ask questions designed to double-check that you understand the concepts we are covering, get you thinking differently about the readings and course content, and check in with the class about administrative issues. Your participation in class Q&A will be registered when you submit your answers to questions that are posed in class.

If you show up to every class and participate, you will automatically get full marks. You're not being evaluated on the content of your participation here, just on whether or not you do it.

Honestly, coming to class is the BEST WAY TO ENSURE that you do well in this course. Participating with TopHat will help to facilitate this process.

Questions or Technical Concerns? Top Hat has technical support available by email (support@tophat.com) and by phone (1.888.663.5491).

Pop Quizzes (6%)

It is really important that you read and try to digest the material for class BEFORE class actually happens. Evidence shows that the more often you encounter ideas, the more likely you are to retain it in your memory, therefore you are likelier to do better on tests and exams, as well as achieving a better understanding of key concepts, terms, and how they all fit together.

In order to encourage you to achieve higher outcomes, I will hold a series of pop quizzes over the term, and on a pop quiz day, we will spend the first 10 minutes of class doing the pop quiz, before diving into the material for class. They are "pop" quizzes, which means I won't be announcing in advance when it is that they will take place, it'll be a surprise.

I would encourage you to prepare for class, and come on time, so that you don't miss out on this 6% of your grade.

Midterm (24%) and Final Exam (35%)

Both the midterm test and the final exam are cumulative: that is, they cover all the material we have done in class until that date. So the midterm covers all of the materials we cover in class up until October 18. The final exam will cover all of the material from the course (from beginning to end), including all assigned chapters, all class discussions and lectures, and anything else we might do in class – movies, guest speakers, etc.

The midterm will take place on October 12, and is worth 24%. The final exam will take place during the exam period in December, and is worth 35% of your final grade.

Research Paper (25%)

Students will be required to write a research essay in this course. I will circulate a list of essay questions early in the term, from which you are to choose one question for your paper. The final draft of your paper will be due on **NOVEMBER 14** in class. Do not email your paper to me, please print it out and hand it in. If you hand it in after class, it will be considered “late.”

Papers must be 3000 words in length. You are required to cite a minimum of TEN (10) sources in this paper, through the use of in-text citations following the *Mapping Politics* style guide (we will discuss this in class) as well as including a bibliography with your paper when you hand it in.

We will discuss the paper more in class, and I will hand out more information, including my expectations and the list of essay questions, in October. This assignment, including a bibliography, is worth 25% of your final grade.

NOTES ON GRADING, MISSED TESTS, AND LATE PENALTIES

In the event of a class cancellation, then a scheduled quiz or midterm test will be administered in the class immediately following. Students unable to write the midterm or final exam on the days which they are administered may qualify—by providing valid medical documentation (e.g. doctor's note) for the day in question—for a different test/exam on a different day.

The research essay is due Tuesday, November 14, in class. The penalty for late assignments is 10% per day, including each weekend day. So, if you submit your paper on the Monday after it is due, 60% will be automatically deducted. This seems like a lot – it is. So submit the paper on time! If class is cancelled on the day the research paper is due, then students are responsible for submitting the assignment in the class immediately following the cancelled class (e.g. if class is cancelled Nov 14, then the assignment will be due on Nov 16).

Cheating on quizzes, midterm tests, research assignments, and/or final examinations includes (but is not limited to) allowing another student to copy from your own work, presenting someone else's work as your own, and/or consulting with others while a test is taking place. Information about procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty is outlined in the University Calendar and is available through the Department of Political Science.

ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I am committed to facilitating and promoting an accessible, inclusive, and mutually respectful learning environment. Please feel free to get in touch with me to ensure that this takes place in my course. Students requiring special accommodation are asked to communicate with the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre (www.mun.ca/blundon) at the earliest opportunity. University policies and procedures pertaining to accommodations for students with disabilities can be found at www.mun.ca/policy/site/policy.php?id=239

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & MISCONDUCT

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means offering the words or ideas of another person as one's own. The material copied or paraphrased may consist of a few phrases or sentences, or an entire passage or paper. Whatever its form and extent, plagiarism constitutes two kinds of failure: 1) Failure to perform the basic tasks expected in any paper -- original mental effort and expression; 2) Potentially, the moral failure of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism may be deliberate (as in the submission of a paper written in whole or part by another student, purchased from an essay bank, or cut and pasted from web sites) or the result of carelessness through failure to provide proper documentation.

All directly copied or quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source must be clearly identified in a footnote. The source of any paraphrased material or ideas must also be properly documented. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

The procedure for handling cases of suspected plagiarism at Memorial University is set out in the University Calendar. All cases of suspected plagiarism must be reported to the Department Head in accordance with Section 4.11 of the University Calendar General Regulations. Depending on the circumstances and the degree of plagiarism involved, the Department of Political Science normally handles first offenders in accordance with the Procedures for Informal Resolution (Section 4.11.5). The penalty in such cases is normally a grade of 0 for the work concerned. The Department maintains a list of students who have been found guilty of plagiarism, and in the case of a second offence or in particularly serious cases of plagiarism, the Procedures for Formal Resolution (Section 4.11.6) will be followed. The penalty in these cases may be probation, suspension or expulsion in addition to the grade of 0 for the work concerned.

If in any doubt about what plagiarism consists of, consult with your instructor or refer to any standard work on writing essays and research papers. The Faculty of Arts Writing Centre (SN2053) can also provide relevant information. The notes on proper documentation below may be of assistance.

Notes on Proper Documentation

A good political science paper contains a logical argument built on solid evidence. While the evidence may be that of first-hand observation and study, evidence for most student papers will come from books, journals, newspapers, and government documents. Documentation in the form of footnotes, endnotes, or in-text references (with page numbers) must be provided for all facts, ideas, or interpretations which are not considered to be common knowledge. An acceptable rule of thumb for determining whether an item is one of common knowledge would be if the information is readily available in a number of different sources. An example may help.

It is common knowledge that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a black civil rights activist who was jailed in Alabama for leading a march against segregation in the early 1960s. No footnote would be required for such a fact.

A footnote would, however, be required for a statement such as: *Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed disappointment that southern religious leaders urged people to comply with desegregation not because it was morally right but because it was the law.*

In the latter case, the reader might want to check that Rev. King actually did express those views. A good guideline to follow is to ask yourself where your understanding of the thoughts, beliefs, or ideas of an individual or a group came from. If you don't know, are you sure that your understanding is accurate? If it isn't, then don't use it. If you do know, then state the source.

A common misperception is that footnotes only have to be given for direct quotations. This is not correct: footnotes must be provided in all cases where an idea, belief, action, or thought is attributed to an individual or group.

A footnote would be required for the following quotation from page 14 of the province's Strategic Economic Plan. "The private sector must be the engine of growth. While it is the role of government to create an economic and social environment that promotes competitiveness, it is the enterprising spirit of the private sector that will stimulate lasting economic growth."

A footnote would also be required for the following statement. *The Strategic Economic Plan argues that the private sector must be the basis of economic growth in the province.*

Similarly, a footnote must be provided whenever you "borrow" a particular idea, interpretation, or argument from a known source.

Other forms of Academic Misconduct

Misconduct can take many forms, and none are tolerated. Please see section 6.12.4 of the University Calendar for more information about academic offences. If you have any questions about this topic, feel free to contact me.