

### **Unit IV: Campaigns, Elections, and the Media**

Chapters 7,9,10; Sabato, Berelson, and Key readings in Woll (note the change in the order of presentations)

#### **Friday, March 14**

Nominations and Elections  
Delegates, The Big Mo and Frontloading

**Have a Safe and Enjoyable Spring Break**

#### **Monday, March 24**

Continue Nominations and Elections

#### **Tuesday, March 25**

Nominations, Elections continued  
The Electoral College and Map

#### **Wednesday, March 26**

Chapter 9 Quiz  
Who Votes and Why? Are Voters Stupid?  
Voter Trends, Recent Elections and Voter Behavior

#### **Thursday, March 27**

Berelson and Key Presentations

#### **Friday, March 28**

Chapter 7 & 10 Quiz  
Sabato Presentation—A Mislplaced Obsession with PACs?  
Assign Follow the Money

#### **Monday, March 31**

Money in Elections, Campaign Finance Reform and PACS  
Follow the Money Due

#### **Tuesday, April 1**

Continue Campaign Finance  
Media  
The Living Room candidate

#### **Wednesday, April 2**

Unit IV Essay

#### **Thursday, April 3**

Unit IV Test

## **Key Concepts to Remember: unit iv**

### **NOMINATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS**

1. There are two types of campaigns in American politics: campaigns for party nominations (nomination campaigns) and campaigns between nominees for public office (election campaigns).
2. Nominations for offices are made via primaries and caucuses, which severely weaken party organizations' control over the nomination process and encourages candidates to rely on personal campaign organizations.
3. Campaigning today is an art and a science, heavily dependent on professional political consultants, polling, and technology.
4. Candidates need money to build a campaign organization and to get their message out. The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal, supposedly tightened reporting requirements and limiting overall expenditures. It also allows for public funding for presidential candidates. The law's loopholes have been exploited by both parties, causing a growing concern for campaign finance reform. These loopholes and the skyrocketing costs of campaigning have given incumbents a major advantage.
5. Research has shown that campaigns have three effects on voters: Reinforcement, Activation, and Conversion. Campaigns mostly reinforce and activate, seldom do they convert.

### **Elections and Voter Turnout**

1. Elections are governed by both the federal and state governments. The federal government is engaged primarily in protecting people from discrimination in their exercise of the right to vote, regulating campaign finance for federal office, and setting uniform dates for federal elections. With the advent of the Motor Voter Bill, states now basically administer elections.
2. Elections socialize and institutionalize political activity, by providing a peaceful channel for participation.
3. To be elected president, a candidate must win a majority of the electoral college vote. A state's electoral votes are allocated to candidates on a winner-take-all basis. Because of this feature, candidates can concentrate their campaign efforts on states with large blocs of electoral votes and on states where the race is tightly contested. The turnout of eligible voters is approximately 50 percent in presidential elections and normally less than 40 percent in midterm elections. Turnout is affected by such social characteristics as age and education, registration requirements, the amount of publicity a campaign receives, the competitiveness of the election, and personal attitudes such as party identification.
4. Voter choice on election day is influenced by the interaction of party identification, candidate evaluations, and the voter's policy positions matched with the candidate's.

## **The Role of the Media**

1. As a major source of political information, the media, particularly television, help shape the public's perceptions and reality. As a vital linkage institution, the media is able to mobilize citizens to take political action and influence the behavior of government officials.
2. The media have a strong voice in deciding which issues will be placed on the public's agenda, but when they cover election campaigns, they tend to focus on the "horse race" aspects of the contest and not on substantive issues.
3. The standards of newsworthiness include audience appeal and impact, uniqueness, and timeliness. The nature of media coverage also is affected by time and space constraints and accessibility of news sources.

Political leaders and news people are mutually dependent. Politicians rely on the media to provide them with information and to convey their message to the public. The media in turn rely heavily on public officials for the information on which to base their reporting. The relationship is characterized by tension, however, as politicians seek to use the media to achieve their objectives and the media seek to perform their