

Wellington Debate – 2004 Political Campaign
Part I: January 6 – March 18
Part II: March 29 – May 13 (details TBD)

As well-informed, open-minded speech and debate enthusiasts, we can all appreciate the role of communication in our society. To enhance understanding of applied communication and of the political system, including (but not limited to) public and professional image, public speaking, rhetoric, propaganda, media, current events, national and international issues (economic, social, cultural, political, etc.), campaign strategy, and public scrutiny, you will be participating in a mock political campaign.

Part I of this project will focus on the nine Democratic presidential candidates who are currently slated to be on the March 9 “Super Tuesday” primary ballot in Florida, as well as the incumbent Republican president (who is running unopposed). The class will be divided up as equally as possible, so that no one campaign group drastically outnumbers any other group. In addition, the class will be divided up through “blind draw,” to prevent any claim of political bias for or against any student by the instructor (which also mean, no, you don’t get to “choose” either your candidate or who is in your group).

Please note that, during the project, should any of the presidential candidates withdraw from the campaign, members of that candidate’s in-class political party will join remaining groups within the class. Once again, this will be done by “blind draw,” with those groups that might have fewer class members in their party getting “first crack” (once again, in an attempt to “balance” the playing field).

1. Research political campaigns and strategies: contact local campaign headquarters, search the Internet, research the library for guidelines and strategies for a successful campaign.
2. Put together a detailed biography on your candidate: childhood, parents, education, culture or heritage, socioeconomic upbringing, religion, work history, links with organizations, coalitions, unions, etc., military background, marital status and children, extended family, etc.
3. Research the platform for your candidate: foreign involvement, welfare, tobacco, taxes, capital punishment, guns, nuclear weapons, family issues, domestic violence, space exploration, drugs, etc. (Groups may discuss this so that the same issues will be researched and debated.)
4. Collect news clippings, campaign flyers, political cartoons, etc. on your candidate and the others running for office.
5. Advertising: slogan, flyers, radio broadcasts, news ads, television commercials. You will need to not only find and discuss actual advertising that is taking place, but develop your own.
6. Media Information: each campaign group is responsible for providing the media with stories regarding your candidate – places s/he has visited, speeches given, etc.
7. Damage Control: without warning, news events may occur that directly affect your candidate (such as the capture of Saddam Hussein), or “leaks” may be made about your candidate (such as illegal campaign contributions, past business involvements, etc.) ... or about another candidate. Your group must decide a strategy to best deal with the situation, issue a press release, make a statement, work out the problem, so that the campaign and candidate are not destroyed. (While “real world” events will be part of this, expect the instructor to also toss “monkey wrenches” into the campaign trail as well.)
8. Defection: in real life, we realize that sometimes our views of the candidates we initially support change – sometimes, so drastically, that we find we can no longer support him or her at all. Thus, expect that, during the course of the campaign, you might suddenly “switch” support from one candidate to another ...
9. Part I grades will be based on the following:
 - a. Depth of candidate’s biography
 - b. Depth of candidate’s platform
 - c. Candidate reports given to the media (see schedule)
 - d. Individual campaign worker journal
 - e. Open Forum participation
 - f. Candidate group binder
10. Extra Credit: work for an actual campaign (does not have to be the candidate you are “working” for in this project)

Part I Schedule:

Wednesday, January 14 (even)
Thursday, January 15 (odd)

Open Forum #1: Platform Issues

Tuesday January 20 (odd)
Wednesday, January 21 (even)

Candidate Report #1 due – Biography of candidate

Monday, February 2 (even)
Tuesday, February 3 (odd)

Candidate Report #2 due – Campaign platform details
RESEARCH MUST BE INCLUDED (cite all sources, including date)

Tuesday, February 10 (even)
Wednesday, February 11 (odd)

Group/Instructor conference regarding campaign strategies,
group work, etc.
Group Binder Check #1

Thursday, February 12 (even)
Friday, February 13 (odd)

Open Forum #2: Campaign advertising

Tuesday, February 17 (even)
Wednesday, February 18 (odd)

Candidate Report #3 due (includes statements from groups
regarding allegations about candidate)

Wednesday, February 25 (even)
Thursday, February 26 (odd)

Advertising Presentation
Group Binder Check #2

Wednesday, March 3 (odd)
Thursday, March 4 (even)

Open Forum #3: Role of the Media

Monday, March 8 (even)
Tuesday, March 9 (odd)

Candidate report #4 due
(include reaction to March 3/March 4 Open Forum discussion)

Wednesday, March 10 (even)
Thursday, March 11 (odd)

Open Forum #4: Reaction to Super Tuesday

Wednesday, March 17 (odd)
Thursday, March 18 (even)

Candidate report #5 due (includes reaction to Super Tuesday
results and forum discussion)
Group Binders due