

# PLAYING

# POLITICS

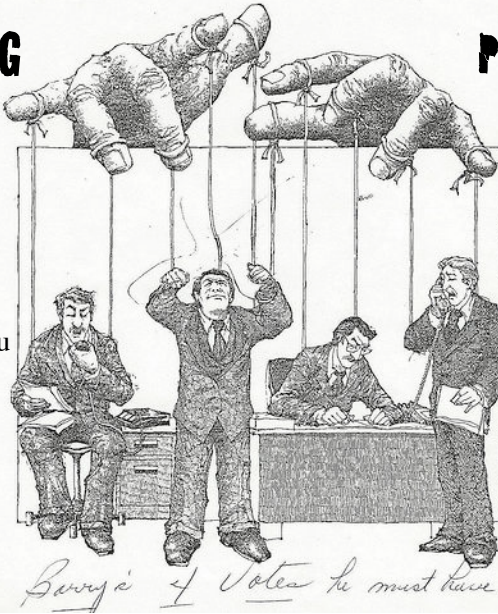
FALL 2012

*faculty:* Mark Harrison  
*office:* SEM II – B3104  
*phone:* 360-867-6454  
*email:* harmark@evergreen.edu

*class times:*

Wednesday, 6 – 10:00 pm  
Saturday, 10 - 6 pm  
(Oct 6, 20, Nov 3, 17, Dec 1)

*classroom:* SEM II – C1105  
CRN: 10180



WINTER 2013

*faculty:* John Baldrige  
*office:* SEM II – B2102  
*phone:* 360-867-6759  
*email:* baldridj@evergreen.edu

*“Politics is just like  
show business”*

-Ronald Reagan

**Program website:** <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/playingpolitics/>

## Program Description

With the US presidential election season as backdrop, we will engage with American politics, both local and national. We will delve deeply into the use and construction of political power—how it leverages cultural trends and reflects the geography of the electorate. We will examine how tactics of performance are employed to create images that have purchase on the political stage. Rhetoric, “spin,” appeals to values, the invocation of class struggle, portrayals of the Constitution, bi-partisanship, race relations, gender rights—all of these will be part of our curriculum. What roles do citizens play, particularly in relation to changing social and environmental realities, the Internet, popular culture and the media? We will develop a set of critical questions, issues, and case studies that will guide our program. We will critique the campaigns as they unfold in real time—political ads, talking points, debates and damage control. And we will analyze plays, narrative and documentary films, and other forms of art and entertainment to determine how they have historically reflected or shaped political action and thought. The Fall Quarter will follow the campaigns as they develop and culminate in the election. We will analyze what the election results tell us about the state of American politics. The Winter Quarter will see the Inaugural Address of the next president and the start of a new US Congress. What do “lame duck” politicians hope to accomplish? How do continuing politicians frame their plans for the future? What can we, as an informed electorate, anticipate from the next political cycle? Students who enroll in this program should expect to do independent research on the elections, participate in political rhetoric and events, conduct statistical analyses of polls and election results, and dig into the elections cycle and results.

### ***Additional questions and concepts that will inform our learning goals:***

- How do we, as informed citizens, distinguish between information, entertainment and propaganda?
- What is role of advertising, marketing, and public relations in politics?
- What are frames, metaphors, and myths? How do they come about and what purpose do they serve?
- In what ways do politics and performance intersect in film—both narrative and documentary—and television?
- In what ways have the live performance and the screen mediums impacted political thought, action and presentation (packaging)?
- What is the role of popular culture? Of money? Of media concentration?
- How has citizen media and the Internet changed political discourse and electoral politics?

**Website**

Be sure to use the program website – <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/playingpolitics/>  
Weekly READING materials (not including the required texts) are **linked in the calendar**.  
Other program information and resource links can be found here as well.

**Books (available at the Evergreen bookstore):**

- Thomas Frank. *Pity the Billionaire* (ISBN: 9780805093698)
- Russ Weston. *The Political Brain* (9781586485733)
- Brecht. *Galileo* (9780802130594)
- Shakespeare. *Antony and Cleopatra* (9781904271017)

**Recommended books**

- Dan Gillmor. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*
- George Lakoff. *Don't Think of an Elephant*
- Frank Luntz: *Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear*
- Sondra Myers, ed. *The Democracy Reader*
- Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*
- Joel Schecter. *Durov's Pig* (e-book)

**OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Study groups:**

The class will be broken into TRIADS (small study groups of three). These groups will participate in a variety of activities together including screenings, regular media assignments, and posting weekly PIQs, which are points, insights and questions about the readings, screenings and weekly topics.

**Seminars and Class Preparation:** It is expected that you will have thoroughly and thoughtfully read and/or viewed the selections for seminar. You should be prepared to identify key themes supported by specific passages in the reading/viewing selections. Topics will come from central themes and texts.

**Other Assignments may include:**

- Weekly political media analysis. Will be discussed during the first week of class.
- Reflective essays: there will be short writings that address specific learning goals, assignments, and topics of importance. **We generally will not accept** late papers or guarantee that they will be evaluated for credit. (All essays must be typed, double spaced, and double sided where appropriate).
- Field trip and fee: We will be attending the Seattle Shakespeare Company matinee production of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle on November 17.
- Final project: will be the culmination of group assignment dealing with the election season.

**Portfolio:**

You are required to keep an organized portfolio. It will be turned on the final day of class and returned during your evaluation conference. The portfolio must be labeled and organized chronologically in the following order:

1. Syllabus and covenant
2. Lecture and reading notes
3. Seminar and workshop handouts with notes
4. Weekly responses to "Politics in Real Time", PIQs, and study questions
5. Completed screening form for each required film
6. All readings downloaded from the website with margin notes and/or highlighted passages of importance
7. All writing/essay assignments including final group project
8. Peer evaluations of study group partners
9. A final self-evaluation and faculty evaluation

### **EVALUATION**

You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of all program requirements
- Adherence to the syllabus and agreements in the covenant
- Excellent attendance, preparation for and full participation in all program activities, including work with TRIADS
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your papers
- Demonstration of acceptable understanding of program content and learning goals

### **EXPECTATIONS**

The faculty member assumes that students have well-rounded college-level skills. In case of deficiencies in basic skills, students are expected to work with the Learning Resources Center. The faculty member does not assume that students initially will be conversant with critical terminology or special techniques for discussing the works to be assigned. It is assumed that by the end of the program, students will have developed the ability to think, to speak, and to write effectively about the materials and themes of the program.

In general, students are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the class, to thoroughly prepare for each class session, and to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments may not be evaluated. Attendance and being on time for class are essential. Unexcused absences, late, incomplete or unsatisfactory completion of assignments or plagiarism will constitute grounds for loss of credit.

Faculty are expected to be prepared for lectures and class sessions, to provide feedback on written assignments in a timely manner, to be available for consultation by appointment and to provide a written evaluation of the student's overall work in the program. Please refer to covenant for further details.

**Access Services:** If you are a student with a *documented disability* that requires arrangements, technology or expense to ensure full access to this program, please contact Meredith Inocencio in the Access Services Office (Library 2153 or 360-867-6348 or [inocenc@evergreen.edu](mailto:inocenc@evergreen.edu); website: <http://www.evergreen.edu/access/>). In order to make accommodations, your program faculty must be informed no later than the second week of the quarter *by the student and in writing from Access Services*.

**Incomplete status** may be granted only for reasons of family crisis, illness, or similar documented emergency. Evaluation conferences will be held at the end of the quarter. *Credit is not the same as positive evaluation*. Students receive credit for fulfilling minimum requirements and standards. The evaluation is a statement describing the quality of the student's work. It is possible for a student to receive credit but receive an evaluation that describes poor quality work. It is also possible for a student to attend class regularly yet receive no or reduced credit because of unsatisfactory performance.

**Screening films outside of class.** You will be required to screen a few films outside of class. Our strong recommendation is that you arrange to do this with your Triad. It is the student's responsibility to find and screen the film prior to the assigned class when it will be discussed.

**On Critical Writing:** Blaise Pascal once wrote a long, drawn-out letter to a friend, then apologized in the postscript that he didn't have time to write a short one. As your faculty, we subscribe to what Thomas Jefferson once noted: "the most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." Economic critical writing requires time, reflection and effort.