

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Section Moderator: Dr. Vaughn May
Room: Beaman Student Life Center – A
Time: 12:00 – 5:00 PM

2:00 – 2:30

“Using Social Media to Revolutionize Politics: The Obama Model”

Ameshia C. Cross
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Vaughn May

Barack Obama’s use of new media in the 2008 presidential campaign season stunned the nation. He implemented a social media strategy that employed several aspects of emerging media trends including: SMS text messaging, viral video (YouTube), Facebook, and microblogging (Twitter), reaching populations unattainable by previous campaigns.

The Obama campaign utilized the information gained by new media campaign pioneers Howard Dean and John Edwards. Building off of their predecessors and employing new media experts, such as Facebook co-founder, Chris Hughes, aided the Obama campaign in its overall success in the use of social media.

The traditional mode of campaigning was turned upside down by the Obama campaign in 2008 due to its predominant use of social media through the creation of the campaign site, MyBarackObama.com. MyBO was the central figure of the campaign. It was used for fundraising, meet-ups, volunteering, GOTV, information forums, as well as blogging. The interactive feature of the site allowed people to move online effort to offline action. The internal structure and ideology behind social media played to Obama’s strengths in regard to community organizing. Social media are an electronic mode of community organizing and Obama’s previous experience in the field allowed him to utilize this form of media to the fullest.

Barack Obama’s campaign model will be implemented by those seeking office in the future but the extent of its success will be dependent upon the candidate’s understanding of new media (social media specifically), and the community organizing aspect therein.

4:30 – 5:00

“Republican Revitalization”

Travis Harvey
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Vaughn May

The Republican party's brand has gradually lost prominence over the last decade. In 2006, for the first time in a decade, Republicans lost their majority in both the House and the Senate, and in 2008, lost the presidency. The party needs to assume a platform to widen its constituency beyond its rank-and-file membership of white evangelicals, develop technological strategies to widen its base and fundraising capabilities, and reexamine stances on issues that have caused cleavages within the party and that have alienated moderates and independents. This paper will analyze vital areas upon which the Republican Party must adapt and improve to be competitive in future elections.