

POLI 100DA: Voting, Campaigning, and Elections

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Campaign Website¹

Due: Friday, August 3, 5:59pm

Submit to Turn it In (link included in justification memo); 25% of Total Grade

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to design a website for your assigned congressional candidate that reflects the underlying strategy you have been developing throughout the term. This assignment, thus, serves the following primary goals:

1. Learn and implement web-design basics (a skill useful for many jobs)
2. Concisely communicate information about your candidate in a way that reflects your underlying campaign strategy
3. Integrate written content from previous assignments into a coherent final product
4. Demonstrate evidence of critical thinking as you select which aspects of your candidate to feature on the website and in what ways

Assignment:

Your task is to design a website for your candidate using WordPress. You should include revised versions of your About Me and Issue Priorities assignments on your website, in addition to the following new sections: News, Donate, and Contact. You may include additional sections, such as volunteering, endorsements, social media, or other sections you deem necessary. Your website should feature strategically selected pictures and may include other content, such as videos, as you see fit. The content in each section should be well-researched, accurate, and well-written. Your website should look professional, but because this is not a web-design course, I do not expect perfection and your grade will not be determined solely on your web design abilities. Thus, the *content* of your website is essential.

Web Design

We will go over examples on how to use WordPress in class, but here are the general steps.

- Go to www.wordpress.com and create a free account
- Follow the prompts to come up with your website address. For example, mikelevinforcongress.wordpress.com or dianeharkeyforcongress.wordpress.com. **Do not** pay for a domain name! WordPress will give you suggested address names and it will be free if you select the option that includes .wordpress.
- Continue through the prompts. When you get to My Site, select “Settings” on the left side of the screen. Set your website to Private. Save.
- On the left side of the screen, under Personalize, select Customize. Here you can:
 - Select a theme template, update fonts and colors
 - Add pages and update Menu content
- At the top of the left side of the screen, you’ll see a Publish button. If you click the settings gear next to that, you can save drafts, view preview links, etc. Make sure you save your progress! **NOTE:** I strongly recommend that you write the *content* for your website in a word processing software (e.g.

¹ This assignment was inspired in part by Caughell, Leslie. 2018. “Teaching Students to Hear the Other Side: Using Web Design and Election Events to Build Empathy in the Political Science Classroom.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, p. 659-663.

MS Word) first so that you can make sure that you are saving your progress and have backup copies. I recommend that you copy and paste the content from your word processor to your website.

- You can view a simple example at www.poli100daforcongress.wordpress.com with additional information on the content to be included in each section

Content

The assignments throughout this course should provide the vast majority of the content for your website. Please see the example website at www.poli100daforcongress.wordpress.com for examples and descriptions of what should go in each section, which is also summarized below.

1. *About Me*

- This should include a version of the About Me section you wrote for the Candidate Bio assignment. It should reflect revisions based on the feedback you received.
- 100-200 words
- May include information on your candidate's education, previous experience in elected office, previous experience outside of politics, military history (if applicable), family, personal life, etc. You should think about which details are most important to communicate to potential voters. You might find sections 3 and 4 of this paper helpful: https://stanford.edu/~jgrimmer/SE_Short.pdf

2. *Issue Priorities*

- This should include a version of the Issue Priorities section you wrote for the Issue Priorities assignment. It should reflect revisions based on the feedback you received.
- 300-900 words (100-300 per issue)
- Select at least three issues to serve as your candidate's issue priorities in the campaign. Consult a variety of real campaign websites for inspiration. This section should include a heading for each issue and a description of your candidate's position on or involvement with each issue. These descriptions might include:
 - Explaining what the issue is and why it is important to the district or your candidate
 - Explaining your candidate's past experience with the issue (credit claiming). If your candidate has previously held public office, you should consider his or her past voting history on relevant bills, particularly any bills that he or she has sponsored.
 - Writing should be clear, concise, and persuasive

3. *News*

- This is a new section. You should include a link to at least one news story about your candidate. You could choose the most recent news story or one that you think strategically highlights some facet of your candidate. Consult real campaign websites for examples of what this might look like in addition to the example I provided on the class website www.poli100daforcongress.wordpress.com
- ~50 words
- You do not need to do much additional writing for this section. Simply finding a news article is sufficient, just make sure that you explain why you chose this news article in your justification memo.
- Consider adding pictures, video, or writing a brief summary, similar to what you'd see in a news article preview on Facebook or Twitter, but this is not required.

4. *Donate*

- This is a new section. Design this page to include everything except the actual opportunity to donate money to the campaign. That is, write up the text that reflects how you would go about soliciting campaign contributions for your candidate. You should consult your campaign spending plan assignment to consider the types of donations you are targeting. You should also consult several real campaign websites to get a sense for the ways in which real campaigns are soliciting donations on their websites.
- ~50 words

- This section does not need to be long – it likely won't include much original text at all. Much of the text might be boiler plate language about contribution rules (see <https://secure.anedot.com/harkey/harkeyforcongress> or <https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/mikelevin>). But, you'll note that some candidates include video and images on this page, which you might consider as well. This section should be accessible and match your overall campaign strategy

5. *Contact*

- In this section, you should invite individuals to contact the campaign. You can leave the standard text boxes / submission form automatically generated by WordPress, but you should include some brief introductory text encouraging potential voters, volunteers, or interested constituents to reach out. Consult real campaign websites for inspiration and include text that matches your underlying strategy.
- ~50 words
- This section will likely not include much text

Grading:

| | F | D | C | B | A |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| About Me 20% | About Me section is missing | About Me section is there, but inaccessible (e.g. not in menu or in menu but page is blank). Shows some evidence of research, but is substantially incomplete. For example, it is very vague and only includes 1-2 pieces of information about the candidate. Alternatively, the section is too similar to the actual About Me section on the official website | About Me section is there and accessible, but difficult to find. Shows evidence of some research, but it is incomplete. For example, it is somewhat vague and only includes a few pieces of information about the candidate. The section is different from the About Me section on the website. No evidence of improvements based on feedback | About Me section is there, accessible, and relatively easy to find. Shows evidence of research, but it does not include any new information that is not present in the official About Me section on the candidate's real website. The research appears to come from only one source. Evidence of improvements based on feedback. Appears to reflect the underlying campaign strategy. Not immediately clear how it reflects the underlying campaign plan. Includes a picture of the candidate. | About Me section is there, accessible, and easy to find. Shows evidence of research and is complete. The section contains at least one piece of information that is not contained in the official About Me section on the candidate's real website. The research appears to come from a variety of reliable sources. Evidence of improvement based on feedback. Appears to reflect the underlying campaign strategy. Includes a picture of the candidate. |
| Issue Priorities 25% | Issue Priorities section is missing | Issue Priorities section is there, but inaccessible (e.g. not in menu or in menu but page is blank). Only 1-2 issues are discussed. The issues are not discussed thoroughly, showing no evidence of applying research on the district to the issue selection. Descriptions are very similar to what is included on the candidate's real campaign website. No evidence of improvements based on feedback | Issue Priorities section is there and accessible, but difficult to find. Three issues are discussed. The issues are not discussed thoroughly, showing no evidence of applying research on the district to the issue selection. Descriptions are very similar to what is included on the candidate's real campaign website. No evidence of improvements based on feedback | Issue Priorities section is there, accessible, and relatively easy to find. Three issues are discussed. The issues are discussed thoroughly, showing some evidence of applying research on the district to the issue selection. Descriptions are somewhat similar to what is included on the candidate's real campaign website. Evidence of improvements based on feedback. | Issue Priorities section is there, accessible, and easy to find. Three issues are discussed. The issues are discussed thoroughly, showing strong evidence of applying research on the district to the issue selection. Descriptions are different from what is included on the candidate's real campaign website. Evidence of improvements based on feedback. Section includes additional features, such as images, video, or external links that reflect the underlying campaign plan. |

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|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| News 5% | News section is missing | News section is there, but inaccessible (e.g. not in menu or in menu but page is blank) | News section is there and accessible, but difficult to find. Section links to one news article, but the link is broken or formatted poorly | News section is there, accessible, and relatively easy to find. Section links to at least one news article. The link is functional. The formatting is sloppy and it is unclear how the selected news story reflects the underlying campaign plan | News section is there, accessible, and easy to find. Section links to at least one news article. The link is functional. The formatting is clean and it is clear that the selected news story reflects the underlying campaign plan. The section includes additional features, such as images, article previews, or video. |
| Donate 5% | Donate section is missing | Donate section is there, but inaccessible (e.g. not in menu or in menu but page is blank) | Donate section is there and accessible, but difficult to find | Donate section is there, accessible, and relatively easy to find | Donate section is there, accessible, and easy to find. The lead in text to the donate page shows creativity and reflects the underlying campaign plan |
| Contact 5% | Contact section is missing | Contact section is there, but inaccessible (e.g. not in menu or in menu but page is blank) | Contact section is there and accessible, but difficult to find | Contact section is there, accessible, and relatively easy to find | Contact section is there, accessible, and easy to find. The lead in text to the contact form shows creativity and reflects the underlying campaign plan |
| Writing 20% | Writing does not meet the length requirement; includes severe grammar or spelling errors | Writing is close to the length requirement; includes many grammar or spelling errors | Writing meets the length requirement but includes many grammar or spelling errors | Writing meets the length requirement, may include some grammar or spelling errors, but is generally clear | Writing meets the length requirement, is free of grammar or spelling errors, and is clearly written |
| Aesthetics and Accessibility 20% | Content is not loaded onto a website at all | Content is loaded onto a website, but only default formatting is used. No evidence of customization | Content is loaded onto a website and there is evidence of customization. Some parts of the website appear sloppy, include broken links, have fonts that are difficult to read, and/or are otherwise difficult to access | Content is loaded onto a website and there is evidence of customization. The website looks professional, using fonts that are easy to read, Links are functional, and pages are easy to access. The website does not show much creativity in its layout or use of images or video | Content is loaded onto a website and there is evidence of customization. The website looks professional, using fonts that are easy to read. Links are functional, and pages are easy to access. The website shows creativity in its layout, use of images or video, or inclusion of additional sections |