

## The Election

1. *Thursday, September 4, 2008.* What the class is about

The class will split into four groups to research and report on each candidate's views on war in the Middle East and health insurance.

Today, we will talk about general goal for ID-1: critical thinking. The Bok reading describes critical thinking, why colleges think they should teach it, and how they try to do so.

*Reading*

Bok (2006)

2. *Tuesday, September 9, 2008.* Library session

Adam Rosenkranz, a reference librarian, will show us how to use the library's resources. We'll meet at the services desk on the second floor of the Honnold-Mudd library and go to the library's classroom from there.

Conrad gives the background of the two issues we're going to discuss. The *National Journal* pieces describe the candidates' positions. Go to the *National Journal* website and note the advisors.<sup>1</sup> We're going to look them up in the library session.

*Reading* Conrad (2008), *National Journal* pieces

3. *Thursday, September 11, 2008.* Set up research projects

We're going to split into groups and plan the research projects. Think about what you want to work on and what tasks have to be done.

*Assignment* Short paper on the summer books.

4. *Tuesday, September 16, 2008.* The case for the Iraq war

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/nj\\_20080619\\_5784.php](http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/nj_20080619_5784.php)

Conrad lays out a variety of arguments for going to war that were given in 2003. These readings focus on the one that is most significant for future decisions. It maintains that that ultimate source of Islamic terrorism aimed at the US is the lack of democracy in the Middle East and that the best response lies in aggressively promoting democracy there.

*Reading* Lewis (2001), Gaddis (2004)

5. *Thursday, September 18, 2008.* The case against the Iraq war

These authors all subscribe to the realist theory of international relations. They believe that the project of aggressively promoting democracy will fail and that it will make the US's problem with Islamic terrorism worse.

*Reading* Scowcroft (2002), Mearsheimer (2005), Pape (2006)

6. *Tuesday, September 23, 2008.* Iraq: what now?

We can't reverse the decision to go to war in Iraq. What should be done now? Galbraith believes that Iraq is hopelessly divided and that the best the US can do is defend the Kurdish part. Boot thinks there is no palatable alternative to continued military occupation aimed at preserving the unity of Iraq. Coll gives an up to date assessment that covers the surge.

*Reading* Galbraith (2007a), Boot (2007), Coll (2008)  
*Assignment* Short paper on foreign policy.

7. *Thursday, September 25, 2008.* Health care overview

The United States is the only wealthy society in the world where health insurance primarily comes through employers rather than a public agency. Blumenthal describes the history and likely future of this system. Its future is in question because the costs of providing health care are going up, leading employers to drop coverage. Mongan doubts costs can be limited much under the present system.

*Reading* Blumenthal (2006a,2006b), Mongan et al. (2008)

*Note* The first debate is on Friday, September 26 at 6 pm. The topic is foreign policy and national security.

8. *Tuesday, September 30, 2008.* Costs and the uninsured

How many people lack health insurance because it's too expensive? Given that emergency rooms are required to treat people, isn't the answer "none"? What would it cost to provide insurance for those who lack it? Our authors have answers!

*Reading* Dubay et al. (2007), Roberson (2008), Hadley et al. (2008)

9. *Thursday, October 2, 2008.* Comparing the plans I

Tanner compares Obama's and McCain's announced plans for health care from a libertarian perspective. That is, Tanner is philosophically committed to minimal government and does not think that providing universal health insurance is society's responsibility. He is primarily concerned with which plan is more compatible with individual liberty.

*Reading* Tanner (2008)

*Note* William Cronon will deliver a Hart Lecture at 4:15 in the Rose Hills Theater in the Smith Campus Center. Cronon's lecture is titled "The Portage: Space, Time, and Storytelling in the Making of an American Place." This lecture will include discussion of some of the foundational works of American environmentalism, notably works by John Muir and Aldo Leopold.

10. *Tuesday, October 7, 2008.* Comparing the plans II

Furman looks at how changes to the tax code might be used to lower the cost of health insurance. This is the major component of McCain's plan. Furman is Obama's chief advisor on economics, but you know that by now.

*Reading* Furman (2008)

*Assignment* Short paper on health insurance.

*Note* The second debate is tonight at 6 pm. It is a town hall format, with no set topic.

11. *Thursday, October 9, 2008.* Single payer, the neglected alternative  
Both Obama's and McCain's plans work within the private insurance system. But why does it make sense to devote part of our health budget to the overhead and profit margins of private insurance companies? Making insurance a public service is the obvious alternative.  
*Reading* Krugman and Wells (2006)
12. *Tuesday, October 14, 2008.* Research day  
We'll use today's class to break into research groups and talk about where things stand and how to go forward.  
*Note* The third debate is on Wednesday, October 15 at 6 pm. The topic is domestic and economic policy.  
*Reading* none
13. *Thursday, October 16, 2008.* Writing day  
Topics in writing. One thing we'll do is edit a professional writer's prose. A second thing we'll do is talk about your assignments: bring some in from your other courses. Finally, we'll talk about some more specific things, like how, or whether, to use gender neutral language.  
*Reading* Wielseltier (2008) Tufte (2006)
14. *Thursday, October 23, 2008.* Foreign policy presentations  
We will discuss reports by the Obama and McCain foreign policy groups. These should spell out each candidate's proposals. They should also identify the major advantages and disadvantages of those positions.  
*Reading* Foreign policy group reports
15. *Tuesday, October 28, 2008.* Health care presentations

We will discuss reports by the Obama and McCain health policy groups. These should spell out each candidate's proposals. They should also identify the major advantages and disadvantages of those positions.

*Reading* Health policy group reports

16. *Thursday, October 30, 2008.* Foreign policy and oil

Michael Klare will deliver the second Hart Lecture on November 6; today, we will read some of his work. Klare argues that the Iraq war is really all about controlling oil, that it is not a major departure for American foreign policy, and that conflicts over oil will only get worse in the future. Say, why is the US building apparently permanent bases in Iraq?

*Reading* Klare (2007,2008), Francis (2006)

17. *Tuesday, November 4, 2008.* Election day

We have a bunch of events coming up. So let's take today off. Go vote and watch the election returns.

*Reading* none

18. *Thursday, November 6, 2008.* Klare's Hart Lecture

Michael Klare will deliver a lecture on "The Global Energy Crunch: Options for America" in the Rose Hills Theater in the Smith Campus Center during our regular class time. Instead of meeting as a class, go to the lecture.

*Reading* see October 30

19. *Tuesday, November 11, 2008.* Menzel's PSU lecture

Paul Menzel will deliver a lecture for the Pomona Student Union on the moral and political controversy over health care policy. The talk will be at 7 pm, place TBA. The reading is about the advantages and disadvantages of McCain's and Obama's health care proposals.

I'm going to try to arrange for us to meet Menzel. He's talking with another ID-1 class today. Perhaps we could get him for lunch either today or on Wednesday the 12th.

*Reading Menzel (2008a)*

20. *Thursday, November 13, 2008.* Menzel discussion

We will talk about Menzel's lecture and an article he wrote on similar themes.

*Reading Menzel and Light (2006)*

21. *Tuesday, November 18, 2008.* National greatness

We've been talking about policies. But what about the philosophical views about the nature and purpose of government that lie behind them? Today, we'll look at McCain's political philosophy, national greatness conservatism. Brooks and Kristol are in favor of it while O'Sullivan, Postrel, and Glassman aren't. Interestingly, all of the participants in this debate are on the political right.

*Reading Brooks (1997b,1997a), Kristol and Brooks (2001), McCain and Salter (2002, pp. 305-25), O'Sullivan (2001), Postrel and Glassman (1997)*

22. *Thursday, November 20, 2008.* Pluralism

As I said in my lecture back on August 31 (you still remember that, right?), Obama strikes me as not having as definite a political philosophy as national greatness conservatism. Instead, I suspect he thinks the purpose of government is to mediate among competing interest groups. This view goes under the name "pluarlism". Pluralism can seem like a welcome relief compared to a very ambitious philosophy. The question is whether it's unprincipled.

*Reading Bentley (1967, pp.110-22), Lemann (2008)*

23. *Tuesday, November 25, 2008.* Writing and campaigns

Pomona's own David Foster Wallace took an assignment from *Rolling Stone* to cover McCain's campaign during the 2000 race. We'll talk about two things. First, there is the substance of the piece: how can we be sure that what we see in campaigns is real? Second, there is the

distinctive, and occasionally shifting, writing style. Why did he write that way? Is it more or less effective than the drier academic style?

*Reading* Wallace (2006, pp. 156-234)

24. *Tuesday, December 2, 2008.* Foreign policy

Where are things likely to go, given how the election turned out? Is it how they should go? This is our last discussion of the issue before your reports are due.

*Reading* none

25. *Thursday, December 4, 2008.* Health care

Where are things likely to go, given how the election turned out? Is it how they should go? This is our last discussion of the issue before your reports are due.

*Reading* none

26. *Tuesday, December 9, 2008.* Critical inquiry revisited

How did it go? Do you think critically now? We'll talk about the first term in general, not just this course.

*Reading* none

*Assignment* Research papers due

## Assignments

Grades will be based on the following writing assignments:

1. Three short papers on topics that I will distribute.
2. Weekly reports on the course of your group's research, starting Monday, September 22.

3. One group research report, see October 23 and 28.
4. A final papers based on your research, due December 9.

### Instructors

My name is Michael Green. My office is 207 Pearsons. I have office hours on Mondays from 2-4. That means that I guarantee that I will be available at that time, first-come, first-served. This is my preferred time to meet. If it does not work for you, it's usually easy to make an appointment at another time.

My office phone number is 607-0906. My life goes much better when I only answer email once a day. I will reply, but if you need a prompt answer to a smallish question, you're probably best off calling or dropping by my office.

We're fortunate to have Gregory Carter as an assistant. Greg is your first resource for your research projects. You can find him in the Pomona directory.

### The Writing Center

THE WRITING CENTER (on the second floor of Smith Campus Center, above the Coop Fountain) offers students free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process — from generating a thesis and structuring an argument to fine-tuning a draft. The Writing Fellows — Pomona students majoring in subjects including Economics, Molecular Biology, English, Politics, and Religious Studies — will work with you on an assignment from any discipline. Consultations are available by appointment, which you can make online: <http://writing.pomona.edu/writingcenter>.

### Readings

All readings will be put on electronic reserve. You will be able to get them through the Sakai site for this course at <http://sakai.claremont.edu>