POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS, FALL 2012

**MEDIA ROLES AND INFLUENCES IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS**

Wayne chapter 8

Wednesday, October 24

**Chapter 8 terms**: horse race journalism (and problems with it); why the tone of election coverage tends to be negative, and more negative toward incumbents; story line, likely loser scenario, bandwagon scenario, front runner losing ground scenario; selective perception, agenda setting, perceptions of media bias; talk-entertainment or soft news, and why it has become more important in recent campaigns; Commission on Presidential Debates, reasons to exclude third party candidates; candidate strategies and tactics in debates; impact of debates on electoral support; goals of positive campaign advertisements, Ashley ad; goals of negative campaign ads; uses of emotive content; targeting, newsworthiness, timing and sequencing; impact of advertising on turnout and voting behavior

1. What factors account for the balance in coverage between the horse race and policy issues in 2004, compared with the imbalance in the previous elections and with 2008 (Table 8.1, p. 252)? What kind of mix between horse race and policy issues would you expect the 2012 campaign to show, and why?

2. The concept of a story line (some sources call this a narrative) for an election is important. Was there a story line/narrative for the 2008 presidential election – can you label it (using one of the book’s labels or your own)? Consider the 2008 story lines from the perspective of McCain and Obama. Also consider the likely story line of 2012.

3. Examine Table 8.3 (p. 263) and Table 8.4 (p. 268) and discuss which presidential debates have seemed most consequential in changing voters’ minds.

(and for fun, here are two famous debate moments: [Ronald Reagan, 1980 presidential debate](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=px7aRIhUkHY&NR=1) “there you go again”; and [Lloyd Bentsen, 1988 VP debate](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-7gpgXNWYI) “you’re no Jack Kennedy”)

4. If voters have become cynical (p. 280) about the content of campaign advertisements and news coverage of campaigns (predominantly negative), how would this information alter the mix of positive, negative, and/or emotive advertisements that campaigns choose to use?

5. Here are links to some famous (infamous?) campaign advertisements, most of which are mentioned in chapter 8. Take a look and judge for yourself – what is effective (or not effective) in these ads? (These ads are posted at [livingroomcandidate.org](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/), which is a great resource)

1964 [Lyndon Johnson “daisy” ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964/peace-little-girl-daisy)

1984 [Ronald Reagan “Morning in America” ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1984/prouder-stronger-better) and another Reagan ad [“The Train”](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1984/train)

1988 [George H.W. Bush “Willie Horton” ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1988/willie-horton)

1992 [Bill Clinton “Journey” biographical ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1992/journey)

2004 [Progress for America Voter Fund “Ashley” ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2004/ashleys-story)

2004 [Swift Boat Veterans for Truth “Any Questions?” ad](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2004/any-questions/)