Bringing teaching, learning and research to life

Politics & International Relations

Teaching with Tutorial Video
Content Type

Tutorial videos are generally brief (5–10 min) and examine one specific topic in a particular discipline. Tutorials define the topic, provide examples, and draw upon latest research and practice. Tutorials can be assigned as homework to be viewed outside of classroom, or, because of their brief nature, can easily be incorporated into a lecture. Instructors can create quizzes from tutorials to assess students’ knowledge. They can also serve as great launching pads for exciting classroom discussion and interesting assignments.

The Power of Political Advertising

In this tutorial, Lynn Vareck, a professor of Political Studies at UCLA, discusses why political advertising is so powerful and important. She explains how political advertisements are created in ways that make people draw inferences about its messages, even when there is no direct correlation between the things being seen and the words being said during the advertisement. Professor Vareck uses clear case studies to ensure that the viewer understands how an advertisement is made and the ways in which each component of the advertisement contributes toward the viewer receiving a message through his or her own inferences.

Suggested Courses or Topics

This video is relevant for courses on political science and for media courses. Topics it is relevant to include elections, advertising, use of media, and psychology. The ways in which the making and effect of political advertising is explained makes this a strong tutorial to be used across a range of disciplines.

Classroom Clips

Listed below are a few examples of clips that focus on key concepts:

- This clip explains why political advertising is so important during elections, and why so many advertisements are played in swing states during election campaigns. Clip 1:21 – 2:50.

- This clip explains how political advertising uses tools to lead viewers to draw inferences that would not be drawn if they only read the transcript or saw the pictures. Clip 2:50 – 4:38.

- This clip explores the first ever political advertisement on American television (“Ike for President”) and analyzes each component within the advertisement. Clip 9:22 – 12: 53.

- This clip asks and explores the question as to whether political advertising ought to be allowed or banned during campaigns. Clip 21:44 – 22:53.

Research Assignment

See below for some example assignments that you might use for students

Professor Vareck provides and explores three examples of political advertising. Find three more examples on Youtube or another platform, summarize the content of the advertisement and explain how each component is used to make viewers draw inferences and what those inferences are.

Classroom Discussion

Here are some example questions that might be used for in-class discussion.

Professor Vareck argues that political advertising on television plays an important role in election campaigns. In what ways are television advertisements different to other types of political advertisements? Should there be regulation of political advertising? What are the problems with television political advertisements? Why should we not trust viewers to draw their own inferences?