



Postponed to 17 Oct. (Wed) Presents

Change, Continuity, and Controversy in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election

The 2012 campaign between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney provides an excellent window into contemporary American electoral politics. In this lecture, I discuss the dynamics and key dimensions of the Obama-Romney race with an emphasis on three themes: change, continuity, and controversy. I argue that while many elements of the election represent change from traditional patterns there is also a great deal of continuity from previous electoral cycles, as well. Points of continuity include the emphasis on Electoral College strategy, the composition of each major party candidate's support coalition, and the ever-present threat of controversy and scandal that could change the outcome of the election. The role of controversy marks an intriguing intersection in that while controversies always occur, they are also always new and different and (usually) unpredictable. By focusing on these three themes, this discussion provides a way to understand this election in light of both the contextual elements pertinent to 2012 as well as the ongoing pattern of American presidential selection.

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Justin Vaughn is an assistant professor of political science at Boise State University. He has published several studies of presidential politics, including *Gendering the Presidency: Gender, Presidential Politics, and Popular Culture* (University Press of Kentucky, 2012) and articles in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Review of Policy Research*, *Administration & Society*, and *White House Studies*. His current research projects include examinations of the strategic dimensions of presidential rhetoric, the role popular culture plays in shaping the presidential image, and empirical analyses of management theory as applied to the inner workings of the White House. Dr. Vaughn has been consulted by the mass media as an expert on the American presidency by numerous media outlets, including the *New York Times*, NPR, Politico, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Toledo Blade*, the BBC,

Jazeera, Danish Broadcasting, ABC (Australia), Ceska Televize (Czech Television), La Presse (Canada), Nikkei (Japan), Swedish National Radio, WKYC-Cleveland, KCBS-San Francisco, WCPN- Cleveland, WBT-Charlotte, and on-air election night analysis of the 2008 presidential election for the Cleveland FOX affiliate. Dr. Vaughn earned his Ph.D. in Political Science at Texas A&M University.

Date: ~~October 16, 2012 (Tue)~~

Time: To be confirmed

Venue: Social Sciences Chamber, 11/F.,
The Jockey Club Tower, HKU