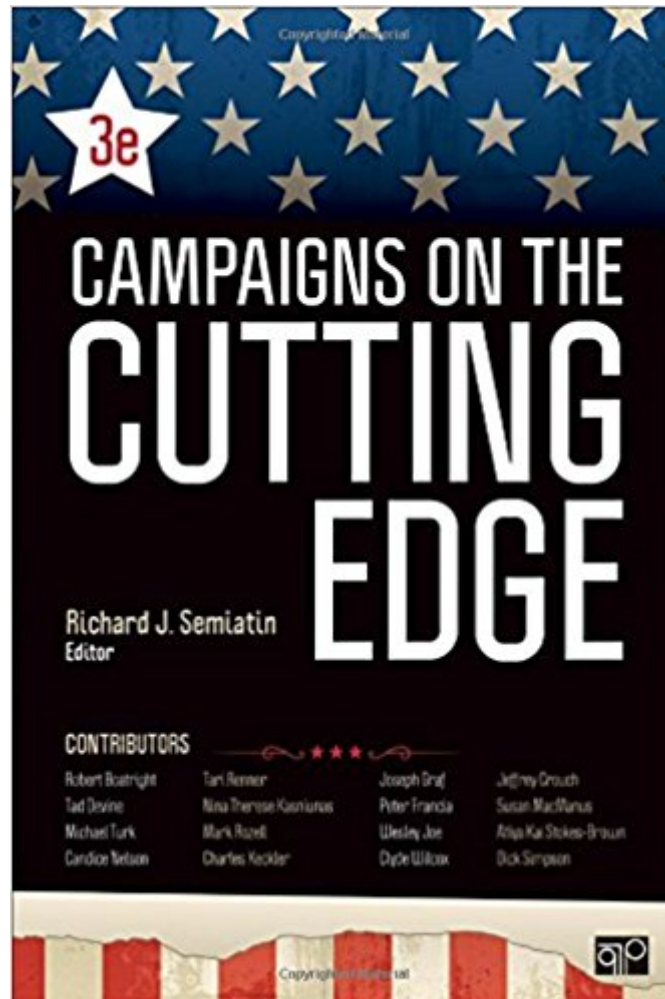


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Campaigns On The Cutting Edge Third Edition



Synopsis

This thoroughly updated Third Edition looks at the 2016 election and focuses on the growth of super PACs, the role of big data in campaigns, voter identification laws and their impact, and the ways in which technology increases the volume of information that campaigns use.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Campaigns on the Cutting Edge reads like a textbook, which has both advantages and limits. For the most part, it's a fact-filled discussion of the different components of an election -- everything from how political parties work to the mechanics of "Get Out The Vote" (GOTV) campaigns. Apart from facts, the book addresses the impact of the Internet and the fragmentation of mass media on political outcomes. It's pretty straightforward. People (especially millennials) aren't getting their news from newspapers and television shows. News gets reported faster, often without appropriate fact-checking. Humorists contribute to the messages voters are getting. My favorite chapter was on the role of women in campaigns. Looking at voters, women are hardly monolithic; the female vote is important, but candidates need to "microtarget" with separate messages for different segments of women. Meanwhile candidates are judged by appearance, hand gestures and wardrobe; indeed, studies show that the emphasis on "style" has sidelined many capable women from running for office. The author of this chapter reviews the way several women candidates address the style issue. In discussing Clinton, she shows Hillary actually has a fine sense of humor. Apparently "her first Instagram post showed a rack of pantsuits in red, white, and blue, labeled, 'hard

choices."Overall, the provides a broad overview of the political system. As other reviewers noted, the use of 17 contributors meant an inconsistency of style, lack of a book-length narrative and in-depth coverage of specific topics. It's helpful to understand how campaign financing works and one chapter provides more detail on the laws than many readers will be able to take in.

This thin book reminds me of so many books I had to read for my freshman and sophomore political science classes. This contains essays by 17 different authors, many of them political science/policy instructors or former or present campaign managers. The emphasis is primarily on federal campaigns of the 21st century. Campaigns are now two years in the making summarized in seven-second sound bites. Our attention span is shrinking!The book is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the updated technology and how to best persuade a voter to vote for a particular party. This is collected via the voter's smart phone and the websites visited, prior voting history, candidates that the voter donated to. Yes, one's internet use reveals a lot about a voter and campaigns will use that to their advantage by writing shocking email that may convince a voter to vote for someone else. Fundraising laws have changed over the years and requires acute legal experts to stay informed. There are also paid media like TV and radio ads, blogs written by pundits or citizen bloggers (and then shared via the internet and social media as gospel). Ads even show up now on one's personal social media. Anyone who owns a smartphone or visits social media will get accosted.More interesting to me is part two, the evolving campaign. Tari Renner's essay on "Political Parties -- Reinvigorated" should be the first chapter one reads. Our two political parties seem to advocate opposing themes with each election: the further left the Democrats go, the further right the Republicans drift, and both parties can do a great spin.Other subjects are Interest groups and Super PACS, as they should not be cast aside as they often have the money to pay for excessive campaigns.

• "Campaigns on the Cutting Edge", now in its third edition, is a textbook consisting of 14 chapters by 18 different authors on topics essential to modern political campaigns. Edited by Richard J. Semiatin of American University, the book is organized into two parts, the first of which addresses basic campaign goals, such as fundraising, paid media, voter mobilization, and the place of survey research in campaigns. The second part looks to the broader picture, including political parties, interest groups, Super PACs and independent expenditures, press coverage, campaign finance, voter ID laws, women and campaigns, and minority candidates. Most of the authors are academics, though two are campaign professionals who use their own experience as examples.The

book is a survey on the many facets and challenges of American political campaigns in the 21st century with an emphasis on what has changed in the digital era and as a result of recent Supreme Court decisions concerning campaign finance. It's not detailed enough to be a how-to manual for managing a campaign, and it's written primarily by academics rather than practitioners, but it conveys how campaigns operate with their increasingly integrated and overlapping functions for new campaigners and students alike. Modern campaigns are, of course, driven by technology, but that's not to the exclusion of old-fashioned fundraising, television ads, direct mail, and door-to-door canvassing, and it all must be planned farther in advance than in the past. As for what's new in how campaigns function: everything is fast, huge quantities of data about voters are available, new media are complicated, and no one can figure out how survey research should be conducted.

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