Abstract

Presidential debates have served as a crux of democratic engagement throughout American history. Although the style, technology, and discussion around presidential debates has evolved over decades, the strategies are consistent. The role of media and the ways in which candidates relate to audience members is key to success in presidential debates. The analysis of former presidential debates lends itself to the understanding that through narrative, candidates are able to avoid being perceived as a ‘loser’ when leaving a debate. I analyze the narrative paradigm as well as modern social media concepts of dual screening to evaluate what candidates and their campaign teams can do to succeed in presidential debates.

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