

PSCI 3021: Campaigns and Elections
Prof. Kenneth Bickers
MWF, 1:00-1:50 PM, HLMS 141
Fall 2018-2019

Office: Ketchum Hall 222
Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 MW, and by appt.

Telephone: (303) 492-2363
Email: bickers@colorado.edu

Course Description

Regularly scheduled competitive elections are at the heart of all democratic societies. Indeed, one consequence of the rise of democracy around the world is that for many people, government actions, even when those actions are found to be disagreeable or contrary to our personal preferences, are typically viewed as legitimate, *if* the leaders taking those actions have been duly elected in an electoral system that is broadly viewed as fair. Yet the practice of democracy is often messy and imperfect.

Criticisms are often leveled at American democracy because of its persistently low turnout rates, the frequent lack of serious challengers to incumbents running for reelection, the gerrymandering of electoral maps to protect incumbents, the impact of money on campaigns, the manipulation of voters through media advertisements, the distortion of popular will due to the institution of the electoral college, and more.

In this class, we will exam the electoral system and election campaigns to better understand democratic practice in America and to consider criticisms frequently made about it. We will explore campaigns and elections at the national level, focusing particularly on presidential and congressional elections. We will also focus on local elections, in particular mayoral and city council elections. Our goal will be to understand how campaigns and elections work in America and to explore the various arguments about why election processes work as they do. More fundamentally, the goal is for each student to be self-reflective about strengths and weaknesses of democracy as it is practiced in this country.

Course Requirements

The format of the course will be a combination of lectures, small group exercises, and class room discussions. Class sessions will be kept sufficiently informal that questions and discussions can be entertained. We will regularly discuss the presidential campaigns that will be unfolding during the semester, in order to expand upon issues that are being encountered in readings, discussions, and lectures. There will be a variety of in-class assignments that will deal with the assigned readings. These in-class assignments will occur at most class sessions.

Additionally, there is a mandatory group research project, discussed below. There are three exams (i.e., two midterms and a final). Each of these exams entails a combination of terms and concepts that you will be asked to identify or define, as well as longer essays. Exams are non-cumulative.

In-Class Assignments. In-class assignments will include a number of short memos and responses to readings and topics that are being discussed in class. They are designed to give you an opportunity to think carefully about issues central to understanding political campaigns and elections – issues which you are likely to encounter on an exam. These assignments will be announced during the class period

in which they are assigned, and will be graded using a dichotomous scale of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. A satisfactory grade means that the assignment was seriously attempted. Not being present for an assignment will produce a grade of unsatisfactory. With the exception of absences that have been excused in advance (such as for a university sponsored athletic event or a documented illness) in-class assignments cannot be made up.

Group Research Projects. Each student will be required to work in a group generally involving three students to produce a research project. The question for these research projects is whether the 2018 election cycle is likely to constitute a “wave election”. Each group will be assigned at random a sample of congressional districts. With reference to the districts in its sample, the group will research the factors typically associated with wave elections to determine whether 2018 is likely to offer average prospects for challengers to incumbents, somewhat strong prospects for challengers, or very strong prospects for challengers. All groups will use a common data collection instrument that we will develop as a class activity. Groups will turn in both the data that have been collected (using a common Excel format) and a research paper describing the results of the research. In general, the research papers should be approximately 8-10 pages in length, excluding any pages used for tables or figures. These papers should be double-spaced, using a ten or twelve point font. They will be graded for substantive content, clarity, and grammatical precision. Papers will be penalized one full grade if they are not turned in at the assigned time on the day they are due. A full letter grade reduction will be taken if the research product is submitted after the 10:00 pm deadline and for each three days that go by until it is turned in. Additional specifics about the research papers will be provided in class.

Additionally, each student will submit individually to me a completed form that describes the relative work load of each member of the group. This form will ask you to indicate the approximate percentage of effort engaged in by each member of your group. It will also ask you to provide a short narrative describing the division of labor in researching and preparing the group’s research products. In cases, where the percentages assigned are approximately equal, the same grade will be given to each member of the group. In cases, where percentages diverge by non-trivial amounts, grades may be adjusted up or down so as to deal with problems of free-riding by members of the group.

The overall grade for the course will be determined as follows:

In-class assignments and discussions	14%
Midterm exam 1	20%
Midterm exam 2	20%
Final exam	23%
Group Research Papers	23%

Policies. Assignments will be penalized one full grade if they are not turned in by the assigned deadline. A full letter grade reduction will be taken for each three days that goes by until the assignment is turned in. Please note that the penalty for late submission of the completed survey instruments is a TWO grade reduction in a student’s research paper grade.

A word about my grading policy. No matter how careful, instructors sometimes make mistakes in grading. For that reason, I have an automatic regrade policy, subject to a couple of restrictions. I will be happy to regrade any exam or paper. I ask, however, that you hold on to any item for at least 24 hours after it is returned to you before asking for a regrade. Any request for a regrade must be made within one week after the exam is returned to you, after which no regrading will be done. Should you feel that an assignment has been misgraded, I encourage you to take advantage of this

policy. Ordinarily, the entire exam or paper will be regraded, which means that the grade may go up, go down, or stay the same.

This course tackles subjects that are sometimes viewed as controversial. It is incumbent on every participant in the class (instructor and students alike) to strive to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning. We should always remember that people bring differences with them into the classroom and that these differences should be respected. It is imperative that each of us maintain civility when asking questions and making comments. Likewise, questions and comments by others should be treated with civility at all times.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES – REQUIRED SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Accommodation for Disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Honor Code. All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation. The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking),

discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays. Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you need an accommodation of any scheduled activity due to a conflict with a religious holiday or observance, please let me know in writing of the scheduling conflict at least two weeks prior to the date in question. I will help you work out a suitable accommodation. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible of violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>.

Course Materials

This course involves a substantial amount of reading. For most class sessions, students will be expected to read chapters from books that have been assigned for the course and/or articles in political science journals. I reserve the right to change specific readings during the semester. At least a week's notice will be provided in such cases. Most of the journal articles will be available to you at the class Canvas site. These articles can also be found at Scholar.Google.Com. To access the text of articles on JStor and Scholar Google, you will need to use an on-campus computer or setup a VPN account for an off-campus computer. Information about setting up VPN accounts can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/its/vpn/>.

Two books have been ordered for use in this course:

Stephen C. Craig and David B. Hill. 2010. *The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (Available as a traditional paperback text or in Kindle e-reader form from Amazon.com).

Gary C. Jacobson and Jamie L. Carson. 2015. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 9th ed. Longman. (Available only as a traditional paperback text).

Course Outline

Week 1: August 27 & 29 (No class Friday, Aug. 31) Overview

Topics: Introduction and Course Overview
Tasks, expectations, grading
Thinking as a scientist: empirical, not normative
Constitutional Design: the three branches
Federalism – historical versus contemporary forms of federalism(s)
Types of governments in contemporary America
Election rules are methods for aggregating preferences

Readings: US Constitution, Articles 1-4, Amendments 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, and 26

Resources: Bickers, Kenneth, “Scientific Method”

Week 2: September 5 & 7 –Types of Election Rules

Topics: Review of types of elections rules
Pres. Nominating process for GOP versus Dems
Electoral College: Simple plurality, weighted by population size
US House and State Legislatures: Single Member Districts, w/ simple plurality, though sometimes plurality with runoff
Senate, Governor: At-Large w/ simple plurality or plurality with runoff
Local Variants: single member districts, multi-member at large districts.
cumulative voting systems, nonpartisan versus partisan elections
Electoral rules and their impact on election of women and minorities

Reading: Trounstein, Jessica, and Melody E. Valdini. "The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity." *American Journal of Political Science* 52.3 (2008): 554-569.
Brockington, David, et al. "Minority representation under cumulative and limited voting." *Journal of Politics* 60.04 (1998): 1108-1125.

Week 3: September 10-14 – Presidential Elections

Topics: Do Campaigns Matter (and When)?
The Nominating Process
Nominating Conventions: GOP vs. Dem. party rules, delegates/super-delegates

Readings: Thomas Holbrook. “Campaigns, National Conditions, and U.S. Presidential Elections,” *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 38, n. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 973-998.
Michael John Burton, Daniel M. Shea, and William J. Miller, “Campaign Strategy” in *The Electoral Challenge*, with response by Charlie Black.
James I. Lingle, Diana Owen, and Molly W. Sonner. “Divisive Nominating Mechanisms and Democratic Party Electoral Prospects” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 57, No. 2. (May, 1995), pp. 370-383.

Stephen Ansolabehere and Gary King. "Measuring the Consequences of Delegate Selection Rules in Presidential Nominations" *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2. (May, 1990), pp. 609-621.

Resource: Overview of Nomination and General Election Processes
Nominating Events 2016

Week 4: September 17-21 – Presidential Elections

Topics: Campaign finance in the nomination process
The General Election Process and Electoral College
Campaign finance in the general election process

Readings: Barbara Norrander. "The Attrition Game: Initial Resources, Initial Contests and the Exit of Candidates During the US Presidential Primary Season" *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 36 (2006), 487–507.
Sunshine Hillygus and Simon Jackman. "Voter Decision Making in Election 2000: Campaign Effects, Partisan Activation, and the Clinton Legacy." *American Journal of Political Science* v. 47, n. 4 (Oct., 2003), pp. 583-596.
James C. Garand and T. Wayne Parent. "Representation, Swing, and Bias in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1872-1988," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4. (Nov., 1991), pp. 1011-1031.

Week 5: September 24-28 –Presidential Elections, Introduction to Group Projects, Midterm 1

Topics: Use of polls, media events, paid advertisements
Introduction to research papers
Sample Theory

Readings: Daron R. Shaw. "The Methods behind the Madness: Presidential Electoral College Strategies, 1988-1996." *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 4. (Nov., 1999), pp. 893-913.
Sean Trende. "How to Speak Geek, Part 2: Probability." *Real Clear Politics*, October 28, 2015.
http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2015/10/28/how_to_speak_geek_part_2_probability_128578.html.

September 28 (Friday) – Midterm 1

Week 6: October 1-5 - Congressional Elections

Topics: The Context of congressional elections
Incumbency advantages, Vanishing Marginals, Quality Challengers
Gerrymandering
Introduction to regression analysis

Readings: Jacobson, chs. 1-4, 7
Alan O. Sykes, "An Introduction to Regression Analysis," The Inaugural Coase Lecture. http://www.law.uchicago.edu/files/files/20.Sykes_.Regression.pdf

Alan Abramowitz, Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. "Don't Blame Redistricting for Uncompetitive Elections" *PS: Political Science & Politics*, vol. 39 (2006), pp. 87-90.

Week 7: October 8-12 – Congressional Elections

Topics: National Tides, Wave Elections, and Voting Patterns

Readings: Jacobson, chs. 5-6.

"Agenda Setting in Congressional Elections: The Impact of Issues and Campaigns on Voting Behavior." By Owen Abbe, et al. *Political Research Quarterly*, v. 56, n. 4 (December 2003), pp. 419-430.

Week 8: October 15-19 – Mobilizing Voters, Research Projects

Topics: Swing voters and the impact of media
Research Project Q&A

Readings: William Mayer, "Swing Voters" in *Electoral Challenge*, with response by V. Lance Tarrance.

Michael Franz, "Political Advertising" in *Electoral Challenge*, with responses by Mike Murphy and David Hill.

Week 9: October 22-26 – Political Scandal, Research Projects

Topic: The impact of scandal on voters
Research Project Q&A

Readings: Beth Rosenson, "Scandal, Corruption, and Campaign Ethics", in *Electoral Challenge*, with response by Susan Casey.

Week 10: October 29-November 2 – Local Elections

Topics: Local Electoral Politics: Race, Ethnicity, Group, Place, and Party

Readings: "A typology of nonpartisan election" by Adrian Charles. *Western Political Quarterly* 12 (1959): 449-58.

"The Political Dynamics of Urban Voting Behavior" by Joel Lieske. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 33, No. 1. (Feb., 1989), pp. 150-174.

Schaffner, Brian F., Matthew J. Streb, and Gerald C. Wright. "A new look at the Republican advantage in nonpartisan elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 60.2 (2007): 240-249.

November 2 (Friday) – Group Projects in Canvas Research Paper Dropbox, 8:00 pm

Week 11: November 5-9 – Direct Democracy, Midterm 2

Topic: Ballot Initiatives: Can there be too much democracy?

- Readings: "Direct Democracy and Candidate Elections" by Daniel Smith, in *Electoral Challenge*, ch. 9.
"Grassroots Mobilization" by Peter Wielhouwer, in *Electoral Challenge*, ch. 10.
"The Contingent Effects of Ballot Initiatives and Candidate Races on Turnout."
By Mark Smith. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (July 2001), pp. 700-706.

November 9 (Friday) – Midterm 2

Week 12: November 12-16 – Turnout

- Topics: Who Votes? And Who Doesn't?
Turnout in other democracies.
Rational actor theory of voting: the "paradox of voting"
Election Laws: if voting were less costly, would voter turnout increase?

- Readings: Arend Lijphart. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma."
American Political Science Review, v. 1, n. 1 (1997), pp. 1-14.
Mary Fitzgerald. "Greater Convenience But Not Greater Turnout" *American Politics Research*, v. 33, n. 6 (November, 2005)
John H. Aldrich. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 1. (Feb., 1993), pp. 246-278.

- Resource: Voter Turnout, Comparative Data.xls
Rational actor model of voter turnout.doc

Term Paper: Overview

Week 13: November 26-30 – Turnout (continued)

- Topics: Does Negative Advertising Suppress Voter Turnout or Enhance it?
Does voter contact induce turnout?

- Readings: Child Care & Early Education Research Connections. "Experiments and Quasi-Experiments." National Center for Children in Poverty and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.
<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/datamethods/experimentsquasi.jsp>
Green, Donald P., Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. "Getting out the vote in local elections: results from six door-to-door canvassing experiments." *Journal of Politics* 65.4 (2003): 1083-1096.
Ansolabehere, Stephen, et al. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American political science review* 88.04 (1994): 829-838.
Wattenberg, Martin P., and Craig Leonard Brians. "Negative campaign advertising: Demobilizer or mobilizer?" *American political science review* 93.04 (1999): 891-899.

Resource: Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections.

Week 14: December 3-7 – How do people decide for whom to vote?

Topics: The classic model
Prospective evaluations: the civics model
Retrospective evaluations

Readings: Bafumi, Joseph, and Robert Y. Shapiro. "A new partisan voter." *Journal of Politics* 71.01 (2009): 1-24.
Alvarez, R. Michael, and Jonathan Nagler. "Economics, entitlements, and social issues: Voter choice in the 1996 presidential election." *American Journal of Political Science* 42.4 (1998): 1349-1363.

Resources: Voting Calculation Introduction
Retrospective evaluations
Prospective evaluations

Week 15: December 10 & 12 – Vote Choice (Continued)

Topics: Voting Heuristics

Readings: Stephen Craig and Michael Martinez, "Voter Competence" in *Electoral Challenge*, with response by Mark Blumenthal.

Final Exam: TBD