

PSCI 3021: Campaigns and Elections
Prof. Kenneth Bickers
TTh, 9:30-10:45, MUEN E113
Spring 2019-2020

Office: Ketchum Hall 222
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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, frequent lack of serious challengers to incumbents running for reelection, gerrymandering of electoral maps to protect incumbents, impact of money on campaigns, manipulation of voters through media advertisements, 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, with one exception. The final exam will include a longer essay question that requires that you consider material that you have learned across the full sweep of the semester.

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 (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 this: What electoral strategy is a particular candidate using to gain the nomination or general election victory in the 2020 presidential contest?

Each group of students will be assigned at random one candidate. In this election cycle, that will be one of the candidates vying for the Democratic Party nomination or President Trump on the Republican side. Each group will articulate a number of testable hypotheses (generally two to four) about the type of strategy being employed, based on published research on presidential election strategies. These hypotheses will then be tested using election information from prior presidential election cycles and Census data on the demographic characteristics of the geographies in which the candidates are focusing their electoral efforts.

To make these research projects manageable, it will be acceptable for groups assigned to Democratic Party candidates to concentrate on states holding contests during the month of February through March 3, the so-called Super Tuesday contests. Likewise, groups assigned to the Republican candidate can concentrate on public events held through that same date. Additional specifics about the research papers will be provided in class.

In general, the research papers should be approximately 10 pages in length, excluding a cover page and 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 by the 10:00 pm deadline and for each three days that go by until it is turned in.

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	15%
Midterm exam 1	15%
Midterm exam 2	20%
Final exam	25%
Group Research Papers	25%

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. They are available as traditional paperback texts or in Kindle e-reader form from Amazon.com.

Stephen C. Craig and David B. Hill. 2010. *The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Gary C. Jacobson and Jamie L. Carson. 2019. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 10th ed. Longman.

Course Outline

Week 1: January 14 & 16 – 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

Resource: Bickers, Kenneth, “Scientific Method”

Week 2: January 21 & 23 – 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.

Resources: Bickers, Kenneth, “Electoral Systems Module”
Bickers, Kenneth, “US as a laboratory for studying electoral rules”

Week 3: January 28 & 30 – Presidential Elections

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

Readings: Michael John Burton, Daniel M. Shea, and William J. Miller, “Campaign Strategy” in *The Electoral Challenge*, with response by Charlie Black.
Thomas Holbrook. “Campaigns, National Conditions, and U.S. Presidential Elections,” *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 38, n. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 973-998.

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.

Week 4: February 4 & 6 – 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: February 11 & 13 – Presidential Elections, Midterm 1

Topics: Use of polls, media events, paid advertisements

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.

Midterm 1 – February 13 (Thursday)

Week 6: February 18 & 20 - Congressional Elections

Topics: Introduction to research projects

The context of congressional elections
Incumbency advantages, Vanishing Marginals, Quality Challengers
Gerrymandering

Readings: Jacobson, chs. 1-4
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: February 25 & 27 – 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: March 3 & 5 – Mobilizing Voters, Research Projects

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

Readings: Jacobson, ch. 7.
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: March 10 & 12 – 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.
Alan O. Sykes, "An Introduction to Regression Analysis," The Inaugural Coase Lecture. http://www.law.uchicago.edu/files/files/20.Sykes_.Regression.pdf
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.

Week 10: March 17 & 19 – 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.

Midterm 2 – March 19 (Thursday)

Week 11: March 31 & April 2 – 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.

Week 12: April 7 & 9 – 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: April 14 & 16 – Turnout (continued)

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

Readings: 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.

Resources: 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>

Summary of Green, et al., "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections."

Week 14: April 21 & 23 – 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

Group Projects – Sunday, April 26, 10:00 pm.

Week 15: April 28 & 30 – Vote Choice (Continued)

Topics: Voting Heuristics

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

Final Exam – Tuesday, May 5, 4:30-7:00 pm