

POL4511G
Special Topics: American Elections and Primaries
Thursdays 9:30-11:30 AM
SSC 4103

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I. Introduction and learning objectives:

We will study U.S. congressional and presidential campaigns while paying close attention to the 2020 races. In particular, we will focus on understanding the causes of successes and failures in primary and general election campaigns. We will also cover topics such as the U.S. electoral system, public opinion, political parties, redistricting and gerrymandering, polarization, voting behaviour, and campaign financing. Readings and assignments will include in-depth empirical research on these and other contemporary aspects of American politics. In preparation for the 2020 election we will discuss the presidential primaries as they unfold, election forecasting, electoral maps and math, and presidential campaigns.

A background in American politics is preferred but not required.

II. Course Requirements

- i. Weekly readings. I will assign readings each week on the topic of the week. Some weeks there may be a lot, some less. The average will be about 100 pages per week. The readings will extend from textbook chapters to scholarly data driven articles to historical pieces to shorter journalistic accounts.
- ii. Follow the campaign in the news. Make one of the following your homepage for the duration of the campaign and read some of the others:
 - a) at least one major, non-partisan newspaper such as The New York Times, The Washington Post or The Wall Street Journal; and
 - b) one serious political magazine (print or online) such as Slate, The Daily Beast, Politico, The Hill, or The Weekly Standard; and
 - c) one political-science website such as The Monkey Cage, Mischiefs of Faction, Vox, or 538;
 - d) one history website such as History News Network.
- iii. Watching campaign events. Students are expected to watch the major political events of the campaign season. Watch the debates, news, and especially primary election nights.

III. Required Texts

There are 2 required textbooks for the course and both are (hopefully) available at the bookstore.

1. Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. ISBN-13: 978-0-226-11237-4.
2. John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossmann, Keena Lipsitz. *Campaigns & Elections 3rd Edition*. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-66467-6. (Used second editions are available more cheaply online and would be okay to use but they won't have the 2018 Election Update.)

There will also be additional readings that I will direct you to.

IV. Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class and to be prepared for questions by completing reading assignments *before* the class for which they are assigned. **For exams, students are responsible for material covered in lectures that may not be in the text and for material in the text that may not be covered in lectures.** Final grades will be based on the results of a mid-term test (worth 25% of the final grade), and one final paper (worth 20% of the final grade). Unannounced quizzes may be given from time to time also. The mid-term exam will be composed of mostly essay questions. Class participation and attendance is worth 10% of your grade. The two short assignments are worth 15% each.

Class participation and attendance: 10%

Mid-term: 20% February 27th, take-home.

State paper: 25% due March 5th in class.

Final paper: 25% Due April 2nd in class.

Final exam: 20% exam week.

State paper: Choose a state and discuss its likely presidential choice in 2020. Discuss the state's history in terms of presidential choice as well as Senators, members of Congress, and state offices. Is it reliably Democratic, Republican, split, or what? How is the history of the parties in your state relevant to the present party context? What are the demographics - racial, gender, economic, and geographic - of your state? How have they played a role in its presidential vote in recent elections and how are the demographics likely to affect the choice this year? The paper should be analytical. Focus on how the answers to these questions explain the likely outcome in your state for the November election. EIGHT pages double spaced minimum not counting tables and bibliography. *DUE March 5. You need to have chosen your state and complete a basic outline and list of sources you plan on using to be turned in by February 20.*

All assignments must be handed in on paper at the start of class the day they are due or beforehand. I will not open email attachments. If you are handing in something late take a copy to the department office. Any paper that is handed in late will lose 5% per day it is late. Days start at 8am. After 7 days the paper will receive a grade of 0.

V. Schedule

Week 1: January 9, 2020: Introduction

Readings: The Single Most Important Fact about American Politics:

<http://www.vox.com/2014/6/13/5803768/pew-most-important-fact-american-politics>

Hans Noel. 2010. Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don't. *The Forum* Volume 8, Issue 3.

http://faculty.georgetown.edu/hcn4/Downloads/Noel_Forum.PDF

Podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rru6kyJByo>

Cohen et al. Chapter 3.

Discussion issues: what do we expect to happen in 2020? What factors are most relevant in predicting the election?

Week 2: January 16, 2020: Political Parties and their Evolution in the United States

Readings:

Madison, Federalist 10.

Sides et al. Chapter 6.

Cohen et al. Chapter 4.

Koger and Lebo. 2017. Chapter 6 of *Strategic Party Government: Why winning Trumps Ideology*. "The Dynamics of Partisan Power."

Week 3: January 23, 2020: The American Two-Party System and Presidential Election Basics

Readings:

Sides et al. Chapters 1 & 2

Cohen et al. Chapters 1& 2

Week 4: January 30, 2020: Party Activists and Campaign History

Readings:

Sides et al. Chapter 3

Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism"

Perspectives on Politics, 2011. http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/williamson/files/tea_party_pop.pdf

February 3rd: Iowa Caucus

Week 5: February 6, 2020: Party Identification

Readings:

Lilliana Mason. 2015 "I Disrespectfully Agree: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Behavioral and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1): 128-45.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. "Is polarization a myth?" *The Journal of Politics* 70.02 (2008): 542-555.

Ezra Klein, "The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency Explained."

<http://www.vox.com/2014/5/20/5732208/the-green-lantern-theory-of-the-presidency-explained>

February 11: New Hampshire Primary

Week 6: February 13, 2020: How Parties Choose Candidates

Readings:

Sides Chapter 8

Cohen et al. Chapters 5-7.

Week 7: February 27, 2020: Presidential Primaries

Mid-term DUE

Readings:

Cohen et al. Chapters 8-9

Andrew Prokop (2015), "Political scientists think 'the party' will stop Trump. They shouldn't be so sure," Vox.

Nate Silver (2016), "The Republican Party May Be Failing: What 'The Party Decides' could get wrong about Donald Trump and the GOP," FiveThirtyEight.

March 3rd: Super Tuesday

Week 8: March 5, 2020: Presidential General Election Campaigns

STATE PAPER DUE

Readings:

Sides Chapter 9

Gelman, A., and Gary King. (1993). "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Voters Are So Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23: 409-451.

Week 9: March 12, 2020: Voter Choice and Participation

Readings:

Sides Chapters 12 & 13

+1 reading

Week 10: March 19, 2020: House and Senate Elections 1

Readings:

Sides Chapter 10

Jamie Carson, Gregory Koger, Matthew Lebo, and Everett Young. 2010. "The Electoral Consequences of Party Loyalty in Congress." Reprinted for *AJPS Special Online Issue on 2010 Elections*.

<https://docs.google.com/a/stonybrook.edu/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=c3Rvbmlcm9vay5lZHV8bWF0dGhldy1sZWJvfGd4OjQ2MTU2OGIxZjdkMDkzNA>

Week 11: March 26: House and Senate Elections 2

Sides et al. Chapters 4&5.

Barry Burden. 2010. "Local and National Forces in Congressional Elections" *Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476-e-24>

This American Life: "Take the Money and Run for Office"

Transcript: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/461/transcript>

audio: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/461/take-the-money-and-run-for-office>

Week 12: April 2, 2020: Redistricting, Reapportionment, and Gerrymandering

FINAL PAPER DUE

McGhee, "The Effect of Redistricting on House Elections, Revisited" in *The Monkey Cage*, a *Washington Post Blog*, October 15, 2012.

Anthony J. McGann, Charles Anthony Smith, Michael Latner, and J. Alex Keena. 2015. "A Discernable and Manageable Standard for Partisan Gerrymandering." *Election Law Journal* Volume 14, Number 4.

Also, go to Common Cause and look up redistricting: <https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/gerrymandering-and-representation/>

VI. Makeup Exam Policy

It is essential that you understand the following policy for the course since *no exceptions will be made*. No exams may be taken early for any reason. A student who misses an exam must provide a *very good* reason supported by evidence such as a hospital admittance form. If you are ill prior to an exam, let me know as soon as possible beforehand if you may miss the exam. Failure to write one of the exams without providing a sufficient excuse will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

VII. What is Expected from Students

I expect every student to come to class fully prepared. That means you have read the required reading prior to class. This will make much of the discussion review for you and you will find class to be a good time to raise questions you may have about the reading. Class discussion is more interesting than lectures and is greatly enhanced by well-informed questions and comments. I hope that you feel free to voice your comments and to question my lectures. However, you are expected to be respectful of myself and the other students in the class especially when it comes to discussing issues with which people may have strong feelings.

Staying informed with current events is a good way for you to apply what you are learning in class to the real world. In terms of grades, there is no substitution for hard work. Test questions will be fair, though difficult, and will come from books or lecture material. If you have questions or require additional help, please let me know.

VIII. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
3. Making up sources or facts;
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test;
3. Misrepresenting your identity; and
4. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and
3. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

X. Accommodations for Disability

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services.

APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar*

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>

"Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Academic Offences

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (Sen. Min. Feb.4/49, May 23/58, S.94, S.3538, S.3632, S.04-097) A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Medical Policy, Late Assignments, etc.

Students registered in Social Science should refer to

https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at www.registrar.uwo.ca
- Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at: <https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>
- Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/>
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Procedures for Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are **not** an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- must communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration **is not** normally intended for students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability. These students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic

Accommodation for Students with Disability.

Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). These students should access support through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the **online Self-Reported Absence portal**. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities **within 48 hours or less**.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

Students will be allowed:

- a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April;
- a maximum of one self-reported absence between May and August.

Any absences in excess of the number designated above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- Self-reported absences **will not be** allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period;
- Self-reporting **may not be** used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a medical absence not covered by existing Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation, will be required to provide documentation in person to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in the form of a completed, signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Non-Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence will be required to provide appropriate documentation to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.