

# Political Science 390: Campaigns and Elections

Dickinson College, Fall 2020

Wednesday 1:30-4:30

Professor Sarah Niebler

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00; Thursday 1:00-2:00; and by appointment

Zoom Link for Class and Office Hours: [REDACTED]

## Course Description

This course is a senior research seminar on Campaigns and Elections. The readings consist of a mix of contemporary and classic scholarly works on various aspects of American elections including candidate emergence; the role of money in elections; polling; and media coverage of campaigns, among others. Since this seminar occurs during an election season, students should expect to actively engage with current events, relating course topics to what they are observing in the day-to-day campaigns of the presidential race, but also of congressional and gubernatorial elections. Political pundits and commentators generate a tremendous amount of analysis, commentary, and predictions about American elections; however, in this class we will move beyond these types of comments in an attempt to understand how voters decide and how campaigns persuade.

Successful students will: demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of campaigns and elections; apply and evaluate theories and evidence; actively participate in, and help lead class discussion; identify unresolved questions in the existing literature; and produce and present an original piece of scholarly research that contributes to our knowledge of elections in the United States.

Learning objectives for the course are for students to be able to:

- Recognize the central thesis of books and articles assigned in the seminar, while also explaining how the authors develop and defend their arguments. Students should also be able to critically analyze authors' work.
- Identify, use, and apply the concepts and theories essential to the subject of the seminar and discussed in the assigned readings, resulting in substantive knowledge of political science.
- Formulate a clear research question, examine what other scholars have said about it, and conduct their own research to address the question at hand, both orally and in writing.

## Course Materials

There are two required books for the course (available at the bookstore):

- Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2019. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton University Press.
- Streb, Matthew J. 2016. *Rethinking American Electoral Democracy*. Third Edition. Routledge.

Additional readings are available on Moodle, online, or through the Dickinson College Library as specified in the syllabus.

Please note that the reading for this course is substantial. Many of the readings are scholarly articles that can be dense and take some time to read carefully and thoroughly. Given that this class meets only one time per week, you **MUST** plan ahead. You will not be able to do all the reading, writing, and preparation required for each class period if you wait until the last minute to start the work.

Requirements and Grading

Active participation in this course is essential. Since we are a seminar and meet only once per week, it is my sincere hope that you will participate in all the group zoom sessions. If you miss class, you will need to be in touch with me about how to make up for your missed participation. During our synchronous zoom class time, we will analyze and discuss the readings each week, and I hope you will contribute to that discussion frequently and thoughtfully. I expect students to answer questions that are posed, ask questions about concepts that are not clear, (respectfully, thoughtfully, and with evidence) challenge viewpoints that are presented, and think critically.

We will talk about all graded assignments in-depth on the first day of class and throughout the semester. Guidelines for all assignments can also be found on the course Moodle pages. The relative weight and due date of each component is as follows:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percent of Overall Grade</b>	<b>Due Date(s)</b>
Participation and Engagement	15%	
Statement of Purpose / Introduction Document	5%	August 19
Reading Memos	2 @ <u>10% each</u> 20% total	<b>Due by MONDAY at 11:59 p.m.</b> August 31 September 7 September 21 September 28 October 5 October 26
Election Papers	4 @ <u>5% each</u> 20% total	August 26 September 16 October 14 October 21
Research Paper Benchmarks	4 @ <u>2.5% each</u> 10% total	Research Question = September 2 Annotation of Five Relevant Sources = September 23 Two pages – “What Others Have Said” = October 7 One page – “What I Will Do” = October 28
Research Paper Presentation	5%	November 11 November 18
Final Paper	25%	Saturday, December 5 @ 5:00p.m.

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way:

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D = 60-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	F = 0-59
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	

### Academic Integrity

From Dickinson College's Community Standards... "Respect for ideas — our own and others' — is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another's words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors."

([http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean\\_of\\_students/867/community\\_standards/2](http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean_of_students/867/community_standards/2))

Students must complete their own work. You may certainly discuss your ideas with your colleagues, but the work you hand in must be your own. In everything you write in this course, you must properly cite all your sources. I prefer for you to use Chicago style with in-text citations (as opposed to footnotes). As seniors preparing to write a significant research paper, you should already know how to cite your materials properly. If you do not, please consult the library's research guides and/or the library liaison for political science, Ian Boucher ([boucheri@dickinson.edu](mailto:boucheri@dickinson.edu)). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask sooner rather than later.

### Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to [www.dickinson.edu/ADS](http://www.dickinson.edu/ADS) or email [access@dickinson.edu](mailto:access@dickinson.edu). If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please follow the guidance at [www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan](http://www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan) for disclosing the accommodations for which you are eligible and scheduling a meeting with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your accommodations and finalize your Access Plan.

Additionally, ADS created some resources specifically dealing with the remote learning environment, which can be found here: <https://www.dickinson.edu/SOAR>.

Please know that I am committed to working with all students so they can succeed in this course. I encourage you to contact me via email or come to office hours if you have any questions or concerns.

### Covid-19 and the Fall Semester

These are extraordinary times in the country and the world, and this course is meeting remotely because of these circumstances. I know this is not the semester you imagined, but I hope we can work together to make the best of a difficult situation. Please know that I value your health and well-being and am happy to work with you if unexpected things arise throughout the semester if you communicate with me. I am hopeful students will be able to participate in class largely with their cameras on, but you are not required to have your video on during class. We will talk about participation and how best to run class discussion on the first day of the semester.

### Outline of the Course

#### August 19 – **Statement of Purpose Due**; Voting Rights and Electoral Democracy

- Streb, Chapters 1-3, pages 1-57
- Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 1-32
- “How to Win a Campaign” (Video on Moodle)

#### August 26 – **Election Paper #1 Due**; Who Runs for Office? Candidate Emergence

- Maisel, L. Sandy and Walter J Stone. 1997. “Determinants of Candidate Emergence in U.S. House Elections: An Exploratory Study.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 22(1): 79-96.
- Lawless, Jennifer L. 2012. Becoming a Candidate: Political Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office. "The Decision to Run for Office", "Biting the Bullet", and "Future Patterns of Candidate Emergence and Studies of Political Ambition", pages 14-30 and 164-199.
- Silva, Andrea and Carrie Skulley. 2019. “Always Running: Candidate Emergence among Women of Color over Time.” *Political Research Quarterly* 72(2): 342-359.

#### September 2 – **Research Question Drafts Due**; How to Count Votes

- Wolf, Zachary B. and Adam Levy. 2020. “The Democrats’ Delegate Rules Explained.” *CNN*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/03/politics/democrats-delegate-rules-2020-explained/index.html>.
- “2020 Democratic Delegate Allocation and Selection.” 2020. *Frontloading HQ*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://frontloading.blogspot.com/p/2020-democratic-delegate-allocation-and.html>.
- Streb, Chapter 9, pages 160-180
- “Alternative Voting Systems.” 2020. *National Council of State Legislatures*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/alternative-voting-systems.aspx>
- Goux, Darshan J. and David A. Hopkins. 2008. “The Empirical Implications of Electoral College Reform.” *American Politics Research* 36(6): 857-879.

#### September 9 – Redistricting and Gerrymandering

- Streb, Chapter 7, pages 117-138
- Abramowitz, Alan A., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. 2006. “Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections.” *The Journal of Politics*. 68(1): 75-88.
- Hayes, Danny and Seth C. McKee. 2009. “The Participatory Effects of Redistricting” *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 1006-1023.

- Waters, Carlos. 2017. “The Difference Between Racial and Partisan Gerrymandering.” *Vox*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/videos/2017/7/24/16012440/racial-partisan-gerrymandering-redistricting-supreme-court-video>
- Pierce, Olga and Kate Rabinowitz. 2017. “‘Partisan’ Gerrymandering is Still About Race.” *ProPublica*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.propublica.org/article/partisan-gerrymandering-is-still-about-race>

September 16 – **Election Paper #2 Due**; The Impact of Money

- Streb, Chapter 10, pages 181-204
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. “Why is There So Little Money in US Politics?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105-130. (Available on Moodle)
- Christenson, Dino P. and Corwin D. Smidt. 2011. “Riding the Waves of Money: Contribution Dynamics in the 2008 Presidential Nomination Contest” *Journal of Political Marketing* 10:4-26. (Available on Moodle)
- Franz, Michael M. 2010. “The Citizens United Election? Or Same As It Ever Was?” *The Forum* 8(4): 1-24. (Available on Moodle)
- Kalla, Joshua L. and David E. Broockman. 2016. “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558.

September 23 – **Annotation of Relevant Sources Due**; Congressional Elections

- Mayhew, David. 1974. Congress: The Electoral Connection. “The Electoral Incentive”, pages 13-77. (Available on Moodle)
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2019. “Extreme Referendum: Donald Trump and the 2018 Midterm Elections.” *Political Science Quarterly* 134(1): 9-38.
- Dottle, Rachael, Ella Koeze, and Julia Wolfe. 2018. “The 2018 Midterms, In 4 Charts.” *FiveThirtyEight.com*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-2018-midterms-in-4-charts/>

September 30 – Presidential Nominating Contests

- Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 3-4, pages 33-68
- Streb, Chapter 8, pages 139-159
- Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform. “The Invisible Primary: Theory and Evidence”, pages 187-234. (Available on Moodle; skim pages 192-230)

October 7 – **“What Have Others Said” Draft Due**; Presidential General Elections

- Sides and Vavreck, Chapters 5-7, pages 69-129
- Blog Posts About 2020 Election TBD

October 14 – **Election Paper #3 Due**; Media Coverage of Campaigns and Elections

- Iyengar, Shanto, Helmut Norpoth, and Kyu S. Hahn. 2004. “Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horseshoe Sells” *The Journal of Politics* 66(1): 157-175.
- Young, Dannagal. 2013. “Laughter, Learning, or Enlightenment? Viewing and Avoidance Motivations Behind *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*” *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. 57(2): 153-169.
- Hardy, Bruce W., Jeffrey A. Gottfried, Kenneth M. Winneg, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2014. “Stephen Colbert’s Civics Lesson: How Colbert Super PAC Taught Viewers About Campaign Finance” *Mass Communication and Society* 17: 329-353.
- Francia, Peter L. 2018. “Free Media and Twitter in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Unconventional Campaign of Donald Trump.” *Social Science Computer Review* 36(4): 440-455.

October 21 – **Election Paper #4 Due**; Polling

- Lepore, Jill. 2015. “Politics and the New Machine.” *The New Yorker*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/16/politics-and-the-new-machine>
- “Breaking News Consumer’s Handbook: Election Polls Edition, Part 2”. 2016. *WNYC Studios On the Media*. Accessed on July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/breaking-news-consumers-handbook-election-polls-edition-part-2>
- Kennedy, Courtney et al. 2018. “An Evaluation of the 2016 Election Polls in the United States.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82(1): 1-33.
- Grey Ellis, Emma. 2020. “Here’s How to Properly Read an Election Poll.” *Wired*. Accessed July 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.wired.com/story/polls-explained/>

October 28 – **“What I Will Do” Draft Due**; Direct Democracy and Ballot Initiatives

- Streb, Chapter 4, pages 58-80
- Bowler, Shaun and Todd Donovan. 2010. “Direct Democracy in the United States” in The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior. Jan E. Leighley, ed. Oxford University Press. (Available on Moodle)

November 4 – The Future of American Political Campaigns and Election 2020 Debrief

- Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, Chapters 8-9, pages 154-220
- Streb, Chapter 11, pages 205-212

November 11 – Student Presentations and Feedback Session

November 18 – Student Presentations and Feedback Session

**Saturday, December 5 @ 5:00p.m. – Final Papers Due**

Class Topic	Final Hour
8/19 - Voting Rights and Electoral Democracy	- Introductions and Expectations
8/26 - Who Runs for Office	- Election Papers
9/2 - How to Count Votes	- Breakout Rooms – Research Questions
9/9 - Redistricting and Gerrymandering	- The Redistricting Game (plus discuss board)
9/16 - Impact of Money	- Documentary (plus discuss board)
9/23 - Congressional Elections	“Meet the Donors” – Kanopy
9/30 - Presidential Nominations	- Breakout Rooms – Sources for Papers
	- Documentary (plus discuss board)???
	“Chisholm ‘72” – Kanopy
	– Breakout Rooms - Lit Reviews
10/7 - Presidential General Elections	- OFF
10/14 - Media Coverage	- OFF
10/21 - Polling	- Breakout Rooms – Methodology
10/28 - Direct Democracy and Ballot Initiatives	- OFF
11/4 - 2020 Election Debrief	- Questions about Presentations
11/11 - Presentations	- OFF
11/18 - Presentations	- OFF