



Political Parties, Campaigns, & Elections

POSC 335 (51985)

Professor _____

- Dr. Jennifer Cryer
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Course Info. _____

- Mon & Wed
- 2:00PM - 3:20PM
- Dauterive Hall (VPD), #116
- No Prerequisites or Textbooks
- blackboard.usc.edu

Office Hours _____

- Tuesdays & Wednesdays
- 4:00PM - 5:00PM
- CPA #301B, or by appt. via

TA(s)/Grader(s) –

- Raquel Centeno
- racenten@usc.edu

Acknowledgements: This course design was inspired by syllabi from Dr. C. Grose's POSC335 @ USC, & Dr. S. Iyengar's PS120B @ Stanford.

Overview

This course examines the theories and practices of U.S. elections, electoral institutions, voter mobilization, political parties, media coverage, & political campaigns. In it, you will learn how to analyze the behavior of actors—such as candidates, journalists, & voters—specifically their incentives, beliefs, and actions. The scholarship will be examined primarily with U.S. elections: presidential, legislative, & state. We cover topics ranging from "big-data" analytical campaign techniques, the impact of campaigns on public opinion & voter behavior, as well as long-term consequences for the democratic process. You will learn rigorous cutting-edge research, such that your own conclusions are well-considered & scientifically substantiated.

Objectives

- Learn to critically skim, review, and summarize peer-reviewed research
- Understand statistical methodologies commonly used in political science
- Identify and test general propositions about the behaviors of political actors
- Improve research writing and master political science discourse norms

Materials

No textbook required. All assigned readings will be provided via Blackboard .

Assignments & Grading Scale

20%	Information Briefs (×2)
30%	Response Papers (×3)
5%	Research Topic & Bibliography Worksheet (Due By: Oct 4)
5%	Research Paper Analysis Worksheet (Due By: Oct 18)
15%	First Draft Research Paper (Due By: Nov 3)
25%	Final Draft Research Paper (Due By: Dec 10)

	F	D	D ⁺	C ⁻	C	C ⁺	B ⁻	B	B ⁺	A ⁻	A
%	<60	60-65	66-69	70-72	73-75	76-79	80-82	83-85	86-89	90-94	≥95
GPA	0	1	1.3	1.7	2	2.3	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.0

Article Response Papers

Students will complete three (3) one-page response papers, each *briefly* summarizing module readings before discussing relevant issues & evaluating their arguments. The first is due by Sept. 15; the second by Oct. 13; the third by Nov. 17.

Module Information Briefs

Students will complete two (2) one-page fact sheets. Info briefs must cover a module and contain the key terms, data, findings & broader implications, the Student finds central to the topic. The first is due by Sept. 29; the second by Nov. 29.

Research Paper & Components

Students will write one (1) ≈ fifteen page research paper due by Dec 10. This paper evaluates the scholarship about a topic, tests a hypothesis, & presents relevant evidence. This assignment will be worked on over the course of the semester.

FAQs

? What are Office Hours?

! Office hours are time set aside for you to discuss the course or related interests, & are proven to impact academic success.

? Is Attendance Graded?

! No, attendance is not a component of the grade. However, skipping class risks missing context, clarity, & tips.

? Can I Get Extra Credit?

! Yes, +1% EC each is provided for submitting questions for class guest speakers via Blackboard, incorporating extra content in assignments, or attending office hours at least once—up to 3%.

? How Should I Cite?

! I will accept Chicago style citations/references, or any modification of the CMS. Please use the Chicago Manual Style Guide [↗](#) or the APSA Style Guide [↗](#)

? How Much Reading?

! This course requires *reading to survey* main ideas and findings. Oftentimes this means it is alright to skim over portions of text. Expect to read ≈3 hours/week.

? What's Expected?

! This course is an interactive lecture. Students are expected to have scanned assigned readings, and to discuss theories in class.

? Feedback Matters!

! An incentive of 2% extra credit total will be provided to ALL students if 90% of the class completes mid- and end-semester course reviews.

Accessibility & Course Design

It is the USC's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical, psychological, or academic barriers based on disability/condition, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss the adjustments necessary to overcome the limitations of the course design and ensure your inclusion. You may consult the Office of Disability Services and Programs [↗](#) to facilitate this conversation at 1-213-740-0776 or DSPFrontDesk@usc.edu.



Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, USC will provide up-to-date information via the Department of Public Safety website & TrojansAlert messages. In a declared emergency where travel to campus is infeasible, USC will announce an electronic mode of instruction. Report incidents directly to the USC Department of Public Safety [↗](#) at 1-213-740-4321 (University Park campus) or 1-323-442-1000 (Health Sciences campus), & be familiar with Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness [↗](#) policy.

Diversity and Inclusivity

I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, beliefs, ideologies - and other visible & non-visible differences. Members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment for every other member. Incidents of bias, hate crimes & microaggressions can be reported to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX [↗](#) at 1-213-740-5086 or eotix@usc.edu, to allow for appropriate investigation and response.

Academic Conduct & Integrity

The USC Office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards has severe sanctions for academic misconduct [↗](#). Academic dishonesty can include, Plagiarism or presenting someone's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in similarly-phrased words, without attribution. Or Contract Cheating i.e. submission of course work done by others on your behalf without receiving authorization. Students are expected to be familiar with all USC Dornsife policies on student integrity [↗](#).

Mental Health & Crisis Intervention

If harmful experiences outside of the course impact your life, please consult with the USC Student Counseling Services [↗](#), which provides free & confidential mental health treatment for students, at 1-213-740-7711 or Campus Support & Intervention [↗](#), which provides academic support & crisis intervention, at 1-213-740-0411.

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording/accessing sufficient food to eat every day, accessing technological services, or lack a safe & viable place to live, & you believe that this may affect your performance in this course, please visit The Student Basic Needs Department [↗](#) at 3730 McClintock Ave #135, Los Angeles, CA 90089.

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention

USC Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services [↗](#) provides immediate & confidential therapy for situations related to sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, etc. Contact the on-call counselor at USC Engmann Student Health Center [↗](#) to confidentially discuss options, rights, & support at 1-213-740-9355 (WELL) (press "0 after-hours) or in Suite 356.

Class Schedule

* = Required Reading

MODULE 1: Understanding Election Institutions & Processes

8/23 SYLLABUS OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTION

8/25 HOW DO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WORK?

* Rebecca B. Morton. "Presidential Elections". In *Anal. Elections New Institutionalism Am. Polit.* 2006 Samuel Krislov. "The electoral college". *Parliam. Aff.* 11, no. 4 (1957)

8/30 HOW DO CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS WORK?

* Rebecca B. Morton. "Congressional Elections". In *Anal. Elections New Institutionalism Am. Polit.* 2006

9/1 WHY DO WE EVEN VOTE?

* Elisabeth Gidengil. "The Decision to Vote or to Abstain". In *Oxford Res. Encycl. Polit.* October. 2016 * Alan Hamlin et al. "Expressive voting". In *Oxford Handb. Public Choice*, vol. 1. 2019

9/6 HOLIDAY 🏠 ✈️

NO CLASS

9/8 WHY PARTIES IN THE FIRST PLACE?

* John H. Aldrich. "Political Parties in & Out of Legislatures". In *Oxford Handb. Polit. Sci.* 2011 Zoltan L Hajnal et al. "The Electoral Implications of Nonpartisanship". In *Why Am. Don't Join Party*. Mar. 2011

MODULE 2: Who Gets to Run, and Why Should We Care?

9/13 PARTY-BOSSES ARE POWERFUL (MAYBE)

* Hans J.G. Hassell. "Party Control of Primary Parties". *J. Polit.* 78, no. 1 (2015) Marty Cohen et al. "Polls or Pols?" *Brookings Rev.* 21, no. 3 (2003)

9/15 Response Paper 1 Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

CHALLENGER QUALITY & DEMOGRAPHICS ARE NOT RANDOM

* Pamela Ban et al. "Challenger Quality and the Incumbency Advantage". *Legis. Stud. Q.* 41, no. 1 (2016) Dawn L. Teele et al. "Social Roles and Women's Underrepresentation in Politics". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 112, no. 3 (2018)

9/20 EXTREMISTS KEEP RUNNIN' & THEY DON'T STOP RUNNIN'

* Danielle M. Thomsen. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run". *J. Polit.* 76, no. 3 (2014) C.R. Grose. "Top-Two & Open Primaries Associated with More Moderate Legislators". *J.P.I.P.E.* 1, no. 2 (2020)

MODULE 3: The Fourth Estate: Journalists & Elites on Campaigns

9/22 THE MEDIA PRIMES, FRAMES, & AGENDA SETS

* Shanto Iyengar. "News and Public Opinion". In *Media Polit. A Citizen's Guid.* 2007 Karen Schnell et al. "How the News Media Frame Elite Policy Discourse". *Polit. Commun.* 18, no. 2 (2001)

9/27 NEWS COVERAGE AFFECTS OUR EVALUATIONS

* Martin Gilens et al. "Mass Media & the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates". *J. Polit.* 69, no. 4 (2007) * Kim L. Fridkin et al. "The Role of Candidate Traits in Campaigns". *J. Polit.* 73, no. 1 (2011)

9/29 Info Brief 1 Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

ELITES & MEDIA MAY SHIFT PUBLIC OPINION

* Gabriel S Lenz. "Learning and Opinion Change, not Priming". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* 53, no. 4 (2009) Steven Kull et al. "Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War". *Polit. Sci. Q.* 118, no. 4 (2003)

MODULE 4: Commercial Breaks: Issues & Strategies in Campaign Ads

10/4 Research Paper Topic & Bibliography Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

CANDIDATES HIGHLIGHT REPUTATIONS & STRENGTHS

* Anne Johnston et al. "Image Ads & Issue Ads In U.S. Presidential Advertising". *J. Commun.* 52, no. 2 (2002)

John R Petrocik. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* 40, no. 3 (1996)

10/6 ADS LEVERAGE THE DIVIDES BETWEEN US TO (DE)MOBILIZE

* D. Sunshine Hillygus et al. "Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns". In *The Persuadable Voter*. 2014

Vincent Price. "Social Identification and Public Opinion". *Public Opin. Q.* 53, no. 2 (1989)

10/11 NEGATIVE ADS ATTRACT ATTENTION & DEMOBILIZE RIVALS

* Jürgen Maier et al. "Campaign Negativity, Emotions, and Media Coverage". *Int. J. Press.* 25, no. 4 (2020)

* Yanna Krupnikov et al. "Candidate Race & Campaign Strategy". *Polit. Commun.* 32, no. 1 (2015)

MODULE 5: Voter Polarization and (Digital) Incivility

10/13 Response Paper 2 Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

IT'S NOT BUSINESS, IT'S STRICTLY PERSONAL

* Carroll Doherty. *Partisanship & Political Animosity in 2016*. Tech. rep. 2016

Leonie Huddy et al. "Expressive Partisanship". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 109, no. 1 (2015)

* Samara Klar et al. "Affective Polarization or Partisan Disdain?" *Public Opin. Q.* 82, no. 2 (2018)

Lilliana Mason. "The Polarizing Consequences of Ideological Identities". *Public Opin. Q.* 82, no. S1 (2018)

10/18 Research Paper Analysis Sheet Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

MOTIVATED REASONING INFLUENCES SOME INFO. SEEKING

* Elizabeth Dubois et al. "The Echo Chamber Is Overstated". *Inf. Commun. Soc.* 21, no. 5 (2018)

* E. Bakshy et al. "Exposure to Ideologically Diverse News & Opinion on Facebook". *Science.* 348, no. 6239 (2015)

10/20 MEDIA COVERAGE AFFECTS POLARIZATION

* Diana C. Mutz et al. "Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 99, no. 1 (2005)

D. Moskowitz. "Local News, Information, & the Nationalization of Elections". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 115, no. 1 (2021)

MODULE 6: The Voting Booth & The Campaign: A History of Election Standards

10/25 VOTING NORMS IMPACT PARTICIPATION

* Richard Bense. *Law, Identity, & the Polling Place in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, 01, 2003

Henry E. Brady et al. "The Costs of Finding and Getting to the Polling Place". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 105, no. 1 (2011)

10/27 THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT IMPROVED REPRESENTATION

* Rebecca B. Morton. "Minority Voters and Representation". In *Anal. Elections New Institutionalism* *Am. Polit.* 2006

Adriane Fresh. "The Effect of the Voting Rights Act on Enfranchisement". *J. Polit.* 80, no. 2 (2018)

11/1 DONORS CONTRIBUTE TO THE IN-GROUP & GET PERKS

* J. Kalla et al. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* 60, no. 3 (2015)

* J.M. Grumbach et al. "Gender, Race, and Intersectionality in Campaign Finance". *Polit. Behav.* – (2020)

11/3 First Draft Research Paper Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

THE DEBATE ON CAMPAIGN & VOTING REGULATIONS

* Bruce E. Cain. "More or Less: Searching for Regulatory Balance". In *Race, Reform, Regul. Elect. Process*. 2011

* The Economist. *How would HR 1, which the House passed on March 3rd, change American elections?*, Mar. 2021

MODULE 7: Worth the Hype? Data Analytics, Campaigns, & Election Science

11/8 CAMPAIGNS & GOV'T COLLECT EXHAUSTIVE VOTER DATA

* Eitan D. Hersh et al. "The Policy Roots of Elite Perceptions". In *Hacking the Electorate*. 2015

Eitan D. Hersh. "The Public Code of Racialized Electioneering". In *Hacking the Electorate*. 2015

11/10 THAT DOESN'T MEAN ELECTIONS ARE PREDICTABLE

* Seo-young Silvia Kim et al. "The Divided (But Not More Predictable) Electorate". 2021

Nicholas Confessore et al. "Data Firm Says 'Secret Sauce' Aided Trump; Many Scoff". *New York Times* (2017)

Jill Lepore. "Scientists Use Big Data to Sway Elections: Welcome to the 1960s". *Nature* 585, no. 7825 (2020)

MODULE 8: Voter Turnout & The Effects of Campaigns

11/15 DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS TURNOUT DIFFERENTLY, & THAT'S PROBLEMATIC

* Jan E. Leighley et al. "Demographics of Turnout". In *Who Votes Now?* 2013

* Karen M. Kauffman. "The Gender Gap". *PS Polit. Sci. Polit.* 39, no. 3 (2006)

11/17 Response Paper 3 Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

THE EFFECTS OF CAMPAIGNS ON VOTERS ARE MIXED

* Shanto Iyengar. "Campaigns That Matter". In *Media Polit. A Citizen's Guid.* 2007

Robert A. Jackson. "Voter Mobilization". In *New Dir. Campaign. Elections*. 2011

11/22 SOCIAL PRESSURE IS A GREAT VOTER TURNOUT TOOL

* Tiffany Davenport et al. "The Enduring Effects of Social Pressure". *Polit. Behav.* 32, no. 3 (2010)

* R. Bond et al. "A 61-Mil-Person Experiment in Social Influence & Political Mobilization". *Nature* 489, no. 7415 (2012)

11/24 HOLIDAY 🏠 ✈️

NO CLASS

MODULE 9: Can Voters Hold Candidates (and Democracy) Accountable?

11/29 Info Brief 2 Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

VOTERS CAN PUNISH/REWARD POLITICIANS

* Rebecca B. Morton. "Controlling the Behavior of Elected Officials". In *Anal. Elections*. 2006

S. Ansolabehere et al. "Accountability from the Constituent's Perspective". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* – (2021)

12/1 BUT INCUMBENTS PRIMARILY LISTEN TO SUPPORTERS

* D. Butler et al. "Pols Discount Opinions of Constituents with Whom They Disagree". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* 60, no. 4 (2016)

Pablo Barberá et al. "Who Leads? Who Follows?" *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 113, no. 4 (2019)

12/10 Final Draft Research Paper Due

By 11:59PM Via Blackboard/E-mail

Representation in Course Materials

The American Political Science Association has identified representing the diversity of the profession as a core objective. Thus, I welcome your suggestions to improve this course such that assigned scholarship addresses the perspectives, approaches, methodologies, and epistemologies of all backgrounds & peoples.

Academic Freedom & Expression

While students should feel free to take reasoned exception to the data or theories offered in any course of study, and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, they are still responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Further, all members of the USC community have a responsibility to provide and maintain an atmosphere of free inquiry and expression respecting the fundamental human rights of others, and the rights of others based upon the nature of the educational process and the rights of the institution.