

PSC215
Hutch 473, 11:05-12:20 T-Th

Fall 2016

American Elections

We will study American elections: presidential, congressional and state primary and general elections. In particular, we will look at how the institutions and rules (t)-2 (.w16r)6 (ut)-2 m i eum6r at the policy representation that emerges from these electoral processes.

r, we'll focus on the presidential primaries and caucuses that will take place
e semester.

ll be a midterm and a final. Class attendance is expected and grades will reflect
tion, primarily in class. Be sure to complete the assigned readings by the first
d for each on the syllabus—the lectures will assume you have done the readings.

Hours: Thursday 1:15-2:30, other times available by email request.

Law, Grossman and Litsitz *Campaigns and Elections 2*

nd Ed.

Other readings will be available on Blackboard or by email. The text will provide much of the basic material for the course. It will be supplemented by additional political science readings. And there will also be current material, often from online sources about the electoral process.

NOTE: As I add new/replace material on the syllabus, I will update the readings on Blackboard or send you a link by email.

Grading:

You are encouraged to discuss course readings, assignments, and exam questions from prior years with your fellow students. However, all written work that is handed in must be done independently and not in collaboration with another.

Class Participation	10%
Midterm Exam, in class March 17	40%
Final Wednesday, December 21, 1600	50%

Writing section students:

Class Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	35%

Final Friday, May 6, 8:30 AM 40%

Paper 15%

There will be a separate email sent to W students about the paper requirements.

Introduction. Sept 1 (Th)

- [3] [Chen and Rodden](#), 2013 “Unintentional Gerrymandering: Political Geography and Electoral Bias in Legislatures.” Quarterly Journal of Political Science.
- [4] [Wang](#), “The Great Gerrymander of 2012,” NYT Feb 2, 2013
- [5] [Sides and McGhee](#)

[3] Wasserman “How Demographics Will Shape the 2016 Election”
FiveThirtyEightPolitics Dec 3, 2015.

[4] Huang, Taofang, and Daron Shaw. 2009 “Beyond the Battlegrounds? Electoral
College Strategies in the 2008 Presidential Election.” *Journal of Political Marketing*,
Volume 8 Issue 4 pp 272-291.]

[5] Goldstein, Ken, Matthew Dallek and Joel Rivlin. 2014. “Even the Geeks are
Polarized: The Dispute over the 'Real Driver' in American Elections” [The Forum, Vol 12
Issue 2.]

[6] [NYT Upshot Polls](#)

[3] Jeffrey M. Stonecash “The 2010 Elections: Party Pursuits, Voter Perceptions, and the Chancy Game of Politics”

[4] Zachary Courser “The Tea Party at the Election” [2] thru [4] in *The Forum* Vol 8 Issue 4, 2010.

[5] [Sabato predictions for 2016](#)

Find information about, think about and be prepared to discuss the following:

First class:

Why do legislative incumbents have an advantage in running for reelection? Consider both their advantage in primaries and in general elections. How many lost primaries in 2014?

Why is the reelection rate of Senators less than that of House members?

Second class:

What factors seem to explain changes in the balance of Republicans and Democrats in Congress in both midterm and presidential years?

What are some of the different approaches to predicting net changes in the House and Senate elections?

Election Results: What Happened and Why? Nov 3 (Th).

Read discussions of the outcomes for the Presidency and Congress and think about how these fit or do not fit the theories from the course.

Money in Elections. Nov 8 (T) Nov 10 (Th).

[1] *Campaigns & Elections*, Ch 4.

[2] [Streb, Matthew J.](#) *Rethinking American Electoral Democracy* Chapter 10: Campaign Finance.

[3] Powell, "The Influence of Campaign Contributions on Legislative Policy" *The Forum*, 2013.

[4] [Kalla and Broockman](#) 2015. “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment”

[5] Sunlight Foundation Blog, Yaeger “The difference between super PACs and dark money groups” October 30, 2015.

[6] [Center for Responsive Politics](#). 2016 Presidential Race. Be sure to click the links in the left hand column.

Find information about, think about and be prepared to discuss the following:

First class:

Why do we care about campaign contributions?

Does money matter? Does it affect who runs for office? Does money affect election outcomes? Does money shape public policy?

