

PSC215  
Morey 205, 11:05-12:20 T-Th  
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Spring 2014

## 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 that structure this process shape the decisions of candidates, voters and activists. Finally, we will look at the policy representation that emerges from these electoral processes.

There will be a midterm and a final. Class attendance is expected and grades will reflect participation.

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday 1:30-2:30, other times available by email request.

### Texts:

Sides and Vavreck, *The Coordinated Campaign / Presidential Election*, 2013, Princeton

Wayne, *End of the Road* 2012, Wadsworth

Streb, *Engineering Electoral Democracy*, Routledge

Other readings will be available electronically or by email

NOTE: As new material appears, I will update the readings on Blackboard or by email.

### Grading:

Class Participation	15%
Midterm Exam	40%
Final Fri. May 9 8:30 AM	45%

**Introduction.** Jan 16 (Th)

**Partisanship—Voters and Electorates.** Jan 21 (T) & Jan 23 (Th)

Sides & Vavreck, Ch 1; Wayne, Ch 3 and Ch 10 pp 349-352; Streb, Ch 2 and 3;

Hanmer, "Turnout in the 2012 Election: A Review and Call for Long-Term Solutions" *Journal of Politics*, 2013.

Find information about, think about and be prepared



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

For the first class:

What factors do potential presidential candidates think about when deciding whether or not to run? Think about the ones that are personal to them, as well as the features of the electoral lanos



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Was the polling correct? If not, where did polling miss?  
What was turnout? In what ways did this matter?

How can we measure bias?

Do changes in our media usage relate to polarization? To the rise of the tea party movement?

**Culture War & Ideological Polarization.** April 17 (Th) and April 22 (T).