GOV 2060 (Sections A and B)
Campaigns and Elections
Fall 2020

Section A
M 2:30-3:50 PM
W 11:30-12:50 PM
F 8:30-9:50 AM

Section B
T 11:00-12:20 PM
W 7:00-8:20 PM
F 1:00-2:20 PM

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Office Hours:
Tuesday, 8:30-10am
Book an appointment in Blackboard;
Or email about a different time as needed

This course introduces current theories and controversies concerning political campaigns and elections in the United States. We take advantage of the fact that the class meets during the heart of the 2020 elections, and students are expected to follow journalistic accounts of the fall campaigns closely. The course considers in detail the style and structure of American campaigns. For example, we ask how campaigns have changed in the last fifty years, especially concerning the role of parties, the presence of incumbency advantage, and the role of money. In addition, we consider why candidates decide to run, how they position themselves on important issues, and how they design their campaign messages. We also cover the importance of campaign polling and the tricky task of forecasting election outcomes. Finally, we explore the impact of campaigns on voters. For example, we ask whether campaigns ever convince voters to change their opinion, or whether demographic and socioeconomic factors explain most political behavior.

Learning Goals
In this course, you should
1. Learn about the importance of elections in American politics and consider the way elections reflect the health of American democracy and/or foster concerns about the equal and fair access of all citizens to electoral participation. You should, in meeting this goal, learn a lot about the rules of running for office and voting.
2. Engage with and learn about the various tools of tracking electoral behavior, spending, and voting. Whereas the first learning goal is focused on your perspectives and reactions to the strengths and weaknesses of the American electoral system, this second learning goal is about obtaining specific skills in acquiring information about the electoral process.

Class Structure
The course will consist of three key parts:
1. Recorded lectures, 1-3 per week. Your professor will upload these, and you will watch them asynchronously.
2. Twice weekly discussion groups. These will last 35-40 minutes and will involve about 13 students. These will happen synchronously and will be moderated by the professor. You will be assigned a discussion group and meet at consistent times throughout the semester.
3. Discussion Board posts responding to questions posted by your professor. The focus of these Board posts will be tracking down data about elections and electoral behavior.

Info on Course Meetings

Lectures for the week will be posted by Monday at noon.

Three groups of ~13 students will meet in each course section; each group meets two times a week.

Section A

	Discussion for Lecture 1	Discussion for Lecture 2
Group 1	M 2:30-3:10pm	W 12:10-12:50pm
Group 2	M 3:10-3:50pm	F 8:30-9:10am
Group 3	W 11:30am-12:10pm	F 9:10-9:50am

Section B

	Discussion for Lecture 1	Discussion for Lecture 2
Group 1	T 11-11:40am	W 7:40-8:20pm
Group 2	T 11:40am-12:20pm	F 1-1:40pm
Group 3	W 7:00-7:40pm	F 1:40-2:20pm

Course Requirements
There are 5 major components to your grade:

1. *Four reading reactions* (8 points; each worth 2 points) — these are short reactions of about 2 pages (double-spaced). I will evaluate these on the basis of how well you react to the readings (namely, originality of thought and conciseness). There are no right or wrong answers, but I will challenge you to think logically. These papers are due at any point, and they can focus on any readings. Because there are only 4 of them, you can choose on which days you want to turn them in. **To hand in a reaction paper, see the "Assignments" link on the left-side menu of our Blackboard page. I will grade and return the papers to you via Blackboard.**

2. **Participation** (20 points)—this includes attendance and class participation. Attendance is <u>required</u>, and I will take regular note of who is and who is not in the scheduled Zoom discussion groups. Be advised, simple attendance is not sufficient; I will also evaluate you on your comments in the sections, as well as your participation on Blackboard (more on that below). *****To facilitate participation, I will also assign each of you one congressional campaign. You are responsible for following the campaign closely. I will usually begin each discussion section by calling on a few of you and asking you to report to the group on the current state of the campaign (i.e., major issues and controversies; current polling data; recent debates or campaign gaffes). ******I will make use of Blackboard to convey information and class discussion topics. I have also posted there a number of websites for you to consult that will help you keep track of your assigned campaign. And I have also set up a number of discussion forums. I hope you take advantage of these forums to pass on important information to your classmates about the upcoming congressional elections. ***Participation on these discussion boards is mandatory. I have no required number of posts, but I would aim for 1-2 posts per week.***

3. **Midterm Exam** (30 points) — scheduled for *Week 8*. The exam is open book and open note. The format will be short answers and essays, and both will be derived from readings and lectures. Exams will be posted to Blackboard, and you will have a specific time (two hours) and page limit (seven total pages—double spaced, 12-point font). More information will be provided as we approach the exam.

*The seven-page limit will be strictly enforced. I will not read past Page 7.
**You are NOT allowed to work with another student on completing the exam. ANY evidence of collaboration during the exam is grounds for failure of the class. (Joint studying is, of course, permitted.)

4. **Final Exam** (30 points) — a take home exam that is NOT cumulative; it is on the lectures and readings for all classes after the mid-term. The parameters of the exam are the same as the mid-term. The exam will available on December 16, and you will have until December 21 to access and complete it.

5. **Election Assessment Memo** (12 points) — You will be responsible for producing a data summary of the election you tracked this semester. You have a lot of freedom on how to present this material, but this is not primarily a written exercise; this is a data display exercise. List the following things about your race: who ran in each party's primary, and what were the results? What were the results of the general election? Who spent more? Provide links to ads from the candidates and supportive parties and groups. Provide any polling results made public before the election. Did the election seem to trend in one direction? As the semester progresses, see Blackboard for more information on the template for the project. You will submit this on Blackboard.
   *Due on December 2nd.

Readings
There are two books for this course and a handful of outside articles. All of the outside readings are on Blackboard.

1. *Campaigns and Elections* (3rd Edition, 2018 Election Update), by John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz. W.W. Norton and Company.

2. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*, by John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Other Issues
1. I expect all students to abide by the Bowdoin Academic Honor Code, which can be accessed online at https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/student-handbook/the-academic-honor-code-and-social-code.html. If you have any concerns or questions about how to cite work appropriately, please consult me or a reference librarian.

2. If you have chosen to take the class as Credit/D/F, I will only grant a Credit grade if the student has completed all of the work for the class. This means completing all four reading reactions, the election assessment memo, and both exams.

Course Outline
Week 1 (8/31)
Classes only on W and F (the Lecture 2 slot)

Lecture 1: Introductions and Expectations

Week 2 (9/7)

Lecture 1: American Electoral System
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 1-2
- Rick Hasen. 2020. "Three Pathologies of American Voting Rights Illuminated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and How to Treat and Cure Them." *Election Law Journal.* 19(3).

Lecture 2: American Electoral System, cont.
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 3

Week 3 (9/14)

Lecture 1: A Look Back at 2016 primaries
- Identity Crisis, Chapters 1-4

Lecture 2: A Look Back at 2016 primaries, cont.
- Identity Crisis, Chapters 5-6

Week 4 (9/21)

Lecture 1: A Look Back at 2016 general election
- Identity Crisis, Chapters 7

Lecture 2: A Look Back at 2016 general election, cont.
- Identity Crisis, Chapters 8-9

Week 5 (9/28)

Lecture 1: Incumbents, Challengers, and the Vanishing Marginal
- Gary Jacobson and Jamie Carson, Chapter 3, *The Politics of Congressional Elections* (10th edition)

Lecture 2: Issue Positions
- Stephen Ansolabehere, James Snyder and Charles Stewart. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1):136-159

Week 6 (10/5)

Lecture 1: Campaign Finance
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 4

Lecture 2: Campaign Finance, cont.
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 4

Week 7 (10/12)
Fall Break on M and T
Classes only on W and F (the Lecture 2 slot)

No Lecture 1

Lecture 2: Polling

- D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2011. "The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States," *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 75(5): 962-981

Week 8 (10/19)
Classes only on M, T, and W (the Lecture 1 slot)

Lecture 1: Exit Polls (Dan Merkle lecture from ABC News)

Mid-term Exam (available on Wednesday at noon. Deadline to turn it in is Friday at 2:30pm)

Week 9 (10/26)

Lecture 1: Campaign Strategies
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 5

Lecture 2: Strategy and Political Ads
- Reading TBD

Week 10 (11/2)
Election Day on Tuesday
No discussion classes M or T
W and F discussions about election results

Lecture 1: Presidential Elections
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 9

Week 11 (11/9)

Lecture 1: Congressional and Down Ballot Elections
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 10

Lecture 2: Congressional and Down Ballot Elections, cont.
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 11

Week 12 (11/16)

Lecture 1: Parties and Organized Interests
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 6

Lecture 2: Parties and Organized Interests, cont.
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 7

Week 13 (11/23)
Classes only on M and T
W groups for Lecture 1 can join M and T (optional)

Lecture 1: Media
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 8

Week 14 (11/30)
Campaign Memos Due on W

Lecture 1: Turnout and Election Choice
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapters 12-13

Lecture 2: Race and Voting
- Reading TBD

Week 15 (12/7)

Lecture 1: Some Normative Considerations
- Campaigns and Election textbook, Chapter 14

Lecture 2:—Looking to 2022 and 2024
- No readings

Final Exam: Due by December 21