

# POLSCI 242: Campaigns and Elections

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Fall, 2023

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Class: Tu/Th 1:25pm - 2:40pm, Reuben-Cooke Building 127

Office Hours: Gross Hall 294H, TBD

## Course Description

Political theorist Adam Przeworski succinctly described democracy as “a system in which parties lose elections.” But how are elections organized, what are political parties, and what factors determine who wins and loses? How do candidates and campaigns compete for votes, and how do voters choose between them? This course will address these questions, among others related to campaigns and elections, with a focus on the United States. It will be conducted in an unstructured seminar style with a heavy emphasis on reading, in-class discussion, and written engagement with foundational and cutting-edge political science scholarship.

This is an intermediate level undergraduate course. While there are no prerequisites, the course assumes that students begin with a basic familiarity with U.S. politics. Students who are successful in this course will gain a deeper understanding of the nature of political competition in the United States, preparing them for further study of and participation in the U.S. political system.

This is a political science course, not a venue for practicing politics itself. This distinction is important. We will discuss topics such as how parties structure primary elections, why people turn out to vote, and how campaigns approach political advertising; we will not debate who ought to win a specific primary, who your classmates ought to vote for in the next election, or whether strategies employed by specific campaigns were unfair. You will have ample opportunities to share your views in these debates outside of class in settings ranging from informal discussions with friends and acquaintances to the pages of Duke’s numerous student publications.

## Office Hours

Office hours are time formally set aside for you to ask any questions about course material, assignments, or anything else you think is relevant. While I generally prefer that you use the listed in-person office hours if possible, you are welcome to email me to set up an alternative appointment if those times do not work.

## Course Texts

With the exception of these books, which I ask that you purchase, all assigned readings (as well as audio/visual material) will be posted on Canvas.

- Masket, Seth. 2020. *Learning from Loss: The Democrats, 2016-2020*
- Hopkins, Daniel. 2018. *The Increasingly United States*
- Hersh, Eitan. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*
- Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*

## Assignments and Evaluation

- **Attendance and Preparation (20%):**
  - Students are required to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material.
  - Everyone has different learning styles, and participation in class discussion includes listening as well as speaking. Do not feel like you have to talk a lot for talking's sake in order to show that you are prepared to attend class. That said, I reserve the right to administer periodic reading quizzes and cold-call during discussions if it seems as though the class is not prepared.
- **Response Memos (50%):**
  - Over the course of the semester, you will write five short (500-750 words) memos critically engaging with a piece of scholarship you have been assigned to read. Each of these response memos will be worth 10% of your final grade.
  - You can choose the weeks in which you would like to submit response memos, but you can only submit one memo in any given week.
- **Final Paper (30%):**
  - The final paper assignment asks you to write a longer (4000-5000 word) paper in response to a prompt I provide midway through the semester. You will be asked to draw on both course material and external scholarly sources to develop an informed argument.
  - A short (500 word) prospectus for your final paper is due roughly one month before the end of the semester, and is worth 5% of your final grade.
  - The final paper itself is due at the end of the exam period for the course, and is worth 25% of your final grade.

### Due dates:

- Response memos: at your discretion (one per week across any five weeks)
- Paper prospectus: November 9th
- Final paper: December 16th, 10pm

## Reading and Course Materials

With the exception of books listed above, all readings and audio/visual course materials will be posted on Canvas.

I expect you to read, listen to, and/or watch a non-trivial amount of material on your own in order to prepare for class. However, being prepared to discuss the material is not the same thing as reading every page of the material in full depth. Reading strategically is an important skill that I encourage you to practice in this course.

## Course Schedule

- Week 1 (August 29th/31st): Introduction and Norms
  - August 29th:
    - \* No assigned reading
  - August 31st:
    - \* Azari, Julia R. and Jennifer K. Smith. 2012. "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(1): 37-55.
    - \* Popkin, Samuel, 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*, pages 1-17
- Week 2 (September 5th/7th): Political Parties and Partisanship
  - September 5th:
    - \* Aldrich, John. *Why Parties? A Second Look*, Chapter 2
    - \* Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571-597.
  - September 7th:
    - \* Kane, John, Lilliana Mason, and Julie Wronski. 2021. "Who's at the Party? Group Sentiments, Knowledge, and Partisan Identity." *Journal of Politics* 83(4): 1783–1799.
    - \* Klar, Samara, Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. 2022. "Who Are Leaners? How True Independents Differ from the Weakest Partisans and Why It Matters." *The Forum* 20(1) 155-167.
- Week 3 (September 12th/14th) Institutions
  - September 12th:
    - \* Fraga, Bernard. 2016. "Redistricting and the Causal Impact of Race on Voter Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 78(1): 19–34.
    - \* Keele, Luke, William Cubbison, and Ismail White. 2021. "Suppressing Black Votes: A Historical Case Study of Voting Restrictions in Louisiana." *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 694-700.
    - \* Grimmer, Justin, and Jesse Yoder. 2022. "The durable differential deterrent effects of strict photo identification laws." *Political Science Research and Methods* 10(3): 453-469.

- September 14th:
  - \* Kogan, Vladimir, Stéphane Lavertu, and Zachary Peskowitz. 2018. "Election Timing, Electorate Composition, and Policy Outcomes: Evidence from School Districts." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 637-651.
  - \* Santucci, Jack. 2021. "Variants of Ranked-Choice Voting from a Strategic Perspective." *Politics and Governance* 9(2)
- Week 4 (September 19th/21st): Fundamentals 1 (Participation)
  - September 19th:
    - \* Riker, William, and Peter Odershook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 25-42.
    - \* Pettigrew, Stephen. 2021. "The downstream consequences of long wait times: How lines at the precinct depress future turnout." *Electoral Studies* 71: 102188.
  - September 21st:
    - \* Valentino, Nicholas, et al. 2011. "Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 73(1): 156–170.
    - \* Gerber, Alan, Donald Green, and Christopher Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.
- Week 5 (September 26th/28th): Fundamentals 2 (Choice)
  - September 26th:
    - \* Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*, Chapters 2-4
    - \* (WATCH) The War Room ([Stream on Kanopy via Duke Library](#))
  - September 28th:
    - \* Hillygus, D. Sunshine, and Todd Shields. 2008. *The Persuadable Voter*, Chapters 1-2.
    - \* Lacy, Dean, et al. 2019. "Measuring Preferences for Divided Government." *Political Behavior* 41(1): 79-103.
- Week 6 (October 3rd/5th): Primary Elections
  - October 3rd:
    - \* Masket, Seth. *Learning from Loss: The Democrats, 2016-2020*, Chapters 1-4
  - October 5th:
    - \* Masket, Seth. *Learning from Loss: The Democrats, 2016-2020*, Chapters 5-7
- Week 7 (October 10th/12th): Campaign Strategy (Broad)
  - October 10th:
    - \* Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People* Chapters 1 & 4

- \* Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*, Preface and Part 1 (Chapters. 1-3)
- October 12th:
  - \* Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*, remainder of book
  - \* Stone, Walter J., and Elizabeth N. Simas. 2010. "Candidate Valence and Ideological Positions in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 371–388.
- Week 8 (October 17th/19th): Campaign Strategy (Deep)
  - October 17th:
    - \* Hersh, Eitan. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. Chapters 1-4
  - October 19th:
    - \* Hersh, Eitan. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. Chapters 5-7
- Week 9 (October 24th/26th): Campaign Finance
  - October 24th:
    - \* Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. DeFigueiredo, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105–130.
    - \* Dawood, Yasmin. 2015. "Campaign Finance and American Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 329-348.
    - \* Gersony, Laura. "Gift cards, commission fees and even free college tuition: GOP candidates test odd fundraising strategies." ABC News, July 13, 2023 ([Link](#)).
  - October 26th:
    - \* Kalla, Joshua, and David Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558.
    - \* Oklobdzija, Stan. 2023. "Dark Parties: Unveiling Nonparty Communities in American Political Campaigns." *American Political Science Review*, FirstView.
- Week 10 (October 31st/November 2nd): Nationalization
  - October 31st: (Election Day)
    - \* Hopkins, Daniel. 2018. *The Increasingly United States*, Chapters 1-5
  - November 2nd:
    - **Paper prospectus due**
      - \* Hopkins, Daniel. 2018. *The Increasingly United States*, remainder of book
- Week 11 (November 7th/9th): The Campaign Industry
  - November 7th (Election Day):

- \* Saldin, Robert, and Steven Teles. 2020. *Never Trump: The Revolt of the Conservative Elites*, Chapter 4.
- \* Martin, Gregory, and Zachary Peskowitz. 2015. "Parties and Electoral Performance in the Market for Political Consultants." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40(3): 441-470.
- \* (WATCH) Our Brand is Crisis: [Link](#).
- November 9th:
  - \* Nyhan, Brendan, and Jacob Montgomery. 2015. "Connecting the Candidates: Consultant Networks and the Diffusion of Campaign Strategy in American Congressional Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 292-308.
  - \* Limbocker, Scott, and Hye Young You. 2020. "Campaign styles: Persistency in campaign resource allocation." *Electoral Studies* 65: 102140.
- Week 12 (November 14th/16th): Paid Media / Ads
  - November 14th:
    - \* Fowler, Erika Franklin, et al. 2021. "Political Advertising Online and Offline." *American Political Science Review* 115(1): 130-149.
    - \* Sides, John, Lynn Vavreck, and Christopher Warshaw. 2021. "The Effect of Television Advertising in United States Elections." *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 702-718.
  - November 16th:
    - \* Brader, Ted. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 388-405.
    - \* Broockman, David, and Joshua Kalla. 2022. "When and Why Are Campaigns' Persuasive Effects Small? Evidence from the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election." *American Journal of Political Science*.
    - \* (WATCH): Classic Campaign Ads:
      - [I Like Ike](#)
      - [Daisy](#)
      - [It's Morning Again in America](#)
      - [Switch to Mitch](#)
      - [Revolving Door](#)
      - [Windsurfing](#)
      - [My Job](#)

Week of November 21st/23rd: No class (Thanksgiving Break 11/21-11/26)

- Week 13 (November 28th/30th): The Media
  - November 28th:
    - \* Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 1992. "The Constructed Explanation: Interpreting Election Results in the 1984 Presidential Race." *Journal of Politics* 54(4): 943-976.

- \* Ladd, Jonathan, and Gabriel Lenz. 2009. "Exploiting a Rare Communication Shift to Document the Persuasive Power of News Media." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(2): 394-410.
- November 30th:
  - \* Darr, Joshua. 2018. "Reports from the Field: Earned Local Media in Presidential Campaigns." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 225-247.
  - \* Moskowitz, Daniel. 2021. "Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections." *American Political Science Review* 115(1): 114-129.
- Week 14 (December 5th/7th): Political Organizing
  - December 5th:
    - \* Chewning, Taylor, Jon Green, Hans Hassell, and Matthew Miles. 2022. "Campaign Principal-Agent Problems: Volunteers as Faithful and Representative Agents." *Political Behavior*, Early View.
    - \* Blum, Rachel, and Michael Cowburn. 2023. "How Local Factions Pressure Parties: Activist Groups and Primary Contests in the Tea Party Era." *British Journal of Political Science*, Early View.
  - December 7th:
    - \* Skocpol, Theda, and Caroline Tervo. "Resistance Disconnect" *The American Prospect*, February 4, 2021 ([Link](#)).
    - \* Hersh, Eitan. "Politics is for Power, Not Consumption." *Boston Review*, November 4, 2019 ([Link](#)).

## Course Policies

### Attendance

Not only are you expected to attend class, you are expected to come to class prepared to engage with that week's material. Excused absences may be requested in writing with reasonable advance notice (more urgent reasons require less advance notice). Duke policies outline personal emergencies, illnesses, varsity athletic competition, and religious observances as acceptable reasons for an excused absence, but I am willing to consider other reasons that do not neatly fall into one of these categories if given sufficient advance notice.

### Deadlines and Late Work

You are expected to turn assignments in on time. However, things happen, and there may be good reasons for additional flexibility. These reasons can range from serious unexpected circumstances to needing to distribute your workload across multiple courses. **Requests to change deadlines must be submitted in writing with reasonable advance notice** (the more urgent the reason, the less notice is required).

There are three forms of written assignment for this course: response memos, the final paper prospectus, and the final paper. The deadlines for the memos are flexible in that you can choose

which five weeks to write response memos. The final paper assignments have set deadlines, which are where they are for a reason. They have separate late work policies that fit their structure.

**Memos:** Deadlines for the response memos are flexible. However, flexibility can be a double-edged sword, as it places additional responsibility on you to manage your time and you are not allowed to submit multiple response memos in a single week. This means that you are not allowed to submit five memos over the final four (or fewer) weeks of the semester. **Falling behind on memos without arranging an alternative schedule with me in advance will result in the loss of partial or full credit for each missing memo, depending on how severely behind you are.**

**Prospectus and paper:** Prospectuses turned in after the deadline (original or extended) will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late. That is, for a deadline of 1:25pm on November 9th (the beginning of class on the due date listed), a prospectus turned in at 1:26pm on November 9th that would otherwise receive an A will receive an A-; if it is turned in at 1:26pm on November 10th, it will receive a B+; and so on. **Because I have limited time to grade them, final papers will be marked down a full letter grade for every day they are late.** That is, a final paper turned in at 10:01pm on December 16th that would otherwise receive an A will receive an B; if it is turned in at 10:01pm the next day, it will receive a C; and so on.

## Class Discussions

When you enroll in this class, you become colleagues with everyone else who is enrolled in it. Colleagues frequently disagree, but they do so without being disagreeable.

You are expected to engage with your classmates' views and perspectives respectfully both inside and outside of the classroom. Even (especially) when you disagree with your classmates, it is essential to approach this disagreement amicably, with an assumption of good faith, because you are colleagues and not opponents.

Of course it should go without saying, but expectations of mutual respect and assumptions of good faith are not licenses to engage in ableism, classism, homophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia, or other exclusionary language that is inherently disrespectful.

## Grading

If you feel that a grade you receive on an assignment does not reflect the quality of the work you submitted, you may email me to request either a clarification or a re-grade. The email must include, either in the body or as an attachment, a rationale for why the request is warranted. This means explicitly acknowledging and engaging with any substantive feedback you received and, if requesting a regrade, explaining (with reference to any provided grading criteria, such as a rubric) why the grade you received does not align with that substantive feedback.



## Writing

Written work should be proofread for spelling and grammar, arguments should be supported by scholarly or otherwise reliable evidence, and all references *must* be appropriately cited (see below). *I do not care what citation format you use as long as you pick one and use it consistently.* I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with a citation management tool – my personal recommendation is Zotero because it’s free and easily integrates with Microsoft Word and Google Docs – that will make citation formatting quicker and easier when you need to compile a bibliography. You are also welcome to consult myself or the University’s writing center for general writing advice.

## Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is when you present someone else’s ideas as your own. Students are strongly encouraged to learn from one another through discussions both in and outside of class, so long as individual writing assignments reflect their own intellectual labor. This means that when you submit writing with your name on it and no one else’s, you did the work that produced the document. All ideas and claims included in written work that are not your own should be appropriately cited.

Recently-developed tools that rely on large language models to predict strings of text that resemble original thought, such as ChatGPT, are prohibited in this class. Presenting model-generated text as your own writing will be considered plagiarism. There are two main reasons for this. First, you are not learning how to write or think effectively if you delegate these tasks to a language model. Second, because these models are not in fact intelligent, and instead generate predictions of what the text they are asked to produce might resemble, they have a tendency to *make things up* when given more complex tasks such as college-level writing assignments.

Duke takes the issue of academic honesty very seriously. Any student who appears to violate the University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy (<https://students.duke.edu/get-assistance/community-standard/a-z-policies/>) may be referred to the University’s Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Academic dishonesty on any aspect of course work will result in failure of the course.

## Support Services

### Academic Support Services

**Political Science Librarian:** Ryan Denniston ([ryan.denniston@duke.edu](mailto:ryan.denniston@duke.edu)) is Duke’s librarian for Public Policy and Political Science. In addition to myself, you are welcome to email Ryan with questions as you working on writing assignments for the course.

**The Writing Studio:** I encourage you to visit the Writing Studio where you will find a place beyond our classroom to work collaboratively with an attentive, non-evaluative reader. You can visit at any stage in your writing process, including before you have even started writing. Visit <http://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio> to schedule a face-to-face or online appointment and

to learn more about Studio resources.

**The Academic Resource Center:** The ARC provides academic support and programming for all Duke undergraduates. Their services include one-on-one consultations and peer tutoring, and they work alongside the Student Disability Access Office to serve students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Their programs include opportunities for students to study together in structured groups (“learning communities”), as well as workshops offered throughout the semester. Further information and resources are available on their website. <http://duke.edu/arc/index.php>.

## Accommodation and Inclusion

**Student Disability Access Office:** If you have any physical, cognitive, or psychiatric needs that require accommodations for this course, please contact the Student Disability Access Office (if you haven’t already) and myself as soon as possible to discuss the appropriate steps I can take to make sure you have what you need to succeed. Duke University’s Student Disability Access Office can be reached by phone at (919) 668-1267, email at [sdao@duke.edu](mailto:sdao@duke.edu), and in-person or remote office hours (see <https://access.duke.edu/students> for locations/times) and can assist you with managing any challenges that may affect your performance. I also encourage you to speak to me individually if you have trouble navigating this process.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** Each of you will face some level of challenge during your time at Duke – whether it be a challenge like procrastination, or a more profound challenge that impairs your ability to function. The CAPS staff includes psychologists, clinical social workers, and psychiatrists experienced in working with college-age adults. Information about their services and workshops is available here: <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps/about-us>.

**The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity:** This center provides education, advocacy, support, mentoring, academic engagement, and space LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty at Duke. The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity also serves and supports Duke alumni/ae and the greater LGBTQIA+ community. Further information and resources are available on their website: <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/csgd>.

## Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects individuals from sex or gender-based discrimination, including discrimination based on gender-identity, in educational programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. It applies to all aspects of employment and education programs and activities at Duke University.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, options a complete list of confidential and non-confidential reporting options and resources both on- and off-campus can be found on the Office of Institutional Equity’s website: <https://oie.duke.edu/sexual-misconduct-title-ix>. Faculty members and instructors are considered “responsible employees” at Duke University, meaning they are required to report all allegations of sex or gender-based discrimination.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am grateful to Katherine Haenschen, Hans Hassell, Christina Ladam, Jacob Smith, and Jennifer Wolak for sharing materials from similar courses they are currently teaching or previously taught, which helped me design this course.