

Course Syllabus: LAH 350 (30960) / GOV 370R-HON (38400)

Course Description

This course explores the nature and consequences of money in American politics and why, at this point in history, we find ourselves embroiled in the most significant debate over campaign finance reform in well over forty years. The debate goes to the heart of the U.S. Constitution, pitting the First Amendment rights of speech and assembly against the perceived fairness and efficacy of a republican government awash, some claim, in increasingly unaccountable money.

Campaign finance issues lie at the crossroads of a bewildering number of analytical perspectives. We examine the work of historians, social scientists, legal scholars, and interested parties on all sides of the debate in an effort not only to assess current policy debates but also to understand how we got here.

The objective of the course is not to persuade you of any particular point of view but, rather, to arm you with the substantive knowledge, theoretical foundation and analytical tools needed to be resolute in whatever conclusions you draw from this experience.

Course Requirements

This course is an honors seminar. As such, there is a premium on preparation and participation. Final grades are based on class participation, two tests and two class projects:

- Participation: 10%
- Projects (2): 40%
- Tests (2): 50%

Grades will be based on the +/- scale. Numerical scores translate to grades as follows:

- - 94-100 A
 - 90-93 A-
 - 87-89 B+
 - 84-86 B
 - 80-83 B-
 - 77-79 C+
 - 74-76 C
 - 70-73 C-
 - 65-69 D
 - 0-65 F

Required Readings

- Mutch, Robert E. Campaign Finance : What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford University Press. 2016

- Primo, David M. and Milyo, Jeffrey D. Campaign Finance and American Democracy. University of Chicago Press. 2020
- Urofsky, Melvin I. The Campaign Finance Cases. University Press of Kansas. 2020.

All other readings, of which there are many, are linked in the [weekly reading assignments](#) posted on Canvas.

Academic Integrity

There is no tolerance for academic dishonesty in the course. Please refer to information maintained by Student Judicial Services about [academic integrity](#) for good rules of thumb to avoid problems.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodation please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). You may refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations.

Religious Accommodation

Please notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Title IX Reporting Requirements

Under Senate Bill 212 (SB 212), the professor for this course is required to report for further investigation any information concerning incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking committed by or against a UT student or employee. Federal law and university policy also requires reporting incidents of sex- and gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct (collectively known as Title IX incidents). This means we cannot keep confidential information about any such incidents that you share with us. If you need to talk with someone who can maintain confidentiality, please contact University Health Services (512-471-4955 or 512-475-6877) or the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center (512-471-3515 or 512-471-2255). We strongly urge you make use of these services for any needed support and that you report any Title IX incidents to the [Title IX Office](#).

Course Communication

Official course announcements will be made in class and/or posted on Canvas.