

Government 370C
Spring, 2022
Unique number: 38080

Robert C. Luskin
University of Texas at Austin
MW 1:00-2:30, Zoom

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Office Hours: by Zoom, Skype, or phone, by appointment

American Election Campaigns

This will be an online, synchronous seminar. There may be occasional stretches, especially near the beginning, where I lecture; I may give over one or possibly two sessions to a discussion of writing, in the hope of helping you, for your own sake as well as mine, to learn to write as well as you can; and we may have a guest speaker or two, but the great majority of the time *we*—not *I*—shall discuss the material in seminar fashion. There are no formal prerequisites beyond eligibility to take upper division Government courses.

All our meetings will be online. The platform will be Zoom. **NB: Please keep your camera on for the whole of every session.** It helps to see, as well as hear, one another. **If there is some technical reason you can't do this, let me know. Otherwise, you will be counted as absent.**

There will be no exams, but an extremely heavy reading load and a term paper, in which you will be expected to make explicit, sensible, and plentiful use of a sizable number of the course readings. I also expect you to participate in the discussion—not just to talk for the sake of talking, of course, but to make sensible, insightful contributions, informed by, though not necessarily confined to, the readings and relevant current events. You should therefore **keep up with both the readings and the news pages of at least one major national newspaper (the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*).** To be clear, this means a newspaper, not a cable news channel, and its news pages, **not its editorial pages or op-ed columns!**

We shall begin each session by discussing campaign- or election-relevant current events for roughly 10-15 minutes, before turning to the designated topic of the day. To encourage preparation and participation (and let the discussion go, within broad limits, where it may), **I shall designate a panel of 2-3 students to lead/organize each day's discussion of the main topic and another such panel or more to lead/organize the day's discussion of relevant current events. The designated students will prepare and distribute, by noon on the preceding Sunday or Tuesday, a list of questions for discussion.** The list should be at least a fairly full page for current events and 1-2 pages for the main topic. Everyone should expect to serve on several such panels over the course of the semester. As a further incentive to keep up with the readings, **I may also ask individual students who are not among a session's co-leaders to share what they found particularly interesting or important in the week's readings, and explain why.** You should come prepared to field that question.

The goal is for students to learn and think about contemporary American election campaigns—about both how they work and the ways in which that may be desirable or

undesirable. The paper, written discussion questions, and contributions to class discussion will be the means of assessing how far individual students have met this goal.

The course is not for the faint-hearted. It will be a lot of work. We shan't read all of every book, and a number of the books are quite-to-very short, but it *is* a lot of reading, and your grade will depend heavily on my sense of how much of the assigned reading you've done and how much you've thought about what you've read. I do hope and expect, however, that those who persevere will find the readings and discussions informative and enjoyable.

A tentative schedule, indicating when we shall do what, is given below. The class will use the UT Canvas website, on which I shall post some course materials, and through which I shall send emails as necessary. **NB: If you need to reach me, please email me at rcluskin@austin.utexas.edu.** Do **NOT** send me anything via Canvas. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. I encourage students who need additional help with their writing to work with the staff of the Undergraduate Writing Center in the Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL).

Texts

- Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels. 2017. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mark Bowden and Matthew Teague. 2022. *The Steal: The Attempt to Overturn the 2020 Election and the People Who Stopped It*. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Herbert B. Asher. 2016. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know* (9th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Michael C. Bender. 2021. *Frankly, We Did Win This Election: The Inside Story of How Trump Lost*. New York, NY: Twelve Publishing.
- Adam J. Berinsky (ed.). 2019. *New Directions in Public Opinion* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- André Blais and Jean-François Daoust. 2020. *The Motivation to Vote: Explaining Electoral Participation*. Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.
- Michael Cohen. 2021. *Modern Political Campaigns: How Professionalism, Technology, and Speed Have Revolutionized Elections*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin. 2019. *American Public Opinion* (10th ed., updated). New York, NY: Longman.
- Frum, David. 2018. *Trumpocracy: The Corruption of the American Republic*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber. 2019. *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Michael V. Hayden. 2018. *The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die* (reprint ed.). New York, NY: Crown Publishing.
- Nolan McCarty. 2019. *Polarization: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lee McIntyre. 2018. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Greg Miller. 2018. *The Apprentice: Trump, Mueller and the Subversion of American Democracy*. New York, NY: Custom House.
- Russell Muirhead and Nancy L. Rosenblum. 2020. *A Lot of People Are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tom Nichols. 2021. *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Assault from within on Modern Democracy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Tom Nichols. 2018. *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron, and Thomas Wynter (eds.). 2018. *Electoral Integrity in America: Securing Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nathaniel Persily (ed.). 2020. *Social Media and Democracy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Larry Sabato, Kyle Kondik, and J. Miles Coleman (eds.). 2021. *A Return to Normalcy? The 2020 Election That (Almost) Broke America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Timothy Snyder. 2017. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. New York, NY: Crown Publishing.
- Timothy Snyder. 2019. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America*. New York, NY: Tim Duggan Books.
- Elizabeth A. Theiss-Morse, Michael W. Wagner William H. Flanigan, and Nancy H. Zingale. 2018. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* (14th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Darrell M. West. 2017. *Air Wars: Television Advertising and Social Media in Election Campaigns 1952-2016* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- David L. Weakliem. 2020. *Public Opinion*. Boston, MA: Polity Books.

For Help with Writing (Not Required, but Strongly Recommended)

William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White. 1995. *The Elements of Style* (3rd ed.). New York: Allyn and Bacon.

Robert's Rules (a guide to writing), to be posted online.

NB: I strongly urge you to purchase your textbooks online, being sure to get the most recent edition, as listed above (except for Strunk and White, of which I recommend the 3rd edition, subsequent ones having been bowdlerized). The least expensive option, apart from used copies, is generally to buy the Kindle edition on Amazon.com, from which you can also download the free Kindle reader app.

Outline and Readings

I Organizational (January 19)

I The Electorate

A. Learning about the Public: The Mechanics of Surveys (January 24, 26)

Erikson and Tedin, pp. 24-44.

Asher, chs. 3-5, 8.

Theiss-Morse et al., appendix.

Berinsky, ch. 1.

B. What Do People “Know”? Knowledge, Ignorance, and Misinformation (January 31, February 2)

Erikson and Tedin, pp. 55-67

Asher, ch. 2.

Pesily, chs. 2, 8.

Berinsky, ch. 2.

Muirhead and Rosenblum, chs. 1-6.

C. What Do People Want? Public Opinion and Political Culture (February 7, 9)

Weakliem, entire.

Nichols, *Own Worst Enemy*, chs. 2-4

Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 6.

Erikson and Tedin, pp. 1-16, 68-79, chs. 4, 7.

Berinsky, chs. 3, 5-8, 14.

D. Who Votes? How Many? (February 14, 16)

Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 3.

Blais and Daoust, entire.

E. Why Do People Vote the Way They Do? (February 21, 23)

Erikson and Tedin, ch. 9.

Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 8.

Achen and Bartels, chs. 4-7, 10.

II Political Parties: Partisanship, Realignment, and Polarization (February 28, March 2)

Cohen, ch. 1

Erikson and Tedin, pp. 81-89.

Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 4.

Achen and Bartels, chs. 8, 9.

Berinsky, ch. 4.

McCarty, chs. 1-6.

Sabato et al., ch. 4.

III The Media

A. Print and Broadcast (March 7)

Cohen, ch. 8.
 Erikson and Tedin, pp. 44-49 and ch. 8, excepting pp. 248-252.
 Asher, chs. 1, 6-8.
 Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 7.
 West, ch. 5-7.
 Berinsky, chs. 11-12.
 Sabato et al., ch. 10.

B. Social (March 9)

Persily, chs. 3-5.
 Cohen, ch. 10.
 Nichols, *Own Worst Enemy*, ch.5.

IV Election Campaigns

A. Organization, Research, Analysis, and Strategy (March 21)

Berinsky, ch. 13.
 Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 2.
 Cohen, chs. 2, 5-7.

B. Fund-Raising (March 23)

Sabato et al., ch. 12.
 Cohen, chs. 3-4.

C. Advertising and Other Messaging (March 28)

West, chs. 1-4, 8-9.
 Erikson and Tedin, pp. 248-252.
 Persily, ch. 6.
 Cohen, ch. 9.

D. Getting Out the Vote (March 30)

Green and Gerber, entire.
 Cohen, ch. 11.

V Current Issues

A. So That's Happened: Elections and Politics, 2016-2020 (April 4, 6)

Sabato et al., chs. 1-7.
 Bender, entire.
 Bowden and Teague, entire.

B. Election Integrity: Fraudulent Voting, Voter Suppression, and Miscounting (April 11)

Norris et al., chs. 1-6, 8-10.
 Highton, Benjamin. 2017. Voter Identification Laws and Turnout in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20: 149-167.

C. Truth in Politics: Lying, Fake News, and Knowledge Resistance (April 13)

Nichols, *Death of Expertise*, entire.

McIntyre, entire.

Norris et al., ch. 7.

Persily, ch. 10.

D. Foreign Meddling (April 18)

Hayden, entire.

Miller, entire.

VI Broader Concerns, including Historical and Comparative Perspectives

A. Part 1 (April 20)

Frum, entire.

Achen and Bartels, chs. 2, 3.

Persily, ch. 7.

Nichols, *Own Worst Enemy*, ch. 1

B. Part 2 (April 25)

Snyder, *On Tyranny*, entire.

Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom*, entire.

C. Part 3 (April 27)

Levitsky and Ziblatt, entire.

Erikson and Tedin, ch. 6.

Theiss-Morse et al., ch. 1.

VII Overview and Evaluation (May 2, 4)

Asher, ch. 9.

West, ch. 10.

Norris et al., ch. 11.

Persily, chs. 9, 11-12.

Nichols, *Own Worst Enemy*, Conclusion.

Muirhead and Rosenblum, ch. 7, Conclusion.

Requirements

Term paper

The paper's prescribed but broad topic is an evaluation of American elections and election campaigns: What, if anything, is right and what, if anything, is wrong about them? What makes you say that? What if anything can be done to improve matters, and what if anything should be avoided to prevent making them worse? You are free, within this broad topic, to focus on whatever you like. **You should develop your reasons and cite your evidence, drawing heavily on the course readings** (and—optionally—on such other sources as you think relevant) in doing so. **Feel free to consult—most usefully, at least 4-6 week before**

the due date—if you have questions about this assignment or how you’re thinking of handling it.

Your term paper grade will rest greatly on your generous, explicit, sensible, and appropriate use of the course readings. To some modest degree, they will also reflect your writing, especially your clarity and economy of expression and the cogency and organization of your arguments. **Construct your own arguments. Do the readings, think about them, and decide what you want to say.**

Cite the readings parenthetically, for support or to indicate disagreement. **Cite, do not quote**—excepting only those rare cases where an author’s exact words are memorably quotable or wrong (and you intend saying why). I shall count off for unnecessary quotes. The average paper should contain many citations but no quotes at all! Do not mention the author(s)’ first name(s) or the titles of books or articles, except in a list of references at the end. **Do not begin any sentences with phrases like “According to X,” “As X says,” or “X shows that.”** Just say what you think and cite X, parenthetically, at the end of the relevant clause, sentence, or paragraph. On these points and many others, see Strunk and White and Robert’s Rules.

The paper is due by **11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 24. There will be no extension. NB:** This is a couple of weeks before the end of the term, so **you will need to plan—and read!—ahead and begin thinking and writing by several weeks before that.** The paper should be **about 15-20 pages**, double-spaced. This precise range is not a requirement, just a confident expectation about what it will take to produce a good paper. The font should be 12 point, the margins between 1 and 1.25 inches. Endnotes, tables, figures (graphs), references, and appendices do not figure in these page totals. **Number your pages!!! Use the APSA format for citations.** (Look at the articles in any recent issue of the *American Political Science Review* or *American Journal of Political Science* to get the idea.) **Please submit your paper as an email attachment (not via Canvas) in MS-Word format. No PDFs!**

Class Participation

Attendance is required. Unexcused absences affect the participation grade. **Come prepared** to participate sensibly and insightfully in the discussion and to lead/organize those discussions you have been assigned to lead/organize. Also be prepared to share, on request, at least one thing you found interesting or important on the day’s topic. To that end, **please keep up with and think about the readings and the news.** Keeping up with the readings will also make writing the term paper less of a painful rush. I shall share my interim estimate of your participation grade around the middle of the course.

Grading

Your course grade will be based on your performance in the discussions (25%), your role in leading/organizing them (25%), and your term paper (50%). The course grades will include pluses and minuses, as merited. I shall share my interim estimate of your participation grade around the middle of the course.

There will be a penalty of 3 points on the usual 50-100 scale for every day (including weekend days) the term paper is late. The penalty may only be waived for legitimate and fully documented excuses. (What is “legitimate” and “fully documented” is up to me.)

Cheating or plagiarism means a failing grade not only for the assignment in question but for the course.