

The University of Texas at Austin

Fall 2024

GOV 370E: Congressional Elections

Class Logistics:	Professor Sean M. Theriault	TA Daniel Little
Unique #: 37390	seant@austin.utexas.edu	daniellittle@utexas.edu
Meeting Time: MW (12:30-2)	Batts 3.130 and Zoom	Batts 1.118
Meeting Place: UTC 4.102	OH: M (1-2:30) & T (2-3:30)	OH: M & W (3:30-5:00)

Course Description

This course takes an in-depth look at congressional elections. In addition to analyzing the congressional elections in 2024, we develop a framework to understand the critical links among voters, candidates, campaigns, and Congress. The first half of the course discusses campaigns and elections. The second half of the course deals with election outcomes and their consequences on policymaking. The readings for the class include both contemporary journalistic accounts of the election and analytic frameworks from political scientists. An energetic classroom requires student participation. If need be, I'll compel you to participate.

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Grades

Grades will be determined according to the following formula:

- 15% Attendance, Homework, and Class Participation
- 20% Midterm Exam I
- 20% Midterm Exam II
- 20% Midterm Exam III
- 25% Course Project

I frown on issues of academic dishonesty and will severely punish any student caught plagiarizing, cheating, or engaging in any other unethical classroom practices. I will not accept late assignments. Beyond the flexible deadlines discussed above, I will not accept excuses for missing pop quizzes. I do not offer make-up exams. All grade disputes must be dealt with during office hours and within one week of receiving the grade. I will use pluses and minuses in this class, with the 0.7 and 0.3 at cutoffs. So, an 82.9 is a B- and an 83.1 is B; an 86.9 is a B and an 87.1 is a B+.

Course Readings

The course readings consist of the following:

- Jamie L. Carson and Gary C. Jacobson. 2023. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 11th Edition. Rowman and Littlefield. Available in the bookstore, through Amazon, or online.
- Readings on Canvas.

Course Outline and Reading List

Aug. 26: Course Introduction

Aug. 28 and Sept. 2: The Basics

- The Constitution of the United States, Article I
- Federalists 52, 53, 62, and 63

Sept. 4: The Project and the Current Context

- Kane article from Nov. 2023
- Weisman article from Apr. 2024
- Hannah Recht and Liz Goodwin article from Aug. 2024

Sept. 9 and 11: Understanding Congress

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapters 1 and 2
- David R. Mayhew. 1987. "The Electoral Connection and the Congress" in *Congress: Structure and Policy*, eds. Mathew D. McCubbins and Terry Sullivan. New York: Cambridge University Press. <Originally published in 1974.>

Sept. 16 and 18: The Candidates

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapter 3
- Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox. 2012. "Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics."

Sept. 23: Catch-up Day

Sept. 25: Midterm I

Sept. 30 and Oct. 2: The Campaigns

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapter 4
- *The New Soft Money*, Chapter 1

Oct. 7 and 9: The Voters: Who are They?

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapter 5
- Sides, Shaw, Grossman, and Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections*, Chapter 12

Oct. 14: The Voters: What They Do

- Sides, Shaw, Grossman, and Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections*, Chapter 13
- Donald R. Wolfensberger. 2000. "Chapter 16: The Future of Deliberative Democracy" in *Congress and the People: Deliberative Democracy on Trial*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- R. Douglas Arnold. 1990. Chpt. 10, "Citizens' Control of Government" in *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Oct. 16: The Youth Vote

- TBD

Oct. 21: Midterm II

Oct. 23: The Role of Presidents and Parties in Congressional Elections

- Sides, Shaw, Grossman, and Lipsitz, *Campaigns and Elections*, Chapter 6

Oct. 28: Congressional Elections in a Historical Context

- Burnham, Walter Dean. 2003. Selection from *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* in *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*, 3rd Edition, eds., Ann G. Serow and Everett C. Ladd. Baltimore, MD: Lanahan Publishers, Inc.
- Michael G. Franc. 2011. "Reagan's Lasting Realignment." *National Review*.

Oct. 30: Recent Congressional Elections

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapter 6

Nov. 4: 2022 Election Day Eve!

Nov. 5: Election Day

Nov. 6: 2022 The Day After

Nov. 11: Catch-up Day

Nov. 13: ST Research Day I

Nov. 18: ST Research Day II

Nov. 20: Midterm III

Dec. 2: The 118th Congress and the 2024 Elections

- Carson and Jacobson, Chapter 7
- TBD.

Dec. 4: The Future