

POL 2192A
Special Topics: Trump vs. Biden 2020

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DRAFT SYLLABUS – SOME SMALL CHANGES ARE LIKELY

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I. Introduction:

We will study U.S. presidential and congressional campaigns while paying close attention to the 2020 races. In particular, we will focus on understanding the causes of successes and failures in American elections. We will also cover topics such as the U.S. electoral system, public opinion, political parties, redistricting and gerrymandering, polarization, voting behaviour, and campaign financing. Readings and assignments will include data-driven research on these and other contemporary aspects of American politics. We will discuss the presidential election as it unfolds and pay attention to election forecasting, electoral maps and math, and the campaigns.

A background in American politics is preferred but not required.

II. Learning Objectives

- 1) Students will learn the **basic history of American politics** with a focus on the development and evolution of the **major political parties**. This includes: The beginning of political parties at the Founding of the United States and during the first few presidencies; the emergence of the Republican Party in the 1850; the evolution of the two parties on civil rights beginning in the 1960s until the present. We will also learn about the recent history of the parties that set the stage for the 2016 election of President Trump.
- 2) Students will learn about the rise of **polarization** in the United States and its effects on recent elections and politics in general. We will discuss the steady decline of democratic norms and values.
- 3) Students will also learn how American **national elections** work, both primaries and general elections. Rules and processes that govern the elections. Students will learn the fundamentals of American elections to know how to **navigate the campaign**, the polls, Election Night, and the aftermath of the election.
- 4) And, throughout the course, students will learn about the 2020 election – how we got here, what are the factors shaping the election, and what are the **key groups** to pay attention to in assessing the likely outcome.

III. Course Requirements

- i. Watch the week's lectures and read the weekly readings on the topic of the week. There will be videos and podcasts as well. Come to live coffee chats and ask questions on the state of the race.
- ii. Follow the campaign in the news. Make one of the following your homepage for the duration of the campaign and read some of the others:
 - a) at least one major, non-partisan newspaper such as The New York Times, The Washington Post or The Wall Street Journal; and
 - b) one serious political magazine (print or online) such as Vox, Slate, Politico, The Economist, or The Weekly Standard; and

c) one political-science website such as The Monkey Cage, Mischiefs of Faction, or fivethirtyeight.com;

d) one history website such as History News Network.

- iii. Watching campaign events. Students are expected to watch the major political events of the campaign season. Watch the news daily and big events like speeches, debates, and election night.

IV. Course Grading:

Weekly quizzes, discussion groups, homework: 5% for each week except first and last week. 50% overall.

Multiple Choice Mid-term: 25%

Multiple Choice Final exam: 25%

V. Schedule

Week 1: September 15, 2020: Introduction

Topics: Set up the election. The electoral college and map. Rules. Swing states. Senate and House elections.

Read:

Hans Noel. 2010. Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don't. *The Forum Volume 8, Issue 3*.

http://faculty.georgetown.edu/hcn4/Downloads/Noel_Forum.PDF

Listen: Podcast of Professor Noel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rru6kyJByo>

Weekly learning objective: The basics of the Electoral College and the 2020 map to win. What are the key groups to watch?

Week 2: September 22, 2020: Political Parties and their Evolution in the United States

Read: Federalist 10: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp

Quick Reads: First parties: <https://www.constitutionfacts.com/founders-library/first-party-system/>

The 1796 election: <https://www.ushistory.org/us/19c.asp>

The Great Debate: <https://www.constitutionfacts.com/us-articles-of-confederation/the-great-debate/>

Watch: Hamilton on Disney Plus – that's a recommendation, not a requirement.

Listen: <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/podcast/the-federalists-vs-the-anti-federalists>

Weekly learning objective: The Framers' views of political parties. How they emerged during the first 3 presidencies. The creation of the Republican Party and the Civil War. The positions of the parties up to the 1960s.

Week 3: September 29, 2020: Political Parties and their Evolution II

Read: America the Divided Republic:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/01/two-party-system-broke-constitution/604213/>

Quick history: <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-party-of-lincoln-won-over-the-once-democratic-south>

Great Twitter threads by historian Kevin Kruse: <https://twitter.com/KevinMKruse/status/1146131622984658944>

Parts IV to XIV (that's 4 to 14). And you should follow him.

Listen: Fivethirtyeight podcast: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-how-the-gop-chose-to-be-a-white-party/>

Watch: short video on LBJ speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kOjKPe6-9o>

Longer speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-C2miztRfw>

Movie Recommendation: All the Way on Crave/HBO with Bryan Cranston.

Weekly learning objective: How Civil Rights changed the two parties in the United States. History of the parties beginning post-WWII to the present. How the American South went from solidly Democratic to solidly Republican.

Week 4: October 6, 2020: The Primaries

Read: Andrew Prokop (2015), "Political scientists think 'the party' will stop Trump. They shouldn't be so sure,"

Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2015/9/23/9352273/party-decides-trump-sanders>

Read: Nate Silver (2016), "The Republican Party May Be Failing: What 'The Party Decides' could get wrong about Donald Trump and the GOP," FiveThirtyEight. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-republican-party-may-be-failing/>

Read: Is the party deciding? <https://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/post/is-the-party-deciding>

Watch: Video, How do primaries work?: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51273719>

Watch: October 7th Vice-Presidential Debate.

Weekly learning objective: How do primaries work? How did Trump win the 2016 Republican primaries and how did Biden get the 2020 Democratic nomination? What are the advantages and disadvantages of primaries compared to leadership conventions, like in Canada?

Week 5: October 13, 2020: House and Senate Elections

Read: The goals of a Speaker: <https://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/post/evaluating-pelosi-speakership>

Fivethirtyeight article: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democrats-lead-the-race-for-congress-but-the-national-environment-will-probably-change/>

Look: https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_House_of_Representatives_elections,_2020

Look: the Electoral College, Senate, and House pages at the Cook Political Report: <https://cookpolitical.com>

Study the map of Senate races here: <https://www.270towin.com/2020-senate-election/>

Watch: Global News primer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAj-Y3gr3f4>

Weekly learning objective: How are House and Senate seats distributed? What does majority status mean in the House and Senate? What is the recent history of who has won the majority? What do the elections look like for 2020? What should we be watching?

Week 6: October 20, 2020: The Electoral Map, Electoral College, Electors, and What's Coming

MIDTERM WEEK

Read: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/09/us/politics/how-does-the-electoral-college-work.html>

Listen: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-the-electoral-college-episode/>

With Professors Julia Azari and Seth Masket.

Watch: Debates if there are any.

Movie Recommendation: Recount on Crave/HBO.

Weekly learning objective: How does the election actually work? How does the Electoral College work? What will happen on Election Day and after?

Week 7: October 27, 2020: Election Fundamentals and Forecasting

Read: Michael Lewis-Beck and Charles Tien. 2016. "The Political Economy Model: 2016 US Election Forecasts." *PS: Political Science and Politics* pp. 661-663.

Read: Professor Helmut Norpoth's Forecast favoured Trump in 2016 and does so again:

<http://primarymodel.com/2016-forecast-full>

<http://primarymodel.com/2020>

The Economist's forecasting model:

<https://projects.economist.com/us-2020-forecast/president>

Weekly learning objective: How do pollsters, statisticians, and political scientists make election predictions? What are the factors that matter in their models? How to read a poll.

Week 8: November 10, 2020: Election Aftermath

Read: ALL the news.

Weekly learning objective: What happened? Why? What were the key groups that swung the election? Is it over? What happens next? What can and cannot be done with the new party split between the branches of government?

Week 9: November 17, 2020: Voter Choice and Participation

Read: Non-voters. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/increased-voter-turnout-could-benefit-republicans-or-democrats-in-2020/>

The 2016 Election Exit Polls: <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/08/09/an-examination-of-the-2016-electorate-based-on-validated-voters/>

Listen: Podcast on 2016 How did the media – how did we – get this wrong?:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/09/podcasts/election-analysis-run-up.html>

I'll add a couple things about 2020.

Weekly learning objective: Which voters swung the 2016 election. What does it look they did in 2020?

Week 10: November 24, 2020: How Did We Get Here? Partisanship and the 2016 Election.

Read: The Single Most Important Fact about American Politics: <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/13/5803768/pew-most-important-fact-american-politics>

Watch: Lilliana Mason: Elections in a Polarized America. The 2016 Election:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJZntk_RPJA

Weekly learning objective: Learn about how polarization has occurred in the American electorate. What is negative partisanship? How strong is it?

Week 11: December 1: Presidential General Election Campaigns

Readings: How Do Campaigns Matter? Gary Jacobson 2015:

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-polisci-072012-113556>

Watch: A sample commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPaucMixQMM>

Watch: Campaign staffers react and dissect advertisements:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZWg3FDDIM&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vUrIXyonBQ>

Weekly learning objective: How much do campaigns matter? How do candidates decide how and where to campaign? How much does money matter in a campaign? Do debates matter?

Week 12: December 8: Redistricting, Reapportionment, and Gerrymandering

Read: What is Gerrymandering? <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/27/us/what-is-gerrymandering.html>

Common Cause and redistricting: <https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/gerrymandering-and-representation/gerrymandering-redistricting/>

Listen: fivethirtyeight podcast September 6, 2019: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-the-gerrymandering-fight-moves-to-the-states/>

Look: North Carolina 2018 results: <https://www.politico.com/election-results/2018/north-carolina/>

Weekly learning objective: Understand the process of reapportionment and redistricting. Learn how packing and cracking works. What are trade-offs between majority-minority districts and liberal representation?

VI. Makeup Exam Policy

It is essential that you understand the following policy for the course since *no exceptions will be made*. No exams may be taken early for any reason. A student who misses an exam must provide a *very good* reason supported by evidence such as a hospital admittance form. If you are ill prior to an exam, let me know as soon as possible beforehand if you may miss the exam. Failure to write one of the exams without providing a sufficient excuse will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

VII. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
2. Communicating with someone else during an exam or test;
3. Misrepresenting your identity; and
4. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and
3. When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

VIII. Accommodations for Disability

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services.

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar*

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>

"Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Academic Offences

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (Sen. Min. Feb.4/49, May 23/58, S.94, S.3538, S.3632, S.04-097) A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Medical Policy, Late Assignments, etc.

Students registered in Social Science should refer to

https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html for information on Medical Policy,

Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at www.registrar.uwo.ca
- Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at: <https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>
- Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/>
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Procedures for Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic

consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are **not** an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- must communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration **is not** normally intended for students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability. These students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability.

Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). These students should access support through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the **online Self-Reported Absence portal**. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities **within 48 hours or less**.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:
Students will be allowed:

- a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April;
- a maximum of one self-reported absence between May and August.

Any absences in excess of the number designated above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- Self-reported absences **will not be** allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period;
- Self-reporting **may not be** used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a medical absence not covered by existing Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation, will be required to provide documentation in person to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in the form of a completed, signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Non-Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence will be required to provide appropriate documentation to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.