

Wright State University

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Dates: August 29 - December 17, 2016
Time: 2:00 - 3:20 PM
Email: lee.hannah@wright.edu
Office Hours: T(4:00-5:00), W(1:00-2:00) and by appointment (set up via e-mail)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This special topics seminar focuses on the 2016 Presidential Election. In this course, we will closely watch the events of the respective campaigns in order to better understand the parties, the electorate, and modern campaigning strategies. We will also discuss the peculiarities of the two major party candidates. Hillary Clinton made history as the first female presidential nominee of a major party. How are we to understand Hillary Clinton as a standard bearer for feminism? Does her candidacy change anything for female politicians moving forward or is it simply a benchmark of shifting norms? What are the disadvantages (and possible advantages) of running for office as a woman? Donald Trump won the Republican nomination by running an outsider campaign that was largely criticized by the media and even members of his own party. How are we to understand Trump's relationship with the American people? Does Trump's candidacy signify a change in elections going forward? Does his candidacy usher in more outsiders? Regardless of the general election outcome, what impact does Trump have on the Republican Party? Meanwhile, for a number of reasons, third party candidates are on pace to have a significant impact on the two major parties and are polling at their highest numbers in twenty years.

By a number of metrics, the two nominees appear profoundly more polarizing and controversial than in elections? past. So perhaps the hyperbole is fitting. But we should also remember that every American presidential election is greeted with claims that "this is the most important election in our lifetime." Political observers are drawn to conflict, the media benefit from heightened drama and outrageous claims, and the candidates themselves will suggest that the results of each and every presidential election define America. In this class, we will certainly discuss the twists and turns of the 2016 election, but we will also contextualize these events in previous presidential elections and lean on historical and scholarly evidence to assess how the 2016 election compares to other elections.

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to

- 1) Students will evaluate the historical and constitutional origins of the election of the president..
- 2) Students will learn how and why presidential elections have changed over time.
- 3) Students will examine different theories related to vote choice and the persuasive effects of campaigns.
- 4) Students will compare and contrast the 2016 election to historical elections and to scholarly theories of elections.

5) Students will learn about the different strategies candidates employ to win presidential elections. These include: fundraising, advertising, and mobilizing voters.

6) Students will develop research and writing skills related to analyzing historical elections and testing theories related to campaigns and elections.

Reading Materials:

- There is no required text in this class. We will read several book chapters and articles from newspapers and academic journals. It is imperative that you complete the readings before class.
- Additional readings related to specific events in the 2016 election will be assigned throughout the course

Additional readings will be available online, posted on Pilot, or available through the Wright State University library.

Methods for Learning and Teaching:

This class will include a mix of lecture, discussion, and group activities. Your attendance is critical for succeeding in this class. Your attendance is especially critical on dates when homework is due.

Make-Up Grades:

These absences may include missing class for a University-sanctioned activity (with proper documentation), illness, religious observance, or family emergency. In case of an emergency, please contact me and we can work together on keeping you on track in the class.

Late Work Policy:

Assignments turned in late will be penalized 5% per day.

EXPECTATIONS

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for academic integrity.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you of any changes made throughout the course.

DISABILITY

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. It is your responsibility to notify me during the first week of the semester if such accommodations are needed. If you have questions about this, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at 937-775-5680 or disability_services@wright.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Forms (15% of final grade) This course has a number of readings. I believe that if you are personally interested in presidential elections, you will have a hard time putting some of these readings down. I will also post additional articles about the 2016 election as we go through the course as well. You will follow this link on a [Google Form](#) by **10:00 AM** on the day of class (link posted on Pilot) that asks a few basic questions about the readings. I will use these to prepare the course and to motivate you to complete the readings. You must complete a reading form on any (not all) of the assigned readings on the syllabus. There are 23 nights with readings over the course of the semester. You must complete 17 (75%) to earn full credit. These must be posted before class at 10:00 AM. You generally get full credit, however, your instructor will contact you if your answers are inadequate.

Homework Assignments (10% of final grade) These assignments will be brief and are primarily intended to have you bring material in for group and in-class discussions. These will be graded for completion. We will have 4 of these over the term worth 2.5% each.

Historical Election Annotated Bibliography (10% of final grade) In this course, we will compare the 2016 election to previous presidential elections. WSU Librarian, Mandy Shannon, will introduce our class to research databases that will help you uncover articles and analyses of previous elections. Instructions for the annotated bibliography are linked [here](#) and posted on Pilot.

Midterm Exam (20% of final grade) The midterm exam material will be drawn from class discussions and the readings from weeks 1 through 6. The exam is intended to assess your knowledge of class content and your ability to apply relevant concepts.

Historical Election Paper (20% of final grade) There are competing theories about what compels voters to support a particular candidate. In this paper, you will analyze a previous election (using your annotated bibliography and additional sources) and apply these theories to determine which theory best explains the outcome of that election. Instructions and a rubric for the historical election paper are linked [here](#) and posted on Pilot.

2016 Election Paper (15% of final grade) After the election, you will write a [paper](#) similar to the Historical Election Paper. You will compare and contrast the election you selected to the election of 2016 and you will assess how previous theories of vote choice hold up in the 2016 election.

Participation and Attendance (10% of final grade) Your participation in class discussion and group assignments is expected. Your grade will also reflect your attentiveness in class. If the instructor observes that you are consistently off task (working on other materials, playing on computer or phone, etc.), then you will also be penalized.

GRADES AND DUE DATES

Below I list each assignment, the due date (also marked on course calendar), and the weight it receives in the final calculation of your grade:

Assignment	Due Date	% of Grade
Homework 1	September 8	2.5%
Homework 2	September 20	2.5%
Midterm Exam	October 13	20%
Annotated Bibliography	October 21	10%
Homework 3	October 27	2.5%
Historical Election Paper	November 4	20%
Homework 4	November 10	2.5%
2016 Election Paper	December 13	15%
Reading Forms	Daily	15%
Participation and Attendance	Daily	10%

CLASS SCHEDULE:¹

Week 1

August 30 - Course Introduction

September 1 - How Did We Get Here? A Long History of Presidential Campaigns

Reading: Sides, John, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz. 2015. "The Transformation of American Campaigns." Chapter 3 in *Campaigns and Elections. Second Edition* (pp. 52-81). New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Week 2

September 6 - How Did We Get Here? A Shorter History

Reading: Halperin, Mark and John Heilemann. 2013. "Like a Hurricane" and "Epilogue." in *Double Down: Game Change 2012*. (pp.451-472.) New York: Penguin.

Reading: SKIM [GOP Growth and Opportunity Project](#) by the Republican National Committee.²

September 8 - The Party Conventions

Reading: [Republican Platform 2016](#)

Reading: [Democratic Platform 2016](#)

Due: Homework #1 on Party Platforms³

¹Students are responsible for knowing both university and course schedules.

The academic calendar is available at: <https://www.wright.edu/registrar/academic-calendar>.

²Also known as "The Republican Autopsy Report."

³Bring assignment to class. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot before class.

Week 3

September 13 Campaign Strategy and the Electoral College

Reading: Hamilton, Alexander. "[The Federalist No. 68.](#)" March 14, 1788.

Reading: Streb, Matthew J. 2016. "The Electoral College." Chapter 9 in *Rethinking American Electoral Democracy, Third Edition*. (pp. 160-180.). New York: Routledge.

Reading: Shaw, Daron. 2006. "The Truth About Electoral College Strategies." Ch. 3 in *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. (pp. 41-60). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

September 15 - Researching the Presidential Election with WSU Political Science Reference and Instruction Librarian, Mandy Shannon.

Due: Submit [Google Form](#) form with preferences for election paper by 5:00 PM.

Week 4

September 20 - The 2016 Candidates

Reading: Lepore, Jill. 2016. "[The Woman Card.](#)" *The New Yorker*, June 27, 2016.

Reading: Beschloss, Michael. 2015. "[Before Trump or Florina, There was Wendell Willkie.](#)" *The New York Times*, August 29, 2015.

Due: Homework #2 - The cases against candidates Clinton and Trump.⁴

September 22 - Presidential Debates

Reading: Schroeder, Alan. 2008. "The Predebate Debate." Chapter 2 of *Presidential Debates: Fifty Years of High-Risk TV, 2nd Edition*. (pp. 15-47).

Reading: Halperin, Mark and John Heilemann. 2013. "Mile-High Meltdown" and "Intervention." Chapters 21 and 22 in *Double Down: Game Change 2012*. (pp.412-450.) New York: Penguin.

Week 5⁵

September 27 - The Role of Gender in Political Campaigns

Reading: Herrnson, Paul S., J. Celeste Lay, and Atiya Kai Stokes. 2003. "[Women Running as Women: Candidate Gender, Campaign Issues, and Voter-Targeting Strategies.](#)" *The Journal of Politics* 65(1): 244-255.

Extra Credit Opportunity: League of Women Voters Event on evaluating the Electoral College at Wright State at 6:00 -8:00 PM.

September 29 - Financing Presidential Elections

Reading: Sides, John, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz. 2015. "Financing Campaigns." Chapter 4 in *Campaigns and Elections. Second Edition* (pp. 82-119). New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

⁴Due at beginning of class. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.

⁵First Presidential Debate on Monday, September 26 at Hofstra University

Week 6

October 4 - The Running Mates - Do They Matter in Elections?⁶

Reading: Heilemann, John and Mark Halperin. 2010. "Sarahcuda" and "Seconds in Command." Chapters 20 and 22 in *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime*. (pp. 353-376, 395-416). New York: Harper Collins.

Reading: Sigelman, Lee and Paul J. Wahlbeck. 1997. "The "Veepstakes": Strategic Choice in Presidential Running Mate Selection." *American Political Science Review*, 91(4): 855-864.

October 6 - Third (and Fourth) Parties

Reading: Lizza, Ryan. 2016. "The Libertarian's Secret Weapon." *The New Yorker*, July 25, 2016.

Reading: Azari, Julia. 2016. "The States that Love (And Hate) Third-Party Candidates." *Five Thirty Eight*, July 6, 2016.

Week 7⁷

October 11 - Exam Review and Debate Reflection

Reading: TBA

October 13 - **Midterm Exam**

Week 8⁸

October 18 - Campaign Effects: The Media and Campaign Optics

Reading: "Winning the Media Campaign 2012" Report on media coverage in the 2012 election by Pew Research Center, November 2, 2012.

Reading: Leibovich, Mark. 2008. "Between Obama and the Press." *The New York Times Magazine*, December 17, 2008.

October 20 - Campaign Effects: Advertising

Reading: Rich, Frank. 2012. "Nuke 'Em." *New York Magazine*, June 17, 2012.

Reading: Gimpel, James G., Karen M. Kauffmann, and Shanna Person-Merkowitz. 2007. "Battleground States versus Blackout States: The Behavioral Implications of Modern Presidential Campaigns." *Journal of Politics*, 69(3): 786-797.

Due: Annotated Bibliography⁹

⁶Vice-Presidential Debate on Tuesday, October 4 at Longwood University

⁷Second Presidential Debate on Sunday, October 9 at Washington University

⁸Third Presidential Debate on Wednesday, October 19 at UNLV

⁹Due at end of day (5:00 PM EST) on Friday, October 21. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.

Week 9

October 25 - Campaign Effects: Strategic Campaigns and Data

Issenberg, Sasha. 2012. "Showdown at the Oasis" and "Models and the Matrix." Chapters 8 and 9 in *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (pp. 212-271). New York: Crown Publishers.

October 27 - **No Class**

Due: Homework #3 - The cases for candidates Clinton and Trump.¹⁰

Week 10

November 1 - Polling and the 2016 Election

Reading: Silver, Nate. 2012. "Are You Smarter Than a Television Pundit?" Chapter 2 in *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail - But Some Don't* (pp. 47-73). New York: Penguin.

Extra Credit Opportunity: Margaret O'Mara, author of *Pivotal Tuesdays*, will be speaking at Wright State at 7:00 PM.

November 3 - Down the Ballot: Congress and Ballot Initiatives¹¹

Reading: Samuelsohn, Darren. 2016. "[Ballot Initiatives Could Tip the Balance in Swing States.](#)" *Politico*, August 13, 2016.

Due: Historical Election Paper due.¹²

Week 11

November 8 - Election Day - Final Projections

Reading: TBA

November 10 - Election Recap

Reading: TBA

Due: Homework #4 - Questions for Reporter.¹³

Week 12

November 15 - Reflections on Reporting on the Election of 2016 with special guest, Amanda Seitz, Government and Politics reporter for WCPO in Cincinnati.

November 17 - The President-Elect's Agenda and the White House Transition

Reading: Naylor, Brian. 2016. "[With White House Help, Clinton and Trump Start Transition Planning.](#)" *NPR*, August 1, 2016.

¹⁰Due at end of day (5:00 PM EST) on Thursday, October 27. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.

¹¹Expect additional readings closer to the date.

¹²Assignment is due on Friday, November 4 at 5:00 PM. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.

¹³Due before class on Thursday, November 10. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.

Week 13

November 22 - Down Ballot Elections

Reading: TBA

November 24 - **Thanksgiving Day - no class**

Week 14

November 29 - Ohio: The Bellwether

Reading: TBA

Reading: TBA

December 1 - International Implications of the Election

Reading: TBA

Week 15

December 6 - A way too early look ahead to the 2020 Election

Reading: TBA

December 8 - Course Wrap-Up

Reading: TBA

Due: 2016 Election Paper .¹⁴

No Final Exam.

¹⁴Due on Tuesday, December 13 at 5:00 PM. Submit to Dropbox on Pilot.