

Political Science 112

US Elections: Rules, Strategies, and Outcomes

Fall 2020

Cohen Auditorium

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Professor Hersh

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12-2, Fridays 10-12 (via Zoom only, by appointment)
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Overview

This course examines election laws and political campaigns in the United States. The overall focus of the class will be on how rules, including the US Constitution, public policies, and party norms, affect the ways that strategic campaigns pursue voters. We will also engage questions like: How do voters make up their minds? Why do candidates choose particular strategies? How effective are those strategies at winning votes? We will spend some time diagnosing the 2016 and 2020 election and the current political climate.

Readings

All scholarly articles are available via Tisch Library online access. All book chapters and unpublished works are posted to the class webpage.

Office Hours Procedures

Offices hours are scheduled via Calendly, at <https://calendly.com/eitan-hersh/15min>. Office hours will take place at <https://tufts.zoom.us/my/eitanhersh>. If the time/format of these office hours does not work for you, email me and we can figure out alternatives.

Assignments

1. **Weekly response.** By midnight each Monday night, each student must post a brief (5-10 sentences) response to the readings on the course website. The response can be a thoughtful question or observation. It can respond to a single reading or synthesize

multiple readings. A student may also contribute by responding to another student's post. Evaluations of these responses will count toward the participation grade.

2. **Short paper.** A 4-5 page paper that will require students to attend, in person or via live video conference (probably the latter), an actual campaign/election event.
3. **Midterm Exam**
4. **Final Exam**

Grading

Participation/Weekly Responses	15%
Short Paper	25%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	40%

Course Policies

1. Follow all Covid-19 policies!
2. No electronic devices, including laptop computers, are permitted during in-person class. If you have a special reason why an electronic device is necessary, please see me. If you are participating in the class remotely, you are strongly encouraged to take handwritten notes so as to avoid the temptation of toggling back and forth between computer programs.
3. On-time attendance is mandatory. If you are to be late or miss a class, you should let me know ahead of time. Unexcused late arrivals or absences will result in grading penalties. Of course, in the event of a personal or family emergency, please get in touch with me.
4. Eating in class is not permitted.
5. Late papers will be down-graded unless you have discussed with me ahead of time or in the event of an emergency.
6. Should an illness or other excused absence require you to miss the midterm exam, a 5-page paper will be assigned in its place.

Academic Integrity

Students must familiarize themselves with the university's policies on academic integrity. Your objective should be to stay so far away from the line of cheating that your work could never possibly be attributed to someone else and no one would ever possibly accuse you of offering someone else's work as your own.

Schedule

September 8: Introductory Meeting

September 10, 15: Foundations

Readings

- 1.) U.S. Constitution. I 1-4, II 1, IV4, V
Amendments 1, 10, 12, 14-15, 17, 19, 22-23, 26
- 2.) *Federalist* 10
- 3.) Nathaniel Persily, "The Place of Competition in American Election Law, in the Marketplace of Democracy," *Scholarship at Penn Law*, Paper 96, 2006.

September 17, 22, 24: Political Parties

Readings

- 1.) Nelson Polsby, *Consequences of Party Reform* (1983), Ch. 1 and 5
- 2.) Rosenfeld and Schlozman, Excerpts from "The Hollow Parties"
- 3.) Cohen et al (2008), Ch 1-3
- 4.) The 2020 Democratic and Republican Platforms

September 29, Oct 1: Party Nomination Rules

Readings

- 1.) Michael Lewis-Beck and Peverill Squire, "Iowa: The Most Representative State," *PS*, Jan 2009: 39-44.
- 2.) Todd Donovan and Rob Hunsaker, "Beyond Expectations: Effects of Early Elections in U.S. Presidential Nominations," *PS*, Jan 2009: 45-52.
- 3.) Eric McGhee, et al. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislator Ideology," *American Journal of Political Science*, 58 (2014): 337-351.
- 4.) Andrew Hall and Daniel Thompson, "Who Punishes Extremist Nominees? Candidate Ideology and Turning Out the Base in US Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 2018.

October 6, 8, 13: Money and Influence

Readings

- 1.) *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010)

- 2.) Theda Skocpol and Alex Hertel-Fernandez, “The Koch Network and Republican Party Extremism,” *Perspectives on Politics* (2016): 681-799
- 3.) Alex Fourinaies and Andrew Hall, “How Do Interest Groups Seek Access to Committees?” *American Journal of Political Science*, (2018): 132-147.

October 15: Midterm Exam

October 20, 22: Redistricting

Readings

- 1.) Edward Tufte, “The Relationship Between Seats and Votes in Two-Party Systems,” *American Political Science Review* (67) 1973: 540-555.
- 2.) Excerpts from *Vieth v. Jubelirer* (2004)
- 3.) Devin Caughey, Chris Tausanovich, and Chris Warshaw, “Partisan Gerrymandering and the Political Process: Effects on Roll-Call Voting and State Policies” *Election Law Journal* (2017): 453-469.
- 4.) *Rucho v. Common Cause* (2019)

October 27, 29: The Voting Rights Act, Racial Gerrymandering

Readings

- 1.) Excerpts from *Thornburg v. Gingles* (1986)
- 2.) Excerpts from *Shelby County v Holder* (2013)
- 3.) Sophie Schuit and Jon Rogowski, “Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act,” *American Journal of Political Science* (61) 2017: 513-526.
- 4.) Carolyn Abott and Asya Magazinnik, “At-Large Elections and Minority Representation in Local Government,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Forthcoming.

November 3, 5: Covid-19, Economic Voting, Bush v. Gore

- 1.) Marc Meredith and Neil Malhotra, “Convenience Voting Can Affect Election Outcomes,” *Election Law Journal* (10) 2011, 227-253.
- 2.) Daniel Thompson, Jennifer Wu, Jesse Yoder, and Andrew Hall, “Universal Vote-By-Mail Has No Impact on Partisan Turnout or Vote Share?” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2020).
- 3.) Yotam Margalit, “Political Responses to Economic Shocks,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2019.
- 4.) Excerpts from *Bush v. Gore* (2000)
- 5.) Diana Cao, “Florida Election Analysis”, Stanford-MIT Project on a Healthy Election, June 24, 2020.

November 10: PAPER DUE - No Class, Tufts Wednesday

November 12, 17: Voting Access and Voter Suppression

Readings

- 1.) Barry C. Burden, et al, "Election Laws, Mobilization, and Turnout: The Unanticipated Consequences of Electoral Reform." Forthcoming in *American Journal of Political Science*, 2013.
- 2.) David Nickerson, "Do Voter Registration Drives Increase Participation? For Whom and When?" *Journal of Politics* 77 (1) 2015, 88-101.
- 3.) Sarah Anzia, "Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups," *Journal of Politics* 73 (2) 2011: 412-427.
- 4.) Justin Grimmer and Jesse Yoder, "The Durable Differential Effects of Strict Photo Identification Laws," *Political Science Research & Methods*, Forthcoming.

November 19: Incumbency, Term Limits

Readings

- 1.) Gary Jacobson, "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections," *Journal of Politics* (2015): 861-873.
- 2.) John M. Carey, et al. "The Effects of Term Limits on State Legislature: A New Survey of the 50 States," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 31 (2006): 105-134.

November 24: Candidate Recruitment

Readings

- 1.) Danielle Thomsen and Aaron King, "Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power," *American Political Science Review* (2020).
- 2.) Nicholas Carnes and Eric Hansen "Does Paying Politicians More Promote Economic Diversity in Legislatures?" *American Political Science Review* (2016): 699-716.

December 1, 3: The Ground Campaign

Readings

- 1.) Eitan Hersh, *Hacking the Electorate*, Ch 2-3.
- 2.) Ryan Enos and Eitan Hersh, "Party Activists as Campaign Advertisers: The Ground Campaign as a Principal-Agent Problem." *American Political Science Review*, 109 (2): 252-278.

- 3.) Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism,” *Perspectives on Politics* (2011): 25-43.
- 4.) Lara Putnam and Theda Skocpol, “Middle America Reboots Democracy,” *Democracy*, February 20, 2018.
- 5.) Eitan Hersh, “How Democrats Can Repair Their Generational Divide,” *POLITICO Magazine*, March 12, 2020.

December 8, 10: The Voter’s Eye View

Readings

- 1.) Donald P. Green, et al., *Partisan Hearts and Minds* (New Haven: Yale UP) 2002, Ch. 1-2.
- 2.) Alan Gerber, et al, “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment,” *American Political Science Review* 102 (2008): 33-48.
- 3.) Eitan Hersh, *Politics is for Power*, Excerpts:
 - a. “College Educated Voters are Ruining American Politics,” *Atlantic* January 20, 2020.
 - b. “Listen up Liberals: You Aren’t Doing Politics Right,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2020
 - c. “Politics is for Power, Not Consumption,” *Boston Review*, November 4, 2019.
- 4.) Katherine Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*, 2016, Ch 1-3, 8.

December 12, 12:00: Final Exam