**POS 390: Election 2018**

[](http://www.roosevelt.edu/Home.aspx)

**Department of Political Science and Public Administration**

**POS 390: Election 2018**

**Fall 2018**

**Tuesdays, 2-4:30**

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**Course Description:**

*Election 2018* takes a deep dive into the dynamics of America’s quadrennial midterm elections, looking particularly at the effects of campaign finance, presidential popularity, media coverage, voter contact and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) operations and candidate strategy on the outcomes of these contests. During our sessions we will consider questions like “Does the president’s approval rating have a determinative effect on congressional races?” and “Where and why do campaigns invest in GOTV operations, and do those investments pay dividends?” We will also look at the dynamics of congressional and gubernatorial races, looking especially at where the parties choose to invest their resources, and asking what it takes to win elections for the House of Representatives and the United States Senate during midterm election years.

**Goals**

The goals of this course are to familiarize students with the *field-specific knowledge* of political scientists and campaign professionals regarding congressional and gubernatorial elections. Furthermore, we seek to ask whether the processes and procedures that we use to conduct national elections contribute to problems of *equity and social justice*. Finally, the course seeks to inculcate *transferrable skills* such as research, analysis and public speaking, that students can use regardless of the profession that they choose to pursue.

**Attendance and Punctuality:**

Because of the frequency of interactive activities and presentations, your presence in class is essential to the creation and maintenance of a collaborative learning environment. One absence is permitted, whatever the reason. Any further absences will result in the removal of three points from your final grade, per absence. Students who arrive after roll is taken will receive half-credit for that day’s attendance; Students arriving more than 15 minutes late are welcome to stay, but will receive no credit for that day’s attendance.

**Crisis Policy**

If you are experiencing difficulties with your health, personal life or any other crisis that is affecting your ability to come to class and complete the work, it is imperative that you alert me as soon as possible. The best path is to see someone at Roosevelt’s counseling center, who can then alert all your professors that you are having trouble. I can work together with the counseling center to find an appropriate course of action to help you make it through the class. *It is not acceptable to approach me at the end of the semester to tell me you’ve been having problems since August with the expectation that this will change your grade.*

**Assignments**

*Campaign preview:* Each student will write a 1,000-1,500 word preview of the race they will be focusing on this semester. The assignment will be distributed during the second week of class.

*Full campaign report*: Each student will write a 2,000 – 2,500 word post-mortem on their assigned campaign, linking outcomes with theories and ideas studied during class.

*Presentations:* Each student will be assigned to a group of students studying similar campaigns – for instance, a group of students will study a set of House races labeled “Toss-up Republican” by the Cook Political Report. Each group will make two 30-minute presentations, one preview of the election and one post-mortem.

*Midterm:* There will be a midterm exam, on Tuesday, October 23rd.

*Final exam*: There will be a final exam during the scheduled exam period.

*Participation Rubric:*

A: Student rarely misses class, contributes frequently with thoughtful comments clearly drawn from a careful consideration of class materials.

B: Student occasionally misses class, contributes occasionally with comments and questions that are clearly drawn from a consideration of class materials.

C: Student misses class frequently, and participates with comments that betray a lack of engagement with class materials. A C will also be assigned to students who attend class diligently but never contribute to class discussions.

D: Student misses class very often and makes contributions to the class environment that are an obvious distraction from the materials, ideas and issues under consideration OR contributes nothing at all to conversations.

F: Student rarely if ever shows up for class.

**Written assignments are due on the assigned due dates and promptly at the times specified on the assignments. Late assignments will be penalized as follows:**

* 1 min – 12 hours past due: -5%
* 12 hours to 24 hours past due: -10%
* 24 hours to 36 hours past due: -20%
* 36 hours to 48 hours past due: -30%
* 48 hours past due: Assignments accepted at 70% credit until the last class meeting.

**You are responsible for sending the correct file in the correct format**. Emails without attachments, or emails containing files other than Word documents, will be regarded as not fulfilling the assignment. You may not under any circumstances:

* Claim that you saved the email in draft form but simply forgot to send it
* Claim that you sent the email to the wrong address
* Claim that you wrote the paper but simply forgot to send it to me
* Claim that you emailed me but forgot to attach the assignment
* Claim that the Internet is down where you live
* Claim that your document was lost in a catastrophic computer crash
* Claim that your document was lost, stolen or otherwise corrupted
* Email me days later with a different file claiming the file you sent me the first time was the wrong one. If you send the wrong file, you MUST realize and rectify the error within the timeframe of the due date.

**Exceptions to policies surrounding the turning in of assignments will only be granted in the case of severe illness or emergency occurring within 24 hours of the due date, which must be documented with written proof.**

**Grade percentages**

Election Preview: 15%

Full Campaign Report 20%

Presentations 10%

Class Participation 10%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 25%

**The grading scale is as follows**. Grades will be rounded down below .5, and rounded up for .5-.9 – i.e. an 89.4 is an 89, but an 89.5 is a 90.

92.5 – 100% : A 86.5 – 89.4%: B+ 76.5 – 79.4%: C+ 66.5 – 69.4%: D+

89.5 – 92.4%: A- 82.5 – 86.4%: B 72.5 – 76.4%: C 59.5 – 66.4%: D

79.5 – 82.4%: B- 69.5 – 72.4%: C- 0 – 59.4%: F

**Academic** **integrity**: For the Academic Integrity Policy on issues such as plagiarism, repurposing, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty please see the University’s policies page, which is available at: [www.roosevelt.edu/policies](http://www.roosevelt.edu/policies). Additional guidelines for avoiding plagiarism are available here: <https://www.roosevelt.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity>.

**Disability**:  Roosevelt University complies fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Details about ADA and Roosevelt’s policies and practices are found in the following link: <https://www.roosevelt.edu/current-students/get-help/learning-commons/disability-services>. If you have a condition or disability that requires reasonable accommodation, please alert the Academic Success Center as soon as possible, certainly before any assignment or classroom activity that requires accommodation.  The Academic Success Center is located in AUD1050 (inside the Library) in Chicago, and the phone number is 312-341-3811. In Schaumburg, the office is in room 125, and the phone number is 847-619-7978. You can also reach the ASC by emailing [**academicsuccess@roosevelt.edu**](mailto:academicsuccess@roosevelt.edu).

**Religious holidays**: Please let your instructor know as soon as possible if you will miss class because you are observing a religious holiday. Roosevelt University policy requires written notification to the instructor within the first two weeks of the term. Any work you miss because of a religious holiday can be made up. You can see the full policy here: <https://www.roosevelt.edu/policies/religious-holidays>.

**Student Code of Conduct:** Students enrolled in the university are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the university’s function as an educational institution. <https://www.roosevelt.edu/current-students/get-help/complaint/student-misconduct>

**Title IX:** Roosevelt University cares greatly about the health and well-being of our students, staff, faculty, and guests to our campuses.  Federal law, specifically Title IX, and the University Sexual Misconduct Policy require that all employees are **mandated reporters** of incidents involving sexual or gender-based violence or harassment. The complete policy can be found here: <https://www.roosevelt.edu/title-ix>

Disclosures made to faculty or teaching assistants (TAs) about sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and/or stalking on or off campus **must be forwarded** to the Title IX Coordinator.  The above listed staff are Responsible Employees and therefore are mandated to report.  The Title IX office will contact any student who discloses an incident regarding student rights, including the option to request an investigation, interim safety measures, and/or academic accommodations.  In certain circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may need to proceed with an investigation, even if none is requested, if there are safety risks to the student or campus community.  Participation in the process is voluntary.

If you want a confidential place to disclose sexual assault, sexual harassment or intimate partner violence, there are confidential advisors on campus who are not mandated reporters.  They are:

**LaDonna Long** (312)244-0426 – Confidential Advisor (available via phone all hours); **Toyia Stewart** – Deputy Coordinator (312) 341-6756; **Alice Jones** - Title IX Coordinator (312) 341-2045. **The Counseling Center** (430 S. Michigan Avenue Room 470 Phone: 312-341-3548) staff are also NOT mandatory reporters and therefore NOT required to report a disclosure to the Title IX Office.

**Withdrawal** **date**: The final date for an official withdrawal from this class (meaning a “W” would appear on your transcript) **is November 1st**. In order to withdraw after the official withdrawal date, you must petition for a late withdraw with Office of the Registrar. Petitions are granted only for non-academic reasons after the deadline. You should consult your academic advisor if you are considering withdrawing from a course. If you receive financial aid, also check with your financial aid counselor to assure that aid isn’t affected by withdrawing from a class. The complete withdrawal policy is here: <https://www.roosevelt.edu/current-students/academics/register-classes>.

**Required Texts**

**The following texts are available for purchase in the university bookstore.**

Alan Abramowitz, *The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation and the Rise of Donald Trump* (Yale University Press)

Ed Kilgore, *Election 2014: Why Republicans Swept the Midterms* (University of Pennsylvania Press)

**Class Schedule**

**August 28th: Welcome**

Hello! Course parameters, introductions and initial discussion of national and state political dynamics

**September 4th: The Collapse of the New Deal Coalition**

*Civil rights tears apart the Democratic majority*

Read: Alan Abramowitz, *The Great Alignment*, chapters 1-3.

In class: Lecture, discussion

**September 11th: From Realignment to Polarization and Hyper-partisanship**

*From Reagan to Trump*

Read: Alan Abramowitz, *The Great Alignment*, chapters 4-7.

In class: Lecture, discussion

**September 18th: Looking Back on 2014**

*How and why Republicans dominated the 2014 midterm elections*

Read: Ed Kilgore, *Election 2014: Why Republicans Swept the Midterms* (all)

In class: Lecture, discussion, House 1 report

**September 25: The State of Play**

*The 2018 primaries, Trump and the Permanent Backlash*

In class: Lecture, discussion, House 2 report

Read: Selections from Salena Zeto’s *The Great Revolt*. **{BB}** Harry Enten, “[Special Elections So Far Point to a Democratic Wave in 2018](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/special-elections-so-far-point-to-a-democratic-wave-in-2018/).” *Five Thirty Eight*. **{BB}.** Ned Ryun, “[From Blue Wave to Blue Trickle to Blue Gurgle](https://amgreatness.com/2018/05/23/from-blue-wave-to-blue-trickle-to-blue-gurgle/).” *American Greatness*. **{BB}**.

**October 2: Who Pays For All of This Anyway?**

*The big business of financing campaigns*

Read: John Sides, Matt Grossman, Keena Lipsitz, and Daron Shaw, “Financing Campaigns.” **{BB}**. Jeffrey Toobin, “[Money Unlimited](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/05/21/money-unlimited).” *The New Yorker* {BB}. Glen Hubbard and Tim Kane, “In Defense of Citizens United.” *Foreign Affairs*, 2013 **{BB}**.

In class: Lecture, discussion, House 3 report

**Due October 7th at midnight: Campaign preview**

**October 9: How Big Does the Wave Have to Be?**

*Polling, Gerrymandering, Partisan Sorting and the House*

**In class**: Lecture, discussion, Senate A

**Read**: Laura Royden Michael Li and Yurij Rudensky, “Extreme Gerrymandering and the 2018 Midterm.” *The Brennan Center For Justice*, 2018 **{BB}**. Latest analysis from the *Cook Political Report* of the 2018 House race (TBD). Dan McLaughlin, “The Gerrymander Myth,” *The National Review*, February 20th, 201 **{BB}.**

**October 16: Sink or Swim with Trump**

*Presidential approval and gubernatorial races*

Read: Eric Ostermeier, “[Is there a Presidential Drag on Gubernatorial Elections](http://editions.lib.umn.edu/smartpolitics/2014/10/29/is-there-a-presidential-drag-o/)?”; Brown, A. R. (2010). “Are governors responsible for the state economy? Partisanship, blame, and divided federalism.” Journal of Politics, 72(3), 605–615. **{BB}**

In class: Lecture, discussion, Gubernatorial reports

**October 23**

*Read: None*

In class: Midterm

**October 30**

*Campaign strategy, Candidate Strength, Advertising*

Read: John Sides, Matt Grossman, Keena Lipsitz, and Daron Shaw, “Modern Campaign Strategies.” **{BB}**. Kevin Banda, “Negative Advertising and the Dynamics of Candidate Support.” *Political Behavior*, 2016.

In class: Senate B report

**November 1st: Withdrawal Deadline**

**November 6**

**GOTV and gameday strategy**

Costas Panagopoulos. “All About That Base.” *Party Politics*. 2015. TBD Reading on turnout operations.

In class: Senate C report

**November 13**

Election 2018 Debriefing

Read: TBD

In class: House 1, 2 and 3 post-mortems

**Due November 18th at midnight: Full campaign reports**

**No class November 20th**

**November 27th**

FRITZ seats, the battle for the Senate and the enduring Republican advantage

Read: Nathaniel Rakich, “[Democrats’ Horrible 2018 Senate Map Couldn’t Have Come at a Better Time](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democrats-horrible-2018-senate-map-couldnt-have-come-at-a-better-time/).” *538*, May 1, 2018. **{BB}.** “The 58 State Solution,” David Faris. **{BB}.**

**In class: Senate A, B and C post-mortems**

**December 4**

Semester wrap. Gubernatorial post-mortems. Discussion of future of U.S. politics

Read: Selections from Liliana Mason’s *Uncivil Agreement*. **{BB}**

**Tuesday, December 11th, 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.: Final Exam**