

GOVT 656-002
VOTING BEHAVIOR, ELECTIONS & CAMPAIGNS
Seo-young Silvia Kim
Fall 2020

Class Time:	Tue 5:30pm–8:30pm	Classroom:	Zoom/Canvas
Instructor Email:	sskim@american.edu	Office Hours:	Mon 2:30–3:30pm/9:30–10:30pm
Teaching Assistant:	Jennifer Lopez (jl0049a@student.american.edu)	TA Office Hours:	Wed 5:30–7:30pm

Overview

This course focuses on one of the most complex and consequential institutions of American democracy, the American electoral system. We will cover subjects ranging from the nomination process and group influences on political behavior to campaign finance, partisanship, and more. How do candidates, parties, interest groups, and the media seek to influence the American electorate? How does the electorate respond, or in turn influence candidates, parties, interest groups, and the media? What other entities interact with American elections? What determines voter turnout and vote choices? We will explore these in detail with particular attention to the presidential and congressional coming up in November 2020.

- ✓ You are expected to have completed the assigned weekly readings and ready to dive into discussions about them. In addition, you are expected to submit (1) two response papers, and (2) your original analysis of a House or Senate election of your choice.
- ✓ There is no single textbook for this class. Instead, I will put up links to article/book readings on the course website. All materials should be accessible within the university network.
- ✓ If you see any conflict between course details on Canvas and this syllabus, please let me know so that I may resolve it.

Course Objectives

- Describe the factors that influence voter turnout and vote choice in federal elections
 - Explain the role and influence of campaign finance in the United States in 2020
 - Explain the importance of the Electoral College and the role of swing/battleground states
 - Be able to interpret public opinion polls
 - Understand the influence of mass media, political parties, and interest groups
 - Be able to produce logical, in-depth presentations, short papers, and long research papers
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Class Format

This class adheres to AU Forward: The Plan for Fall 2020. Per the guideline updated on July 30, 2020, the class will online only. I will try my best to accommodate you and keep you engaged.

- All the lectures will be uploaded online on Canvas. There are no asynchronous online lectures for this class, so it will be recordings of Zoom. The class Canvas website will open on Aug 24, 2020, and will contain Zoom links for each class.
- I will try to provide a couple of offline office hours for those who remain in the DMV area and would like to engage (outside and socially distanced). This is of course strictly optional, and I will also provide ample online office hours, both daytime and nighttime, to accommodate those who are remote. Note that **non-medical face coverings (face masks) will be required for all community members at all times on campus per AU guidelines.**
- I will be implementing student surveys several times during the semester to incorporate student feedback on the efficacy of the class.

Requirements

Classes will be divided into two segments with a 10-minute midpoint break. Lectures, short papers, student presentations, guest speakers, and small group discussions offer opportunities to discuss and deepen understanding of the material, discuss the readings and relate them to contemporary events in the political world, and debate various questions and perspectives. Graduate seminars presuppose preparation.

This is not a lecture class but a seminar class. There will be discussion leaders for each class, who are expected to read the class materials, summarize and present them, and lead the discussion on the given topics. Students may be called on at random for discussion.

- **Participation:** Students should arrive on time, be prepared to contribute constructively, and respond to the contributions of others with attention and respect. Although I will not use the attendance for the live synchronous sessions for grading, your participation is crucial to the class.
- **Discussion leader:** Each class will have one or two students presenting a summary of the weekly readings (a well-designed presentation format) and leading the class discussion as discussion leaders.
- **Response papers:** You are expected to submit two response papers for two separate weeks' topics of your choice. These should be a critical response to the readings with original analysis, and not just a summary of the readings. They should have a clearly defined thesis statement and written to strongly support this statement. Both response papers should be 5 pages or more without annotated bibliography. The response paper should be submitted within a week of the topic's class—for example, if you are submitting a response paper for Week 2's topic, this should be submitted by Week 3 class date, 11:59 pm. This is a little tricky in Canvas, so the assignments will have generic names (Response Paper 1 and Response Paper 2) with a due date not specifically set.
- **Congressional election analysis paper:** You are expected to submit your original analysis of a House or Senate election of your choice. Use the course readings to research and analyze the key factors shaping the outcomes of congressional elections. Your primary sources will include an analysis of the demographic, economic, political, and social data on the electorate and the campaigns in a given district or state. This should be 15 pages or more without annotated bibliography.

- This paper will be completed sequentially in smaller parts: (1) an introduction about your state or district and the candidates (10%), (2) historic election results in the state/district (20%), (3) current candidates’ key campaign agendas and strategies (20%), and (4) analysis of the election result (50% of the grade). Deadlines for each of these smaller submissions will be set and announced at a later date.
- Students may collaborate with another student (up to two students in a single group) as a joint project, recognizing each student will earn the same grade, and that once a collaboration pair has been set, you cannot be paired with another student or return to working on your own. I strongly encourage you to find partners to co-work on the analysis paper.
- You should choose one of the races marked as “competitive” by Cook Political Report. I have uploaded the current (as of Aug 4, 2020) versions of their House/Senate analyses on Canvas. 2020 House Race Ratings is available [here](#). You can choose any race in this file, although I strongly suggest you look among the toss-ups. 2020 Senate Race Ratings is available [here](#). If choosing a Senate race, you should avoid Solid D and Solid R races. If you have a strong preference for a race that is not listed here, and can convince me that it will make an interesting analysis paper, bring it up to me during office hours and I can take a look.
- Per request, you may also analyze the presidential election. In this case, the paper should be 20 pages or more without annotated bibliography.
- The [Writing Center](#) can be a great resource for students who would like to improve their writing skills. There is no fee—check out the Center’s website for details.
- **Final presentation:** At the end of the semester, you will present your final research paper as a presentation. This will comprise of 7 min presentation + 3 min Q&A, and the instructor and other students will ask questions. You should also submit the slides for this presentation on Canvas.

All papers—response papers and the final paper—should be one-half (1.5) spaced, 12pt font, 8.5” × 11” paper size (US letter), with 1” margins on all sides. The paper should use the [American Political Science Association citation style](#). You may use Microsoft Word, LaTeX (see my [Overleaf template](#), which is preset with the class requirements), or R Markdown, but please submit the final product as a PDF export.

Grades

The following is the composition of grades:

Participation	10%
Discussion Leader	10%
Response Papers	30%
Election Analysis Paper	40%
Presentation	10%

The grading scale is as follows:

		B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	60-69%
A	94% or above	B	84-86%	C	74-76%	D	55-59%
A-	90-93%	B-	80-83%	C-	70-73%	F	54% or below

Policies

University Policies and Resources. See American University’s Policies, such as the Academic Integrity Code, Emergency Preparedness, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy, Student Conduct Code, and so on. See also Disability-Related Accommodations.

- In particular, the Academic Integrity Code is extremely important. It governs all course-work in this class. Common violations include plagiarism, cheating, taking credit for work that is not one’s own, and so on. Any violations should be reported to me or the teaching assistants, and I will process the reported violation per guidelines. These are grave offenses that will result in penalties down to the F grade.
- See Section VII of the Student Conduct Code (Classroom Behavior and Academic Dishonesty) and I ask that you to be courteous in the classroom at all times.
- The Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to promoting access for individuals with disabilities within the university’s diverse community. If you have University-documented disabilities related to learning, please contact me to make the necessary arrangements.

Late and “Things Happen” Policy. All submissions will be subject to 20% reduction each day (i.e., 24 hours after specified submission date/time) you are late. To put it another way, if you are late one day, your grade for the submission will be maximum 80%. If you are late for two days, your grade for the submission will be maximum 60%.

For **two** of these (regardless of what) I will accept a three-day extension without any necessary excuses or documentations. After that, the above late policy will apply again similarly, so that if you are late for four days, your grade for the submission will be maximum 80%.

Contact. Please contact me through email if the specified office hours conflict with your other classes, and you wish to schedule an appointment (please provide a reason why). Please do *not* text or call through personal phone numbers. The class policy is that all questions should be first addressed during class or the office hours. There are no teaching assistants for this class.

Please address me as Dr. Kim or Professor Kim in the email correspondences. Consider these opportunities to prepare yourself for professional environments.

Intellectual Property. Course content is the intellectual property of the instructor or student who created it, and may not be recorded or distributed without consent.

Changes to the Syllabus. This syllabus is subject to change during the course as the instructor sees fit, depending on the situation and class progress—especially the weekly schedule below.

Weekly Schedule

Readings should be completed before the scheduled course meeting under which they are listed below. Extra reading may be added as the course progresses—if so, an email/Canvas announcement will be made. Most of the readings are hyperlinked so that you can click on it to access it directly on ProQuest Ebook Central.

For books (as opposed to journal articles), I will gradually update the requirements to assign specific chapters instead of the entire book in many cases. Please check Canvas for chapter selections.

MODULE 1: Elections

WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION

Aug 25

Readings

– [Syllabus](#)

– Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press.

WEEK 2: THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Sep 1

Readings

– Gelman, Andrew, Jonathan N. Katz, and Gary King. 2004. “Empirically Evaluating the Electoral College.” In *Rethinking the Vote: The Politics and Prospects of American Electoral Reform*, eds. Ann N. Crigler, Marion R. Just, and Edward J. McCaffery. Oxford University Press.

– Kriner, Douglas L., and Andrew Reeves. 2012. “The Influence of Federal Spending on Presidential Elections.” *The American Political Science Review* 106(2): 348-66.

WEEK 3: REDISTRICTING

Sep 8

Readings

– Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan N. Katz. 2002. *Elbridge Gerry’s Salamander: The Electoral Consequences of the Reapportionment Revolution*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 1-3, 6, 8, and 12)

– Jacobson, Gary C., and Jamie L. Carson. 2015. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. Rowman & Littlefield. (Chapter 2)

WEEK 4: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Sep 15

Readings

– Highton, Benjamin. 2017. “Voter Identification Laws and Turnout in the United States.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20(1): 149-67.

– Burden, Barry C., David T. Canon, Kenneth R. Mayer, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2014. “Election Laws, Mobilization, and Turnout: The Unanticipated Consequences of Election Reform.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1): 95-109.

– Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, and Seth J. Hill. 2013. “Identifying the Effect of All-Mail Elections on Turnout: Staggered Reform in the Evergreen State.” *Political Science Research and Methods* 1(1): 91-116.

– Kropf, Martha, and David C. Kimball. 2011. *Helping America Vote: The Limits of Election Reform*. Taylor & Francis Group.

– Atkeson, Lonna Rae et al. 2010. “A New Barrier to Participation: Heterogeneous Application of Voter Identification Policies.” *Electoral Studies* 29(1): 6673.

MODULE 2: Campaigns

WEEK 5: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

Sep 22

Readings

– Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 7 and 10)

– Norrander, Barbara. 2019. *The Imperfect Primary: Oddities, Biases, and Strengths of U.S. Presidential Nomination Politics*. Routledge. (Now available through Course Reserve; Chapters 3 and 4.)

WEEK 6: CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Sep 29 Readings

– (Optional) Jacobson, Gary C., and Jamie L. Carson. 2015. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. Rowman & Littlefield. (Chapters 3-7)

– Abramowitz, Alan I. 1991. "Incumbency, Campaign Spending, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 53(1): 34-56.

– Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, and Charles Stewart. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 136-59.

– Hirano, Shigeo, James M. Snyder Jr, Stephen Ansolabehere, and John Mark Hansen. 2010. "Primary Elections and Partisan Polarization in the U.S. Congress." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 5(2): 169-91.

WEEK 7: MONEY IN POLITICS

Oct 6 Readings

– Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder. 2003. "Why Is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105-30.

– Austen-Smith, David. 1995. "Campaign Contributions and Access." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 566-81.

– Barber, Michael J., Brandice Canes-Wrone, and Sharece Thrower. 2017. "Ideologically Sophisticated Donors: Which Candidates Do Individual Contributors Finance?" *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 271-88.

WEEK 8: MOBILIZATION/PERSUASION

Oct 13 Readings

– Thurber, James A., and Candice J. Nelson. 2000. *Campaign Warriors: Political Consultants in Elections*. Brookings Institution Press. (Chapters 3 and 6)

– (Optional) Bartels, Larry M., and Lynn Vavreck Lewis. 2000. *Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence*. University of Michigan Press. (Chapters 1-3)

– Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *The American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829-38.

MODULE 3: Voting

WEEK 9: PUBLIC OPINION

Oct 20 Readings

– Chanley, Virginia A., Thomas J. Rudolph, and Wendy M. Rahn. 2000. "The Origins and Consequences of Public Trust in Government: A Time Series Analysis." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 64(3): 239-56.

– Keele, Luke. 2007. "Social Capital and the Dynamics of Trust in Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 241-54.

– (Optional) Berinsky, Adam J. 2006. *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Participation in America*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1-3)

WEEK 10: VOTER TURNOUT

Oct 27 Readings

– Riker, William H., and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 62(1): 25-42.

– Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now?: Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 2 and 3)

– Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.

– Burden, Barry C. 2000. “Voter Turnout and the National Election Studies.” *Political Analysis* 8(4): 389-98.

WEEK 11: 2020 GENERAL ELECTION
 Nov 3 Election Day! Depending on the situation, either polling observations/exit polls or data-driven election prediction contest and discussion as the results roll in.

WEEK 12: VOTE CHOICE I
 Nov 10 Readings
 – Healy, Andrew, and Neil Malhotra. 2013. “Retrospective Voting Reconsidered.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 16(1): 285-306.
 – Healy, Andrew, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2014. “Substituting the End for the Whole: Why Voters Respond Primarily to the Election-Year Economy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1): 3147.
 – Lewis-Beck, Michael S., and Mary Stegmaier. 2000. “Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3(1): 183-219.

WEEK 13: VOTE CHOICE II
 Nov 17 Readings
 – (Optional) Reuning, Kevin, and Nick Dietrich. 2019. “Media Coverage, Public Interest, and Support in the 2016 Republican Invisible Primary.” *Perspectives on Politics* 17(2): 326-39.
 – Alvarez, R. Michael. 1998. *Information and Elections: Information and Elections*. University of Michigan Press. (Chapters 1, 2, and 8)

WEEK 14: INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA
 Nov 24 Readings
 – Barberá, Pablo et al. 2015. “Tweeting From Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than an Echo Chamber?” *Psychological Science* 26(10): 1531-42.
 – Jost, John T. et al. 2018. “How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks.” *Political Psychology* 39(S1): 85-118.

WEEK 15: WRAP: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY
 Dec 1 Readings
 – TBD

EXAM WEEK: Final Presentations (TBD)
