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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Office Hours By appointment

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 All book chapters and unpublished works are posted to the class webpage.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**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Weekly Responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**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

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

October 6, 8, 13: Money and Influence

Readings


**October 15: Midterm Exam**

**October 20, 22: Redistricting**

Readings
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)


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).
November 10: PAPER DUE - No Class, Tufts Wednesday

November 12, 17: Voting Access and Voter Suppression

Readings

November 19: Incumbency, Term Limits

Readings

November 24: Candidate Recruitment

Readings

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.

**December 8, 10: The Voter’s Eye View**

Readings
3.) Eitan Hersh, *Politics is for Power*, Excerpts:

**December 12, 12:00: Final Exam**