US Campaigns & Elections 2020

COURSE INFORMATION	*Term:* Fall 2020 *Level:* Topics (open to all) *Time:* Fridays 11:10-12:30 *Room:* N/A; remote class. Course may be completed asycnronously. *Syllabus Revision:* August 27, 2020	*Instructor:* Jack Reilly *Office:* Social Sciences 205 *E-mail:* jreilly@ncf.edu *Student Hours:* Tuesday and Friday, 4-5, scheduled online over zoom or drop-in via slack *Appointments:* jacklreilly.com/appointments

DESCRIPTION   The link between elected representatives and the people is arguably the most important aspect of political life in a democracy. This course begins by examining this link in the context of the United States, focusing on parties, campaigns, and elections as the critical mediating connection between private citizens and the institutions of government. Special attention will be paid to the elections of 2016, 2018, and 2020. Who gets elected? Why do they get elected? Can we forecast who will get elected? Does polarization harm the electoral process? Does the media cover the right things? What is important, what is not important, and perhaps most critically, how do we tell the difference? We conclude by examining alternative political contexts to examine how different electoral institutions lead to different behavior on the part of citizens and representatives. How can we best ensure effective democratic representation? Do different voting and electoral systems lead to better political outcomes, and how so? What can we learn from other systems to inspire potential reforms here at home?

TOPICS   Presidential, congressional, state, and local elections, primaries, gerrymandering, alternative voting and electoral systems, political parties, Duverger's law, interest groups, campaign finance, campaign strategy, the media, vote choice, and turnout, among others.

PREREQUISITES   None. This is a topics level course open to students at all levels.

MATERIALS   **Books:** There are no required books for this course. All of our reading for the course will be posted electronically on the course Google drive.

Computing, Technology, & Software: This is a remote course. As such, to successfully complete the course, you will need internet access and a device capable of running or accessing the following software: Canvas, Zoom, Google Drive, and Slack. You will also need the ability to play mp3 audio files and mp4 video files. You may find details, links, and locations for all electronic course materials on the course Canvas page.

For your class project, you will also need word processing software and the ability to conduct research over the internet. This is not a course on statistics or research design. If you have prior experience in statistics and data analysis, you may wish to conduct analysis with statistical software as part of your project, but this is not required.

Course Requirements

CLASS FORMAT   This is a mod-unit class, and formally meets once a week for an hour and twenty minutes. In a typical class, time is broken up in the following fashion:

1. Weekly Elections Lecture (~30 minutes, asynchronous)

2. NCF Campaigns Podcast (~20 minutes, asynchronous)

3. Politics Chat (~30 minutes, synchronous)

However, you'll find that most class periods are not "typical" class periods, as (just like a normal, in person, class) activities change a bit week to week. Some weeks will have student presentations in place of professor lectures, others may have double podcasts, others will be alternate activities, etc.

Weekly Elections Lecture is a traditional 20-30 minute recorded lecture by Professor Reilly on a series of course topics, including voting, campaigning, polarization, realignment, forecasting, and more. The aim of lecture is to summarize an area of literature to illustrate what we know, what we don't know, and what we are in the process of finding out about campaigns, elections, and the people that take part in both. You should watch the lecture before politics chat that week (it's ok to get ahead if lectures are posted early!)

NCF Campaigns Podcast is a weekly interview podcast featuring "guest" appearances by New College community members (loosely defined) who have experience working in politics, on campaigns, and running for office. On the show will be former students, professors, and friends of the college who have worked in campaigns or politics, talking about their experiences, what it's like to work on a campaign (or do the work they do) and how they got into their current (or former) position in politics.[1] You should make sure you're up to date on the podcast before politics chat.

Politics Chat is a weekly chat among everyone in the class, over Zoom or Slack, about the current campaign season, course topics from the week, and more. If desired, the class can be completed completely asynchronously by skipping the politics chat but viewing lectures, listening to the podcast, and completing an additional assignment.

REQUIREMENTS   Satisfactory completion of the course requires completion of the following:

1. Weekly Work

    (a) Reading: about one article per week
    (b) Watching: Elections Lecture (30 minutes)
    (c) Listening: NCF Campaigns Podcast (20 minutes)
    (d) Interacting: Politics Slack Chat (30 minutes)

2. Campaign Project

    (a) Strategy Memo (5+ pages)
    (b) Executive Summary (1 page)
    (c) Presentation (5 minutes)
    (d) Post-Mortem (2-3 pages)

3. "In-Class" Assignments

    (a) The 2020 Forecasting Game
    (b) Final "Quiz"

CAMPAIGN   The main independent work for the course involves a study of a particular campaign this fall,
PROJECT   with the primary goal of crafting a campaign strategy customized for the district or state of the
                campaign and the. candidate. There are four components to each campaign project:

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[1]If *you* are interested in a career in politics, many of the people appearing on the show would be great people to reach out to to chat with!

1. An *campaign strategy memo*, outlining and identifying a path to victory for your chosen candidate.

2. An *executive summary* of your memo, prepared particularly for your busy candidate.

3. A *campaign presentation*, where you tell the class what your campaign/race is about, who is likely to win, and why.

4. A *campaign post-mortem*, identifying which candidate won in your race, and why. Consult the exit polls, media coverage, and events particular to the campaign as well as the overall national environment. Did the campaign effectively follow its strategy, and earn its success or failure, or did national trends swamp local efforts?

QUIZ   A final quiz covering all aspects of the course but focusing on voting and electoral systems.

Course Expectations

COURSE POLICIES   **Meetings:** Meetings can be scheduled with me at your convenience at jacklreilly.com/appointments. As this class is remote, all meetings with me will also be remote (in person meetings may become possible later in the semester). When you schedule an appointment with me, an invitation to a zoom conference call will be automatically sent to you for your chosen time, and I will meet you there.

E-mail & Asynchronous Communications: I check my email at least once a day, so students can typically expect a response to all e-mails within 24 hours, excepting weekends. (Alternately, you may find that I respond slightly faster on the course slack . . .) Questions that require more than a couple sentences in response should usually be addressed in a zoom meeting, rather over email, but if in doubt, shoot me an email and I'll let you know if we should schedule a zoom call instead. Also, feel free to send me all the weird and neat election-related tidbits you find!

A Note on Writing: Clear writing and argumentation is a critical element to success in this class. I strongly recommend exploring the options for writing (and revising!) assistance at the Writing Resource Center. You can schedule an appointment through the writing center here: https://ncf.mywconline.com

NEW COLLEGE POLICY STATEMENTS   **Students with Disabilities:** Any student who, because of a documented disability, may require special arrangements and/or accommodations, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are NOT permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please visit Student Disability Services in HCL 3 and/or email disabilityservices@ncf.edu.

Religious Observance: No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when s/he would normally be engaged in religious observance or on a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with the policy, prior to the scheduled meeting.

Academic Integrity: Any suspected instance of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the College's policy on academic dishonesty.

Class Schedule

OVERVIEW

Topics Outline (Subject to Change)

W	Topics	Work	2020 Cycle
0	VIRTUAL MINI-CLASSES		DNC
1	10 Things Political Scientists Know (That You Don't)		RNC
2	2016, Part I: The Surprise (and A Short History of Polling)		
3	2016, Part II: The Voters, the Narratives, and the Media		
4	2018: The Riposte and Ordinary Politics	*	
5	Psephology (Election Science)		
6	Models of Voting		
7	Campaigning 101		Debate 1
	BABY FALL BREAK		
8	Polarization & Sorting	*	VP Debate
9	Realignment & Parties	*	Debate 2
10	Forecasting		Debate 3
11	*Student Campaign Talks*		Election!
12	Electoral and Voting Systems	*	
13	Wrap-up (2020: What Happened?)		
14	THANKSGIVING		
F	FINALS WEEK (REMOTELY)	QUIZ	EC Votes