

**PSCI 341: Political Parties & Elections (Section: 001)**  
**Spring 2019**  
**TR 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., LA 712**  
**Department of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies**  
**Montana State University Billings**

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Office Hours: MWF 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., TR 9 a.m. – 10:20 a.m., or by appointment

### **Course Description**

A key requirement of democracies, and many autocratic governments, for that matter, is holding elections, which is the process of how people are chosen for various political offices. Perhaps more important than elections itself are campaigns, which is the process of how political candidates compete for voters, acquire resources needed to compete, and the role of outside organizations, such as political parties, interest groups and the media in shaping electoral contests.

This class will provide an overview of elections that include discussion of who can vote, challenges to voting, and potential issues with the election process, itself. We will also discuss the development of the party system in American and how that has shaped modern campaigns.

We will also explore why individuals vote the way they do, and why interest groups and the media matter in campaigns. The course also provides an overview of the similarities and differences in presidential, congressional, and state and local campaigns. Finally, the course discusses the issue of who votes, what affects vote choice, and how the electorate has changed in recent elections.

### **Course Objectives**

This course satisfies three credits of upper-division requirements for the political science major's U.S. government emphasis area. Students at the end of this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the transformation of America's Party system over the past 200 years;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental models, terms, and concepts associated with the study of political parties and political behavior;
3. Demonstrate proficiency at writing critical analyses of social science theories;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of political reform and the election process.

### **Textbooks and other readings**

Sides, John, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman, and Keena Lipsitz. 2018. *Campaigns and Elections*. 3rd edition. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-64053-3. **Required**

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2018. *Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation, and the Rise of Donald Trump*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. ISBN: 978-0-300-20713-2 **Required.**

Parker, David C.W. 2015. *Battle for the Big Sky: Representation and the Politics of Place in the Race for the US Senate*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-4833-6863-4. **Required.**

Other readings will be posted on D2L.

### **Grading**

House election analysis paper: 20%

Campaign finance paper: 20%

Campaign strategy paper: 25%

Literature reviews: 20%

Participation: 15%

**Final grade scale:** A = 93% and above, A- = 90%-93%, B+ = 87%-89%, B = 83%-86%, B- = 80%-82%, C+ = 77%-79%, C = 73%-76%, C- = 70%-72%, D+ = 67%-69%, D = 60%-66%, F = 59% and below (Note: I do not round up final grades if you are just below the cutoff, such as having a 92.8%. I have to define the scale at some point, and some people are always going to fall on the other side of the divide. Do not beg to be bumped up. If you have any concerns about grades for individual assignments, please see me. I do have a 48-hour “cooling off” policy and you have to see me about any grade appeals within a week of me grading an assignment. If you appeal, you need to write a 2-3 paragraph summary of why you think the grade you received does not reflect your work).

*Campaign finance paper (20%):* You will analyze the role campaign donations played in the 2018 Senate elections by writing a 7-8 page paper. More details will be on D2L. Deadlines listed in the schedule.

*House election analysis paper (20%):* You will choose a House district from the Cook Political Report website rated as a toss-up and write a 7-8 page paper analyzing the race. More details will be on D2L. Deadlines listed in the schedule.

*Campaign strategy paper (25%):* At the end of the semester, you will write an 11-12 page memo outlining a strategy to challenge an incumbent House member in a 2020 House tossup race using the material you have learned from the first two papers. You will also present the results during the scheduled final exam time on Tuesday, April 29. More details will be on D2L. Deadlines listed in the schedule.

*Literature reviews (20%):* To help you understand the material and practice articulating an academic argument, you will write six short literature reviews. Literature reviews will be one-page single spaced with 1-inch margins. I will provide a short prompt and you will need to conduct research on the question. More details on D2L.

*Participation (15%):* While this is an intro class where I will lecture frequently, class participation is essential to your learning, and also because you do not want me to drone on for an hour (My wife will attest to that!). Since I assume you have read the material since there are reading quizzes, everyone should be prepared to contribute. I am not looking for the right answer when I look for responses. I am also looking to move along the conversation a bit and help flesh out any questions. I will call on everyone at some point during the semester, so be prepared to answer questions and offer your thoughts. There will be times when we get to debate issues. If you miss more than four classes (two weeks' worth of class) due absences that are not due to university-sponsored activities, you will lose half of your participation points. If you are absent due to university sponsored events, you will need to email me a 1-2 page reaction (double-spaced) to the assigned readings with questions before class.

**Grading notes:** Proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure will be assessed as part of your exam and paper grades. Developing the ability to write clearly is an important skill for your future careers. You are expected to carefully read, edit, and proofread their written work. If you would like help with your writing skills, there are on-campus resources that are there to help you. The university offers help in various subjects through the Academic Support Center. Assistance is free and is available in the Student Union Building. Drop-in writing help is available from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

### **Laptop/Cell Phone Policy**

I understand many of you use your computers and tablets to take notes. If you do so, you will need to choose a seat along the walls so your screens will not be distracting to others. I do not allow cell phones in class, so if you need to text, please step out for a moment (but don't make it a habit). I will stop class and wait if I see any texting.

### **Email etiquette**

I try to answer emails the same day they are received, but in some cases, you may have to wait 48 hours for a response. For emails, please use an appropriate subject and appropriate salutations (e.g. Dr. Adkins or Prof. Adkins). Professors do not like it when you start with "Hey!" or "Yo!" Keep emails as short as possible and please do not email about the details of an assignment on the day it is due. I hold five office hours per week and am available by appointment outside of those hours and my other classes if needed.

### **Assignment and late work policy**

All papers should use 12-point Times New Roman font, be double-spaced, and use 1-inch margins. You may use APA or Chicago (parenthetical) Style for your citations. All assignments must be turned in on D2L unless noted. No exceptions will be made. All assignments must be in

a Word file (.doc or .docx). Any other file format such as .pdf, .rtf, or Apple Pages will not be accepted and returned with a zero. Google Docs and Pages can export to a Word format. Late work will **not** be accepted. However, life happens. I allow **one** no-questions asked late pass good for a 48-hour extension on the paper assignments. You just need to email me if you need to use one. If you run into issues in completing assignments, visit me during office hours, especially 1-2 weeks before papers are due. Be proactive instead of reactive. I cannot do much to help once due dates have come and gone.

### **Registration Requirement**

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Please confirm enrollment in MyInfo. Registration errors must be corrected prior to university deadlines. After the deadline for withdrawing for the class without instructor permission, I will only give permission to those who experience a documented emergency such as serious illness or death in the family that occurs after the deadline.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

Use of the intellectual property of others without attributing it to them is considered a serious academic offense. I will either give a zero for an assignment or you will fail the course if I detect academic misconduct. It can also lead to a disciplinary hearing where sanctions can suspension or expulsion from the university. I report **all** instances of plagiarism to Student Affairs. The university's policy on academic misconduct can be found in Section B of the student handbook. I will provide links to how to avoid plagiarism on D2L. I am available to help. However, you are responsible for learning how to properly cite your sources and avoid plagiarism.

### **Student Accessibility**

MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (657-2283) located in Room 135 in the College of Education). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

### **Class Schedule**

Readings will come from the textbook and other readings I may post on D2L. They will be organized in D2L by week. You should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading on the day listed below. I may make changes to the schedule as needed.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignments</b>
1	1/17	Intro/Syllabus	None
2	1/22	Intro to elections	Sides et al., chapter 1 Abramowitz, chapter 1

	1/24	Election basics	Sides et al., chapter 2, pgs. 18-27 Jennifer L. Lawless, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , “Female Candidates and Legislators” Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> , “Does Gerrymandering Cause Polarization?”
3	1/29	Election rules	Sides et al., chapter 2, pgs. 27-52 Abramowitz, chapter 2 Edward B. Foley, <i>Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy</i> , “The Lake Wobegone Recount: Minnesota's Disputed 2008 U.S. Senate Election” Walter R. Mebane Jr., <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> , “The Wrong Man Is President! Overvotes in the 2000 Presidential Election in Florida”
	1/31	First and second campaign eras	Sides et al., chapter 3, pgs. 52-65 Charles Sellers, <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> , “The Equilibrium Cycle in Two-Party Politics” <b>Literature review #1 due</b>
4	2/5	Third and fourth campaign eras	Sides et al., chapter 3, pgs. 65-83 Abramowitz, chapter 3 Shigeo Hirano and James M. Snyder Jr., <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “The Decline of Third-Party Voting in the United States” <b>Campaign finance choice due</b>
	2/7	Campaign finance	Sides et al., chapter 4, pgs. 84-99 Sanford C. Gordon, Catherine Hafer, and Dimitri Land. <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “Consumption or Investment? On Motivations for Political Giving”
5	2/12	Campaign finance	Sides et al., chapter 4, 99-123 Abramowitz, chapter 4 Seth E. Masket and Michael G. Miller, <i>State Politics and Policy Quarterly</i> , “Does Public Funding Create More Extreme Legislators? Evidence from Arizona and Maine.” Raymond La Raja and Brian F. Schaffner, <i>Electoral Studies</i> , “The Effects of Campaign Finance Spending Bans on Electoral Outcomes: Evidence from the States about the Potential Impact of

			Citizens United v. FEC”
	2/14	Campaign strategies	Sides et al., chapter 5, pgs. 124-135 Gary C Jacobsen, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , “How Do Campaigns Matter?” Alexis C. Madrigal, The Atlantic, “When the Nerds Go Marching In.” Seth E. Masket, Public Opinon Quarterly, “Did Obama’s Ground Game Matter? The Influence of Local Field Offices during the 2008 Presidential Election” <b>Literature review #2 due</b>
6	2/19	Campaign strategies	Sides et al., chapter 5, 135-157 Ben Jacobs, The Atlantic, “Orca Failed; but So Did Obama's 2008 Version of the Same” Lynn Vavreck, NY Times, “Yes, Political Ads are Still Important, Even for Donald Trump”
	2/21	Political Parties	Sides et al., chapter 6, pgs. 158-169 Abramowitz, chapters 5-6 Hans Noel, <i>Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties</i> , “The activists decide: the preferences of party activists in the 2016 presidential nominations” <b>Campaign finance paper due (2/22)</b>
7	2/26	Political Parties	Sides et al., chapter 6, pgs. 169-185 Abramowitz, chapter 7 Hans Hassell, <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “Party Control of Party Primaries: Party Influence in Nominations for the U.S. Senate” Jeff Stein, Vox, “Experts say conservative hopes of a 3rd-party “stop Trump” bid are probably doomed”
	2/28	Political parties	<b>Primary documentary</b> <b>House district choice due</b>
	3/4 – 3/8	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>No class</b>
8	3/12	<b>State Capitol trip</b>	<b>No class</b> Political Science trip to state capitol in Helena
	3/14	Interest groups	Sides et al., chapter 7 Parker, chapter 1-2 Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. DeFigueiredo, and James M. Snyder, Jr. <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , “Why

			<p>Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?"</p> <p>Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, <i>Perspectives on Politics</i>, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens"</p> <p>Thomas J. Rudolph, <i>Journal of Politics</i>, "Corporate and Labor PAC Contributions in House Elections: Measuring the Effects of Majority Party Status"</p> <p><b>Literature review #3 due</b></p>
9	3/19	Presidential campaigns	<p>Sides et al., chapter 9, pgs. 248-263</p> <p>Parker, chapter 3</p> <p>Thomas Wood, <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, "What the Heck are we Doing in Ottumwa, Anyway? Presidential Candidate Visits and their Political Consequences"</p> <p>Boris Heersink and Brenton D. Peterson, <i>Electoral Studies</i>, "Truman Defeats Dewey: The Effect of Campaign Visits on Election Outcomes"</p>
	3/21	Presidential campaigns	<p>Sides et al., chapter 9, pgs. 263-285</p> <p>Parker, chapter 4</p> <p>Dean Lacy and Barry C. Burden, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, "The Vote-Stealing and Turnout Effects of Ross Perot in the 1992 U.S. Presidential Election"</p> <p>William G. Mayer, Emmett H. Buell, Jr., James E. Campbell, and Mark Joslyn, <i>Choosing A President: The Electoral College and Beyond</i>, "The Electoral College and Campaign Strategy."</p>
10	3/26	Congressional campaigns	<p>Sides et al., chapter 10, pgs. 286-298</p> <p>Parker, chapter 5</p> <p>Gary C. Jacobson, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, "The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments"</p> <p>Robert M. Stein and Kenneth N. Bickers, <i>Journal of Politics</i>, "Congressional Elections and the Pork Barrel"</p>

	3/28	Congressional campaigns	Susan Welch and John R. Hibbing, <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “The Effects of Charges of Corruption on Voting Behavior in Congressional Elections, 1982-1990” <b>Literature review #4 due</b>
11	4/2	State and local campaigns	Sides et al., chapter 11 Parker, chapter 7 John M. Carey, Richard G. Niemi, and Lynda W. Powell, <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “Incumbency and the Probability of Reelection in State Legislative Elections”
	4/4	State and local campaigns	<b>No class (MPSA Conference)</b> Thomas M. Carsey, Thomas M., and Gerald C. Wright, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> , “State and National Factors in Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections” Cherie D. Maestas, L. Sandy Maisel, and Walter J. Stone, <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> , “National Party Efforts to Recruit State Legislators to Run for the U.S. House” Kanopy documentary, “A Perfect Candidate” <b>House election analysis paper due</b>
12	4/9	Voter participation	Sides et al., chapter 12, pgs. 342-351 Parker, chapter 8 Joao Cancela, and Benny Geys, <i>Electoral Studies</i> , “Explaining Voter Turnout: A Meta-analysis of National and Subnational Elections” Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, <i>American Political Science Review</i> , “The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment” <b>Campaign topic due</b>
	4/11	Voter participation	Sides et al., chapter 12, pgs. 351-380 Michael P, McDonald and Samuel L. Popkin., <i>American Political Science Review</i> , “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter” Zoltan Hajnal, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson, <i>Journal of Politics</i> , “Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes”

			Nicholas A. Valentino and Fabian G. Neuner, <i>Political Psychology</i> , “Why the Sky Didn't Fall: Mobilizing Anger in Reaction to Voter ID Laws” <b>Literature review #5 due</b>
13	4/16	Citizens United wrap-up	Parker, chapter 10 <i>Big Sky, Big Money</i> documentary
	4/18	<b>Spring mini-break</b>	<b>No class</b>
14	4/23	Voter choice	Sides et al., chapter 13, pgs. 380-397 Craig M. Burnett and Vladimir Kogan, <i>Political Communication</i> , “When Does Ballot Language Influence Voter Choices? Evidence from a survey experiment” Paul Gronke, Eva Galanes- Rosenbaum and Peter Miller. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , “Convenience Voting”
	4/25	Voter choice	Sides et al., chapter 13, pgs 397-411 Thomas Stratmann, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> , “Is Spending More Potent For or Against a Proposition? Evidence from Ballot Measures” Dominic D. Wells, In <i>Why Don't Americans Vote? Causes and Consequence</i> , “Dynamics of Direct Democracy and Voter Turnout” <b>Literature review #6 due</b>
15	4/30	<b>Final exam</b>	12:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. ( <b>Note different time</b> ) Presentations from campaign strategy paper <b>Campaign strategy paper due (5/2)</b>