Course Description

Part of the American Democracy Forum’s Undergraduate Fellows Program, this course explores the place of elections and electoral politics in American Political Thought and the contemporary practice of democracy in America. We will begin by considering debates about electoral politics at the time of the American founding, proceed to consider key moments in the history of American electoral politics and end by talking about important issues in contemporary American elections. Throughout, we will of course have an eye on the current election season.

Course Materials

The American Democracy Forum provides a set of key texts in early American Political Thought to all ADF Undergraduate Fellows. We will draw on these books during the first part of the term. Other readings will be made available on Learn@UW. In addition, students are asked to purchase the following book, available at the University Bookstore:

Amy Guttmann and Dennis Thompson, The Spirit of Compromise (Princeton, 2012)

Course Requirements and Assignments

This is a small seminar. We will spend our time together discussing our shared readings and reflecting upon their significance for our current understanding of elections in American politics. This means that each of us must come to every session having completed the assigned readings and ready to engage in collegial and lively discussions and arguments with one another.

In addition to our in-class discussions, you will participate in an online discussion forum asking you to reflect on our readings, on contemporary events, and on data from previous elections. You will also work in groups to produce a presentation about a particularly important election
in American history and write a **500 word essay** on your contribution to that project. Finally, you will write a **research proposal** on a topic relevant to the course.

Course grades will be calculated approximately as follows, though I reserve the right to change assignments and weightings as I deem necessary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Discussion Forum</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election Presentation &amp; Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:**

- Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact the instructor as early as possible. All information will remain confidential. You also may contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 1305 Linden Drive, (608) 263-2741 regarding questions about campus policies and services.

- You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

- I will not discuss grades on assignments for 24 hours after they have been returned. If, after 24 hours’ reflection, you have a concern about a grade, please approach me with a brief written explanation of your concern. Any concerns about grading must be raised no later than two weeks after the assignment has been returned.

- Any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be dealt with in full accordance with University policy and will result in a grade of “F” for the course.
Course Schedule

Sept 6  Introduction to class

Sept 13  Republicanism, Liberalism & Elections in the Revolutionary Period
    Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (pp. 3-47)
        Introduction and chapters 1, 6 and 10

Sept 20  Elections and the Ratification Debate
    Letters of “Cato,” pp. 336-345
    Essays of “Brutus,” pp. 345-358
    Federalist Papers: Numbers 10, 52, 53, 62 and 68

Sept 27  Jefferson and the Election of 1800
    John Adams, “Defense of the Constitutions …” (Learn@UW)
    George Washington, “Farewell Address,” (Learn@UW)
    Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address” (Learn@UW)
    Jim Caesar, “Presidential Selection in the Jeffersonian Era.” (Learn@UW)

Oct 4   Democracy and the Election of 1824
    Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
        Volume I, Chapters IV, VIII (pp. 103-112), XV
        Volume II, Book IV, Chapters VI, VII
    Andrew Jackson, “Farewell Address” (Learn@UW)
    Bianco, William T., David B. Spence, and John D. Wilkerson, “The Electoral
        Connection in the Early Congress: The Case of the Compensation Act of
        1816,” American Journal of Political Science, v. 40 no. 1, February 1996,
        pp. 145-171. (Learn@UW)

Oct 11  Progressives and the Election of 1912
    Woodrow Wilson, selections (Learn@UW)
    Theodore Roosevelt, selections (Learn@UW)
    Alvarez, R. Michael, and Betsy Sinclair. “Electoral Institutions and Legislative
        Behavior: The Effects of Primary Processes.” Political Research Quarterly
        65:3 (September 2012), pg. 544- 557.
Oct 18  **Liberals, Conservatives and the Election of 1964**
Lyndon Johnson, selections (Learn@UW)
Barry Goldwater, selections (Learn@UW)
Key, V. O., Jr. (1966) - The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960 (Learn@UW)
Lau and Redlawsk (2006) – How Voters Decide: Information Processing during Election Campaigns (Learn@UW)

Oct 25  **Campaigns Today: Campaign Finance**
Green, Donald P. and Krasno, Jonathan S. "Rebuttal to Jacobson's 'New Evidence for Old Arguments'." AJPS 34:2 (May, 1990): 363-7 (Learn@UW)

Nov 1  **Elections today: Redistricting and Voting Rights**

Nov 8  **After the Election I**
Gutmann & Thompson, *Spirit of Compromise*, first half

Nov 15  **After the Election II**
Gutmann & Thompson, *Spirit of Compromise*, second half