COURSE DESCRIPTION
This class is going to focus on Congressional elections. Every two years there are 435 House districts and 33 Senate seats up for election allowing for a great deal of variation. This variation in the elections should allow us to determine what factors matter in campaigns. Does the candidate’s personality matter? Do voters know and care about the positions the candidates take? Do the candidates even take positions on the issues—and does it make sense if they do? The goal is for you to get a lot of information on different aspects of congressional campaigns through seminar and you will become experts in a particular aspect through your research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Every student in the class will be required to write reaction papers and a final paper. The nature of the final paper differs based on whether you are a Political Science Ph.D. student or a Master’s student. Master’s students who wish to complete the same paper as the Ph.D. students are able, but they must inform me by February 1.

All students will complete 6 reaction papers throughout the course. We will assign the reaction papers on the first day. The reaction papers must be no longer than one page single spaced—I will not read any text on a second page. In the reaction papers, you will briefly summarize the argument in the assigned article and then proceed to explain the strengths and weaknesses of the argument and the evidence presented in each paper.

The final paper for Ph.D. students: Ph.D. students are required to write a standard political science research paper for this seminar. The nature of these papers will be worked out on an individual basis. Your goal for this type of effort should be a paper suitable for presentation at a professional conference and ultimately journal submission. You must have your paper topic approved by me by February 8.

The final paper for Master’s students: Master’s students are required to write a paper explaining the outcome of a particular election. You may select any election you choose. It’s not enough to explain what happened, you need to explain why it happened. You must have your paper topic approved by me by February 8.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Reaction Papers (25%)*: The six one-page reaction papers as described above.

*Class Participation (15%)*: Participation among the students is vital for a seminar such as this one. As you cannot participate if you are not in class, you will have your grade reduced if you miss classes.

*Final Presentation (20%)*: You will have to present your final paper to the class. Your presentation will last 15 minutes. You will also be the discussant for one of the other papers. Your comments should take 5 minutes. Presentation dates will be assigned at random. Hopefully, no students will present and comment in the same week.

*Final Paper (40%)*: The final paper as discussed above. Final papers are due April 26.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. All academic work must meet the standards contained in the Academic Honor Code, published in the *Florida State University Bulletin* and *The Student Handbook*. Please see the following web site for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code:


STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
[http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/)
Books


*We’re not reading this book, but you should have it.*

Schedule
January 4—Introduction

January 11—Candidate Entry


January 18—The Incumbency Advantage I


January 25—The Incumbency Advantage II


February 1—Campaign Spending


**February 8—Position Taking I**


**February 15—Position Taking II**


February 22—Advertising I

March 1—Advertising II


March 8—Spring Break

March 15—Winning and Losing


March 22—Turnout


**March 29—Voters and Partisanship**


**April 5—And the Presidential Vote**


**April 12 and 19—Presentations**

*Final papers due April 26*