

**GVPT. 423**

Fall 2017

**U.S. Elections and Electoral Behavior**

W 2-4:45 pm (Tydings 0101)

Office: 1106C Morrill

Professor: Jim Gimpel

Office hours: Th 9-11, and by appointment

This course is about elections and political campaigns in American politics. Topics to be covered include: recent electoral history and change; voting and political behavior; political regionalism and geography; the social psychology of persuasion; how much campaigns matter to who wins; political microtargeting; campaign organization, strategy and finance; the conduct of campaign research and polling; advertising; volunteer recruitment; and other relevant topics.

Given the heavy reading load in this class, and given that the lectures expand upon and elaborate rather than repeat the readings, it is essential that you attend class and that you not fall behind. The major work product of the course will be four homework assignments and two exams. More information about the exams and the homework assignments will be given to you after the start of the course.

Homework assignments (4)	40%
Mid-term exam	25%
Final exam	25%
Attendance/participation	10%

All grades are non-negotiable. Homework is due on the date that is listed on the syllabus. *Late homework is not accepted.*

**Final Exam:**

The final exam is scheduled for Saturday, Dec 16, 1:30 – 3:30 pm

**Required Books:**

1. Jonathan Haidt. 2012. *The Righteous Mind*.
2. J.D. Vance. 2016. *Hillbilly Elegy*.
3. Sam Gosling. 2008. *Snoop: What Your Stuff Says About You*.
4. Daniel M. Shea and Michael John Burton. 2014. *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics and Art of Political Campaign Management, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*
5. Donald P. Green and Alan Gerber. 2015. *Get Out the Vote! 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*

Pieces of the following books will be available for free download on the University's Online ELMS System.

Elms is available for login at: <http://www.elms.umd.edu/>

1. Bill Bishop. *The Big Sort*. Chaps. 1-4.
2. Gerard DeGroot. *The Sixties Unplugged*. Chaps. 7-9.
3. D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd G. Shields. 2006. *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns*.

The MIT *Technology Review* article by Issenberg, "A More Perfect Union" is available on line here: <http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/508836/how-obama-used-big-data-to-rally-voters-part-1/>

Below is a calendar of reading assignments to help you keep pace with the flow of lectures and discussion topics. It will be to your advantage to follow this calendar. Students who keep up with the reading on a week-by-week basis do far better on the exams than those who try to read everything two days beforehand.

<b>Calendar of Class Meetings, Reading Assignments, Homework and Exams</b>		
<i>Mon</i>	<i>Lecture/Discussion/Exam</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Aug 28	U.S. Electoral Behavior to 2016	No Reading
Sep 4	Labor Day, No Class	Haidt, Chaps 1-7
Sep 11	Party Identification; Forces for Continuity in Electoral Behavior Forces for Electoral Change	Haidt, Chaps 7-8
Sep 18	Social Psychology and Political Polarization; Homophily, Sorting	Haidt, Chaps 10-12
Sep 25	1960s, Moral Unraveling; Film clips from the late-60s <b>HW 1 handed out, due Oct 2</b>	Bishop, Chaps 1-4; <i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> Chaps 1-4
Oct 2	Political Cultures; Religion, Economic Grievance and Voting	<i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> , Chaps 5-Conclusion

<b>Calendar of Reading Assignments, Homework, Exams</b>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture/Discussion/Exam</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Oct 9	Personality Psychology and Political Preference, Microtargeting, Exam Review	Gosling, Chaps 1-8
Oct 16	Exam 1	Exam 1
Oct 23	How Persuasion Works <b>HW 2 handed out, due Oct 30</b>	Hillygus and Shields (see Elms) Gerber and Green, Chaps 1-3
Oct 30	Voter Turnout; Field Experiments	Gerber and Green; Chaps 4-6
Nov 6	Field Experiments; GOTV Strategies; Turnout and Volunteers <b>HW 3 handed out, due Nov 13</b>	Gerber and Green; Chaps 7-9 Issenberg; MIT Review article. "A More Perfect Union"
Nov 13	Campaign Research; Use of Polling; Surveys; Targeting Tools	Issenberg, Gerber and Green; 10-12.
Nov 20	Campaign Research; Opposition Research <b>HW 4 handed out, due Nov 27</b>	Shea and Burton, Chaps 1-3
Nov 27	Campaign Money and Fundraising	Shea and Burton, Chaps 4-5
Dec 4	Campaign Media and Advertising; Campaign Ads	Shea and Burton, Chaps 6-11, Chap 13
Dec 11	Exam Review	Exam Review
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>1:30-3:30 pm</b>