

**POLS 4520: Electoral Behavior**

Instructor: Simon Williamson

Email (the best way to contact me): [sjw48916@uga.edu](mailto:sjw48916@uga.edu), with "POLS 4520" in the subject line. If I do not reply within 24 hours please email me again.

Office hours: Fridays from 3.30PM until 4.30PM, or by prior arrangement in my office, which is located on the ground floor of Baldwin. If you enter the building through the front doors, turn left under the stairs and walk to the end of the corridor. It is the last door on the right.

**Course Schedule:**

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2.30PM to 3.20PM in Baldwin 102.

**Course Description**

This seminar course is intended to give students a broad overview of the literature and research into the effects that elections have on American politics. By the end of this course you should have a well-rounded view of congressional elections and be able to critically discuss and explain elements of the political science literature, like why the win rate for congressional challengers is so low, how elections affect representation and accountability for our elected representatives, how primary elections differ from general elections and so on. This course will enable students to further their studies into American political institutions and American political behavior.

**General expectations.**

Students are expected to behave professionally in class at all times. This means coming to class on time having done the readings, and participating in discussions. This syllabus acts as your official notification of deadlines, exams and expected readings. It is your responsibility to do all the readings and attend classes and ensure you are prepared for exams and that your assignments are completed on time. Please remember your manners and do not use your cellphones during class. I will also abide by my own rules for professionalism and have my phone turned off. If there are extenuating circumstances under which you will need your phone on, please see me before the class begins.

**Absence**

You will be permitted three unexcused absences for which I need no explanation. If you have taken your three absences you will need to have seen me in advance, or a university-approved excuse. I will only reschedule exams for students who have university-approved excuses. No students will be penalized for missing class due to observance of a religious holiday, or for jury duty, or a scheduling mistake between our department and ROTC. A university approved excuse will require documentation from a doctor or literature from a family event. If this documentation is of a sensitive and/or confidential nature, students may take it to the Office of Student Care and Outreach who will notify me that the excuse holds up.

**Withdrawals**

The end of Drop/Add is January 15<sup>th</sup> and the withdrawal deadline is March 21<sup>st</sup>. If the student withdraws before the semester's withdrawal deadline, the student will receive a grade of W. An

instructor may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus, and the student will receive a grade of W. You can find more details here: <http://bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/ind/attendance.html>.

### **Sexual Assault, Harassment and Violence Resources**

All students have the right to work in a safe environment free of harassment and discrimination. Should you be subject to harassment or discrimination or any other Title IX violation, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office (<https://eoo.uga.edu/>). There are numerous resources to help students who are confronting sexual assault, sexual harassment and any other kind of sexual violence. The University Health Center's Relationship And Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) can be contacted 24 hours per day on 706-542-SAFE (7233), and provides emotional support, safety planning, medical services coordination, and legal advocacy. Should you wish to file a report or complaint, RSVP can also accompany you to the police, or Equal Opportunity Office. The UGA Health Center's Counseling And Psychiatric Services provides confidential services and can be contacted on 706-542-2273. Please find more information provided from the Equal Opportunity Office here: [https://eoo.uga.edu/sites/default/files/sar\\_resources\\_chart\\_1.pdf](https://eoo.uga.edu/sites/default/files/sar_resources_chart_1.pdf).

### **Disabilities and accommodations**

All students have the same right to learn at this university regardless of disability or any required special accommodation. Please notify the Disability Resource Center (DRC) if you require any extra accommodation in taking this course, and myself, if you are comfortable doing so. The DRC can be contacted by voice on (706) 542-8719, by email at [drc@uga.edu](mailto:drc@uga.edu), and is located at Clark Howell Hall, 825 South Lumpkin Street. It is open from 8AM to 5PM Monday to Friday.

### **Further information**

As you have actually read the syllabus you are hereby made aware of the opportunity for a free three points added to your pop quiz grade. All you need to do is email me a picture of a puppy before Spring Break.

### **Lactation Facilities**

Baldwin Hall does not have any lactation facilities. The closest are in the Main Library building: Basement Room B99C; First Aid Room B14.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

I am required by the university to report any complaints or knowledge of discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, to the Equal Opportunity Office. If I am concerned about a student I will also use my own judgement in contacting the Office of Student Care and Outreach.

### **Exams:**

Both the midterm and the final exams will be take-home exams, which I will distribute one week before they are due. You may hand them in at anytime at reception in Baldwin Hall

before 4.45PM, or to me during my office hours or class time. I will be in the classroom during our normal class hours for any consultation, but there will be no scheduled class.

Please add these dates to your calendars now:

**The Midterm exam** is due Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 3.20PM. It will be a take home exam. I will require a printed copy.

**Final exam** is due Monday May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6.30PM. It will be a take home exam. I will require a printed copy.

The final exam is cumulative and will require you to consider material from throughout the semester.

### **Grades breakdown:**

Participation: 10%

This class requires you to participate and discuss the readings and lectures in class. This grade will be affected by more than the three absences described above, playing with your phone, evidence of not having done the readings and so on.

Pop quizzes: 20%

There will be an unspecified number of pop quizzes throughout the semester. These will be multiple choice, or short/single-word answer only. If you have done the readings you should easily earn the full grade.

Midterm: 30%:

Your midterm exam will be an open-book, take-home exam which I will distribute one week prior to its deadline. The midterm will be due Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 3.20PM and you will have one full week to complete it. I will not accept any late exams without an official university excuse, for which I will require documentation. There will be no class during this week but I will be available to meet in Baldwin 102 during class time, should you have any questions or wish to discuss anything. I will require a printed, paper copy of this exam – there will be no budging on this rule. You may hand it in any time during the week at reception in Baldwin before the office closes at 4.45PM, or to me directly in Baldwin 102 during class time.

Final: 40%

Your final exam will be an open-book, take-home exam which I will distribute one week prior to its deadline. The final will be due Monday May 6<sup>th</sup> by 6.30PM and you will have one full week to complete it. I will not accept any late exams without an official university excuse, for which I will require documentation. There will be no class during this week but I will be available to meet in Baldwin 102 during class time, should you have any questions or wish to discuss anything. I will require a printed, paper copy of this exam – there will be no budging on this rule. You may hand it in any time during the week at reception in Baldwin before the office closes at 4.45PM, or to me directly in Baldwin 102 during class time.

**Required texts**

- 1) Mayhew, D. R. (1974). *Congress: The electoral connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Publisher website: <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300105872/congress>
- 2) Jacobson, Gary C. and Jamie L. Carson. 2016. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 9th edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. Publisher website: <https://rowman.com/isbn/9781442252622/the-politics-of-congressional-elections-ninth-edition>

All other readings can be found using the university library system, or will be sent to you by me or placed on eLC. Please email me on [sjw48916@uga.edu](mailto:sjw48916@uga.edu) if you cannot find a reading.

**Course breakdown**

All readings must be completed by the Wednesday of the specified week. We will learn the outlines of the subject matter on the Monday of every week and you will be expected to be familiar with the readings as of the Wednesday, so we can discuss the research on Wednesday and Friday.

For every reading of a journal article, students must be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the main argument?
- How does this paper differ from the prior literature?
- How were these variables measured, and are they appropriate?
- Do you accept these conclusions, and why?

For every reading of a book chapter, students must be prepared to summarize and analyze the argument made by the authors.

**Course Schedule:**

Week 1: January 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>: Syllabus overview and introduction to The Electoral Connection  
Readings (if you have the book):

- Mayhew: The Electoral Connection, Chapter 1.

Week 2: January 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>: The Electoral Connection  
Readings:

- 1) Mayhew: The Electoral Connection, Chapter 1.
- 2) Mayhew: The Electoral Connection, Chapter 2.
- 3) Jacobson and Carson: The Politics of Congressional Elections, Chapter 2

**NO CLASS FRIDAY JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup> DUE TO SOUTHERN POLITICAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE**

Week 3: January 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>: Electoral Accountability

## Readings:

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *American Political Science Review* 96(March): 127-140.
- Jones, David R. 2010. "Partisan Polarization and Congressional Accountability in House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(April): 323-337.

**NO CLASS MONDAY JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> DUE TO MLK DAY.**

Week 4: January 28<sup>th</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup>: Strategic Politicians and Quality Challengers

## Readings:

- Jacobson and Carson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections*: Chapter 6, only the section: "*National Conditions and Strategic Politics*".
- Krasno, Jonathan S. and Donald Philip Green. 1988. "Preempting Quality Challengers in House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 50(November): 920-936.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86." *American Political Science Review* 83(September): 773-793.

Week 5: February 4<sup>th</sup> to February 8<sup>th</sup>: Incumbency Effect: What, and why?

## Readings:

- Jacobson and Carson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 3
- Alford, John R., and John H. Hibbing. 1981. "Increased Incumbency Advantage in the House." *Journal of Politics* 43(November): 1042-1061.
- Cover, Albert D., and Bruce S. Brumberg. 1982. "Baby Books and Ballots: The Impact of Congressional Mail on Constituency Opinion." *American Political Science Review* 76(June): 347-359.

Week 6: February 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>: Incumbency effect – dissuading quality challengers

## Readings:

- Carson and Jacobson Ch3: Read from "Discouraging the Opposition" to the end of the chapter
- "Andrew Cuomo has won himself another term, but his presidential aspirations are dead" - <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/13/17854554/andrew-cuomo-new-york-president-2020-no>
- Schaffner, Brian F. 2006. "Local News Coverage and the Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31(November): 491-511.

Week 7: February 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>: Primary elections

## Readings:

- CNN: 7 reasons Eric Cantor lost - <https://www.cnn.com/2014/06/11/politics/why-eric-cantor-lost/index.html>
- "An Upset in the Making: Why Joe Crowley Never Saw Defeat Coming" <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/27/nyregion/ocasio-cortez-crowley-primary-upset.html>
- "Renee Ellmers is first GOP incumbent knocked off in primary" - <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/holding-defeats-ellmers-in-member-versus-member-primary-224032>
- Lawless, Jennifer and Kathryn Pearson. 2008. "The Primary Reason for Women's Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom." *Journal of Politics* 70(January): 67-82
- Midterm exam handed out on Friday.

Week 8: February 25<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>: Review and Midterm

No class due to take-home midterm exam. I will be in the classroom during class time in case you wish to consult with me.

Week 9: March 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>: Representation

Readings:

- Carson and Jacobson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 7
- "Why your Congressional Representative Isn't So Representative of You" <https://psmag.com/news/congressional-representative-isnt-representative-73330>
- Bafumi, Joseph and Michael C. Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519-542.

Week 10: March 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>: SPRING BREAK – no class

Readings:

- Whatever you want

Week 11: March 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>: Who is participating?

Readings:

- Carson and Jacobson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 5
- "Who Votes, Who Doesn't, and Why" - <http://www.people-press.org/2006/10/18/who-votes-who-doesnt-and-why/>
- As a kind and generous professor I am happy for you to read the Wikisum for Fiorina: Retrospective Voting. <http://wikisum.com/w/Fiorina: Retrospective Voting in American Elections>
- Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarø. 2015. 'Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity', *American Political*

*Science Review*, 109: 1-17. – READ ONLY from the beginning up to (but not including) “Empirical Strategy”. Then read “Results and Discussion”.

Week 12: March 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>: Congressional Campaigns

Readings:

- Carson and Jacobson: *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 4

Week 13: April 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>: Congressional Campaigns 2

Readings:

- Youtube: “2014, Joni Ernst - Squeal - political ad - closed captioned” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zc8uLuHsNw0>
- The Atlantic: “Republicans Gingerly Brag About Bringing Home the Bacon” - <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/04/republicans-gingerly-brag-about-bringing-home-the-bacon/359960/>
- “13 ads that define these midterm elections” - [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/10/12/ads-that-define-these-midterm-elections/?utm\\_term=.b487bca1ab53](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/10/12/ads-that-define-these-midterm-elections/?utm_term=.b487bca1ab53)
- Franklin, Charles H. 1991. 'Eschewing Obfuscation? Campaigns and the Perception of U.S. Senate Incumbents', *American Political Science Review*, 85: 1193-214.

Week 14: April 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>: The Media

Readings:

- “There really was a liberal media bubble” - <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/there-really-was-a-liberal-media-bubble/>
- “Why Horse-Race Political Journalism Is Awesome” - <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/09/why-horse-race-political-journalism-awesome-223867>
- Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. “Why do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(July): 611-623.

Week 15: April 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>: Money and Elections

Readings:

- Moon, Woojin. 2006. “The Paradox of Less Effective Incumbent Spending: Theory and Tests.” *British Journal of Political Science* 36(October): 705-721.
- “How Money Affects Elections” - <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/money-and-elections-a-complicated-love-story/>
- “Money in elections doesn’t mean what you think it does” - <http://news.ufl.edu/articles/2018/10/money-in-elections-doesnt-mean-what-you-think-it-does.php>

Week 16: April 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>: Review and Final  
Instructor-led review in preparation for final.

Week 17: April 29<sup>th</sup>: Review session.  
Instructor-led review and distribution of final exam, which is due May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6.30PM.  
Although we have no class scheduled after April 29<sup>th</sup>, I will be in the classroom on  
Wednesday and Friday from 2.30PM until 3.20PM in case you wish to consult with me.