



POLS 101
Contemporary Issues in Politics
Department of Political Studies, Winter 2019

“What is Going on? Explaining Donald Trump”

Monday 9:30-10:30, Wednesday, 8:30-9:30
Thursday 10:30 to 11:30. All classes in Stirling Auditorium

Instructor: Professor Jonathan Rose
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<http://jonathanrose.ca>

Office Hours: Generally Tuesday 1-2; Wednesday 10:30-11:30;
and Thursday 11:30-12:15

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Twitter Hashtag: #POLS101Q

The election of Donald J. Trump in November 2016 was seen by many as a surprise. In the summer of 2016, during the Republican primaries, his campaign looked like it would fail. His election campaign violated many traditional campaign rules around behaviour, damage control, mode of communication and fundraising. It was marked by many missteps that insulted African Americans, Hispanics and women to name three. Though he won the election he still received two million fewer votes than Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton though he communicates on Twitter regularly to justify that win. Since assuming office, he has governed in ways that defy political norms and challenge conventions of political behaviour. What explains this remarkable and unprecedented success? This course will unpack some of the reasons for Donald Trump's victory. In doing so, you will learn about American politics, the role of the mass media, history and socio-economic forces that led to his victory.

Learning outcomes

In order to successfully complete the course, students will demonstrate their ability to:

- 1) understand and explain the U.S. electoral process;
- 2) use political science concepts and history to describe the electoral success of Donald Trump;
- 3) discuss the role of the mass media in modern presidential elections;
- 4) distinguish between the US presidential system and the Canadian parliamentary system;
- 5) make persuasive arguments through three short writing exercises.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1>), on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Copyright of Course Materials

This material is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in this course. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in this course. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate's Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

Students with Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) office (formerly the Disability Services Office) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services>

GRADING SCHEME:

All components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale:

Components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale (see below). Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale (see below).

Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme

Assignment mark	Numerical value for calculation of final mark
A+	93
A	87
A-	82
B+	78
B	75
B-	72
C+	68
C	65
C-	62
D+	58
D	55
D-	52
F48 (F+)	48
F24 (F)	24
F0 (0)	0

Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Evaluation:

Students will be graded on:

- 1500 word research essay (approx. 5 pages) (worth 25%)
- 3 - 400-600 word (single spaced) peer reviewed assignments. These will be peer reviewed through OnQ (worth 30%)*
- Tutorial participation (worth 5%)
- Final exam (worth 40%)

*students will be evaluated by a) submission of three peer reviewed assignments and; b) evaluating three other student papers each submission (nine papers over the course of the term).

The essay will have three due dates. Students can submit their essay in class on

1. Thursday, February 14: and receive comments and bonus of one partial letter grade (i.e, B- to B; C+ to B-; A to A+)
2. Thursday, March 14: and receive comments and no bonus
3. Thursday, April 4: and receive no comments and no bonus (i.e., just graded)

Materials required:

We will use many publicly accessible articles and studies all of which will be posted in the OnQ website and/or are available through Stauffer's e-collection. In addition, other resources will be used:

Charles O. Jones, *The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford Press, 2016) \$15 and likely in the Used Book store on campus.

Alasdair Roberts, *Can Government do Anything Right?* (London: Polity Press, 2018). In the Campus bookstore but also on Amazon for \$15.

J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy* (Harper: New York, 2016). This book is recommended but not required. It can be found on Amazon for \$19 and likely in the Used Book store on campus.

Class Format:

There will be two lectures a week and occasionally a third. Generally, class will meet on Wednesday and Thursday morning but Monday will be reserved for films, guest speakers, discussion or to get caught up if we fall behind. There will also be one tutorial per week beginning in mid-January.

Students can choose 3 out of 4 dates for writing a brief or an op-ed or writing a memo. This assignment will be submitted on-line through onQ and evaluated anonymously by your peers. If you complete all four, you will be graded on your best three. Details of the format and requirements to follow. Dates of submission and evaluation are:

January 28 (submission deadline) February 1 (peer evaluation deadline)
 February 11 (submission deadline) February 15 (peer evaluation deadline)
 March 4 (submission deadline) March 8 (peer evaluation deadline)
 March 25 (submission deadline) March 29 (peer evaluation deadline)
 → deadline is 5:30 PM for each date.

Week One: Jan. 7 - 11

Course introduction, goals, evaluation how we got here

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, “Is Donald Trump a Threat to Democracy?”, *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 2016: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/16/opinion/sunday/is-donald-trump-a-threat-to-democracy.html>

Week Two: Jan. 14 – 18

Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems: How structure affects behaviour

Readings:

James John Guy, *People, Politics and Government* [5th ed.], ch. 5, “Government” (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001), pp. 141-71.

Charles Jones, *The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 2016), Chapter 1. Hereafter referred to as “Jones”

Week Three: Jan. 21 - 25

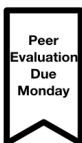
The Origins of the Election Victory, Primaries: What are they?

Readings:

Josh Putnam, “Everything you Need to Know about how the Presidential Primary Works”, *Washington Post*, May 12, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/12/everything-you-need-to-know-about-how-the-presidential-primary-works/?utm_term=.4740f836cde6

Barney Henderson et. al., “US Election 2016: How Five Months of Primaries and Caucuses Have Left us with Donald Trump v Hillary Clinton” *The Telegraph*, 15 June 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/15/us-election-2016-how-five-months-of-primaries-and-caucuses-have/>

Jones, Chapter 3, “Electing Presidents”



Week Four: Jan. 28 - Feb 1

The Republican and Democratic Conventions: Who is the Audience and What is their Purpose?

Readings:

Russell Berman, “What Actually Happens at the U.S. Presidential Conventions?” *Atlantic*, July 10, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/a-laymans-guide-to-the-republican-and-democratic-national-conventions/489560/>

Kevin J. Coleman, *The Presidential Nominating Process and the National Party Conventions, 2016: Frequently Asked Questions*, (CRS Report No.R42533) Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, December 2015, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42533.pdf>

Drew Desilver, “Contested Presidential Conventions and Why Parties Try to Avoid Them”, PewResearch Center Fact Tank, February 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/04/contested-presidential-conventions-and-why-parties-try-to-avoid-them/>

The Election Campaign

Week Five: Feb. 4 – 8

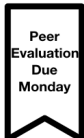
The Campaign: What role did the media play?

Readings:

Thomas Patterson, “News Coverage of the 2016 Election: How the Press Failed the Voters”, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, December 2016, <https://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-2016-general-election/>

Shawn Musgrave & Matthew Nussbaum, “Trump Thrives in Areas that Lack Traditional News Outlets”, *Politico* <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/04/08/news-subscriptions-decline-donald-trump-voters-505605>

Johanna Dunaway, “Mobile vs. Computer: Implications for News Audiences and Outlets”, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, August 2016, <https://shorensteincenter.org/mobile-vs-computer-news-audiences-and-outlets/>



Week Six: Feb. 11 – 15

The Campaign: What is Fake News and How to Evaluate Social Media

First Due Date for Essay:
Feb 14 in class

Readings:

Clay Shirky, “The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change”, *Foreign Affairs* (90:1) January 2011, pp. 28-41.

Natt Garun, “How Social Platforms Influenced the 2016 Election” Read any four posts from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/14/13626694/election-2016-trending-social-media-facebook-twitter-influence>

Donna Brazile, “Campaign 2018 Improving Cyber Literacy in Political Campaigns”, Accessible online through Shorenstein Center, May 2018.

Wael Ghonim, “Transparency: What’s Gone wrong with Social Media and What Can We Do About It? Accessible online through Shorenstein Center, March 2018.

Other readings:

Heidi Legg & Joe Kerwin, “The Fight against Disinformation in the US: A Landscape Analysis”, Accessible online through Shorenstein Center

Andre Rojecki & Sharon Meraz, “Rumors and Factitious Informational Blends: The Role of the Web in Speculative Politics”, *New Media & Society* 2016 (18:1), 25-43.

Brian L. Ott, “The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement”, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34:1, (2016) 59-68

No classes: Feb 18 – 22 – Some things to pass the time

PBS Frontline program called “President Trump”

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/president-trump/> (55 mins)

On Netflix:

“Mitt” about 2012 Republican nominee, and likely 2020 challenger, Mitt Romney

“Race For the White House” (6 part series; each one 40 minutes)

“Oliver Stone’s Untold History of the United States” (occasionally polemical but thought provoking 56 min, 11 episodes)

Week Seven: Feb. 25 – March 1

The Campaign: What were the Issues?

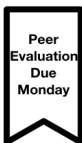
Readings:

Various authors, “The Big Issues of the 2016 Campaign”, FiveThirtyEight,

<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/year-ahead-project/#part1>

Pew Research Center, “4. Top Voting Issues in 2016 Election” [Part of a report entitled, “2016 Campaign: Strong Interest, Widespread Dissatisfaction]

<http://www.people-press.org/2016/07/07/4-top-voting-issues-in-2016-election/>



Week Eight: March 4 – 8

Who are the Electorate?

Readings:

Matthew MacWilliams, “The Best Predictor of Trump Support isn’t Income, Education or Age. It’s Authoritarianism” *Vox*, February 23, 2016:

<http://www.vox.com/2016/2/23/11099644/trump-support-authoritarianism>

Nate Silver, “Education, Not Income, Predicted Who Would Vote for Trump”, FiveThirtyEight, November 22, 2016, <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/education-not-income-predicted-who-would-vote-for-trump/>

Amanda Taub, “The Rise of American Authoritarianism”, *Vox*, March 1, 2016:

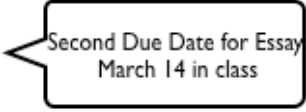
<http://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump-authoritarianism>

Vox, “Authoritarianism: The Political Science that Explains Trump”, YouTube,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YU9djt_CQM

Week Nine : March 11 – 15

The Electoral College and the Popular Vote



Second Due Date for Essay
March 14 in class

Readings:

Robert Leonard, “Why Rural America Voted for Trump”, *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 2017
<http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/05/opinion/why-rural-america-voted-for-trump.html>

Youtube, “Does Your Vote Count? The Electoral College Explained – Christina Greer”,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9H3gvnN468>

Week Ten: March 18 – 22

Governing vs. Campaigning: The Challenges of an unpredictable President

Readings:

Andrew Prokop, “The GOP’s Quickly Learning that Governing is Difficult – as is working with Donald Trump”, January 5, 2017 <http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/1/5/14155088/house-republicans-ethics-activism>

Jones, Chapter five, “Connecting To and Leading the Government” and Chapter six, “Presidents at Work: Making Law and Doing Policy”, pp. 85-142

Politico Magazine, How will the Shutdown End?*

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/04/how-will-government-shutdown-end-223691>

*at the time of writing this syllabus, the US government is shut down because Donald Trump wants to include \$5 billion in any Congressional spending bill to pay for a wall on the Mexico-US border, a central plank in his campaign. By this time in the course outline, the government shutdown will have ended (hopefully!) and we will examine what this challenge says about governing vs. campaigning.

Week Eleven: March 25 – 29

Anomaly or Carefully Laid Plan? Donald Trump and the ‘Southern Strategy’

Readings:

Joshua F.J. Inwood, “Neoliberal racism: the ‘Southern Strategy’ and the expanding geographies of white supremacy”, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 16:4, (2015) 407-423

Joseph Airstrup, *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican top-down advancement in the South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), ch 1, pp. 5-18

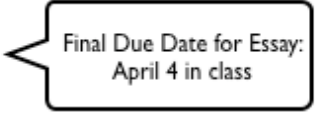
William Shannon, “Southern Strategy”, September 29, 1972, *New York Times*, p. 43.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1972/09/29/archives/southern-strategy.html>



Peer
Evaluation
Due
Monday

The Nation, “Lee Atwater’s Famous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy”, Youtube Vox, “Authoritarianism: The Political Science that Explains Trump”, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_8E3ENrKrQ&t=5s (1 min, 40 sec)

Week Twelve: April 1 – 5
Should we be worried?



Final Due Date for Essay:
April 4 in class

Jones, Ch. 7

Alasdair Roberts, *Can Government do Anything Right?* (London: Polity Press, 2018)