

# GOVT 312

## Political Parties and Campaigns

Term: Fall 2024  
Day/Time: Virtual  
Location: Virtual

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Office Hours: By Appointment

### DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce students to political parties and campaigns. We will study the evolution of political parties in the United States over time and their impact on the electoral process. We will also review some of the more interesting campaigns in U.S. political history and the factors that influenced those campaigns and campaigns today.

Course topics will include:

- The American Electoral Process
- The Transformation of American Campaigns
- Electoral/Voter Participation
- Financing Campaigns
- Modern Campaign Strategies
- Parties and Party Systems
- The Political Party As An Organization
- The Political Party in the Electorate
- Parties, Nominations and Elections
- The Party In Government
- Interest Groups and the Media

### CLASS SESSIONS:

This is a 100% virtual course. Course content will be delivered via weekly pre-recorded sessions that students can watch at their convenience.

Class sessions will primarily be lectures. Power Points of all lectures will be available, and some video content may also be used.

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any changes in this syllabus. Points will be lost for work submitted late. No incompletes will be granted, except for extraordinary circumstances.

Please Note: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me, and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## SPECIAL PROJECT:

There will be two Special Projects as a part of this course:

- Each student will select a presidential campaign from American political history prior to the year 2000 and write a report about that campaign. The paper should focus on the candidates of the two major political process and how they became nominated to run for president, as well as any minor party candidates that were involved in the campaign. The paper should provide a summary of the nature and outcome of the campaign, and the issues/factors that influenced the campaign. This paper should be a minimum of 1000 words, excluding the title page, table of contents and references. This paper will count as 100 points toward the student's final grade, and will be due by October 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Each student will write a report summarizing the 2025 election cycle. This report should focus on the campaigns for Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General of Virginia; as well as the battle for control of the Virginia General Assembly. Key issues that dominated the statewide campaigns and the outcome of the campaigns in key legislative districts should be discussed. This paper should be a minimum of 1500 words. This paper will count as 100 points toward the student's final grade. This paper will be due by November 23rd.

## REQUIRED READING:

*Campaigns and Elections* – John Sides, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman ad Keena Lipsitz - Fourth Edition - ISBN 978-0-393-44168-0

*Party Politics in America* - Marjorie Randon Hershey – Eighteenth Edition - ISBN 978-0-367-47257-3

## GRADING SCHEDULE:

There will be 600 points available during the semester. Grading elements will include:

- The Special Project reports discussed above will count as 100 points each toward the 600-point total.
- There will be two exams during the semester, and each exam will count as 200 points toward the 600-point total.
- Extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester.

The final grading scale will be as follows:

- A      600-540 points
- B      539-480 points
- C      479-420 points
- D      419-360- points

- F Anything below 360 points

Exams will be given under the rules of the Honor Code.

Professor reserves the right to award +/- grades.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE** (Subject to change)

See attached

## **Academic Standards**

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies.

[The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures here.](#) Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By

adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

**Student responsibility:**

Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu). Phone: (703) 993-2474.

**Student responsibility:**

Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

**FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

**Student responsibility:**

Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

**Title IX Resources and Required Reporting**

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct** (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required.

If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the “Complainant”) will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to [TitleIX@gmu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@gmu.edu), by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

**Student opportunity:**

If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential employees in [Student Support & Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), Counseling and [Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).