

**JMCT0003**  
**2022 Congressional Elections in the United States**  
**Wed. Sept. 14–November 16, 2022**  
**Time: 10:15–11:45**

**SYLLABUS**

**Instructor: Prof. Benita Heiskanen & visitors**

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**Course Description**

This seminar explores the 2022 U.S. congressional elections, the so-called “Midterms,” as a socioeconomic, cultural, and political process from a wide range of transdisciplinary American Studies perspectives. Our point of departure will be that the election year is a complex nexus that intertwines various internal power struggles within the United States, exposing linkages between policy issues, public discourses, and media representations. In particular, we will consider various hot-button issues during the peak of the electoral race.

**Course Format**

This will be an in-person class. The classes consist of lectures, readings, and discussion. The course materials include assigned readings/other materials that are posted on Moodle. In addition, students team up to conduct out-of-class assignments on a case study of one battleground state in the 2022 Midterms, which will result in a final presentation for the course. In this class, students learn to look for information from multiple sources, to practice their presentation skills, and to explain scholarly discussions on current issues to the general public.

**Course Requirements**

- 1) This course is based on dialogue between students and the instructors and require active contributions from all participants
- 2) Required readings and materials on Moodle to be studied before each session
- 3) Election Day Coverage
- 4) A meeting with one of the instructors
- 5) Final Presentation
- 6) Chat forum on Moodle

**Final Assignment**

The final assignment for this class will be a presentation, either live or video-recorded. The presentation will be presented on the last day of class in order for us to be able to compare the findings of different case studies. In addition, students will write a 1-2-page research report, including the following: an evaluation of the assignment (what went well, what would you do differently), any surprising aspects that might have come up during the process, and what you learned from this particular approach to studying elections. Throughout the semester, students

can brainstorm on their projects and get guidance from the course instructors via the Moodle Chat forum.

### **Case Study Guidelines**

In the case study, you will get to the bottom of the particular state's midterms: for example, who is on the ballot, what is being voted on, polls and predictions, local media discussions, terminology and rhetorical usage, and social media discussions. You are welcome to choose your own approaches, but for the sense of consistency, it would be beneficial, if the final presentations include some kind of a who-what-how dramatic arc.

### **Course Evaluation**

This class necessitates regular attendance. Students are expected to study the assigned texts and other materials thoroughly and actively participate in seminar discussions. The final evaluation for the course is on a scale from 1 to 5. The evaluation will be based on attendance and active discussion 20 %, final presentations 70%, Moodle chat activity 10 %.

### **Schedule**

Sept. 14	Pub209	Introduction	(Benita Heiskanen)
Sept 21	Pub209	U.S. Electoral Process Overview	(Michael Hansen)
Sept. 28	Pub5	Midterms and the U.S. Congress	(Anna Kronlund)
Oct. 5	Pub209	Generational Divides	(Mila Seppälä)
Oct. 12	Pub309	The State of Democracy	(Oscar Winberg)
Oct. 19	Pub209	Political Strategy and Mobilization	(Niko Heikkilä)
Oct. 26		<i>Assignment Prep.</i>	
Nov. 2	Pub209	Culture Wars & Rhetoric	(Pekka Kolehmainen)
Nov. 9	Pub209	<i>Election Coverage</i>	(Kolehmainen & Seppälä)
Nov. 16	Pub209	<i>Final Presentations</i>	(Heiskanen & visitors)

*Additional, voluntary activity*

Finnish-speaking students are welcome to attend an election panel to be held on Friday, November 11 from 13:00-15:00 either at Tiedekulma (University of Helsinki) or via Zoom.

To register, please see:

<https://www.samsuomi.fi/tapahtuma/sam-suomi-keskustelutilaisuus-yhdysvaltain-valivaalit-2022-pohjois-amerikan-tutkijat-vastaavat/>