

Course description «The 2020 US elections in a global context»

Credits: 10

Level: Bachelor

Teaching: Autumn

Teaching language: English

Course content

The election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States in 2016 and his subsequent term in office has been one of the dominating issues in global news media in the last years. The policies of the Trump government not only had a significant impact on the United States but also on global politics. At the same time, his interaction with the press and the public especially through social media are a unique feature of his presidency. On November 3 2020, the citizens of the United States will go to the polls to elect a new president as well as new senators and members of the House of Representatives. Whether Donald Trump will get to govern for a second term, or if his democratic opponent will be able to enter the White House, and what either result might mean for US as well as global politics will be the core questions around which this course is centred.

This course will accompany the build up to the election, the election night, and its aftermath by offering a lecture series with changing speakers from the Department of Political Science, other departments at the University of Oslo, and from outside the university. Besides the question, who will most likely succeed in the presidential election, the course will introduce students to the way in which the presidential elections in the US work, the other electoral races that take place in parallel (e.g. for members of Congress), how the election will shape US politics, what role media plays in the election, and what impact the election will have on different policy fields.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

Having completed this course, students:

- Have detailed knowledge on the 2020 U.S. presidential election and can interpret the results
- Have detailed knowledge on other elections happening in parallel (e.g. for Congress)
- Have a detailed knowledge about the U.S. political system including the role of the presidency, checks and balances, and how elections take place
- Are aware how different areas of world politics are affected by the U.S. presidential election
- Have acquired knowledge about contemporary U.S. politics

Skills

Having completed this course, students can:

- Apply different analytical lenses as well as general political science knowledge to understand the impact of the election on the U.S. as well as globally
- Explain the outcome of the elections
- Critically assess the media debate on the U.S. presidential election and its impact for world politics

Competence

Having completed this course, students can:

- Find and make use of information about contemporary political events
- Critically assess information about contemporary political events
- Understand the significance of elections in a broader democratic context

Teaching

Lectures by different scholars from the political science department, other departments at the University of Oslo, and from outside the university.

Examination

School exam

Students will take a 3 hour written school exam. In this exam, they will receive 8 questions to different sessions of the course, of which they have to answer 6. Each question will be open-ended (no multiple choice) and students can write up to 300 words per answer.

Colleagues from ISV who already agreed to give a lecture

Carl Henrik Knutsen (Democratic quality and developments in the US' system)

Francesca Jensenius (how women are prevented from entering office)

Scott Gates (Forecasting presidential elections)

Tobias Bach (US bureaucracy and how elections/turnover affects how they work, and how this is very different from Norway or other European countries)

Jens Jungblut (partisan polarization and higher education in the U.S.)

James Cameron (implication of the elections on nuclear policy)

Tora Skodvin (implication of the elections on international climate policy)

People from outside ISV who already agreed to give a lecture

Hilde Restad (relevance of the election for U.S. foreign policy)

Gunn Enli (social media and election campaigns in the U.S.)

U.S. Embassy (describing the process of the election)