**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 have 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

<u>Teaching</u>

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

<u>Compulsory activities</u>

Poster presentation in small groups (up to three students)

Students will be divided in small groups in the beginning of the course and get the task to pick a candidate, an election (e.g. for a seat in the House of Representatives or the Senate), or a specific policy issue that is being debated in the media as part of the election campaign. They will be tasked to follow the issue / candidate / election throughout the course. Students will then have to prepare a poster on the issue / candidate / election, which is supposed to introduce other students to the topic and which will be displayed and presented in the foyer of Eilert Sundts Hus to the participants of the course and other interested students in the week before the election.

<u>Examination</u>

Portfolio examination

For each session of the course, students will receive two reflective questions prepared by the lecturers. During the semester, students have to answer four of these questions from four different sessions. Each answer should be between 750 and 1500 words. The answers to the four questions will jointly constitute the basis for the final grade.

<u>Colleagues from ISV who already agreed to give a lecture</u>

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)

<u>People from outside ISV who already agreed to give a lecture</u>

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)