

## Presidential Election Background



**Description:** Join colleagues in understanding the basics of U.S. democracy in a Presidential and Congressional campaign and election year. Hear from faculty in different departments about how the process works and challenges of the pandemic. Use MC Learns to sign up for a one-hour Zoom session with brief presentations followed by discussion. Feel better prepared to participate and to understand the impact of various local, state and national outcomes.

**Series dates and times:** Thursdays, 3 - 4:00 p.m., via Zoom

**10/8 - Session 1: Preparing for Elections—Voting Rights and Demographic Trends**

**10/15 - Session 2: Participating in Elections--Electoral College and Proposed Options**

**10/22 - Session 3: Influencing Elections--Campaign, Media and Funding Issues**

**10/29, 2020 - Session 4: Understanding Elections—Global Impact of US Elections**

**Intentions** – By the end of this series, participants will be able to:

- Describe main components of the US Presidential/Congressional election process
- Discuss the role of the Electoral College vs. the popular vote
- Give an example of trends and patterns among US voter populations
- Describe funding and media strategies used by campaigns
- Consider the potential impact of various outcomes on other nations

**Each session will consist of a brief Welcome, series description, outcomes and norms; 50 minutes of panelist presentations, Q & A and comments followed by a few minutes for feedback**

### **Session 1: Preparing for Elections—Voting Rights and Demographic Trends**

**Description:** Learn about the history and expansion of U.S. civil rights and voting rights, including amendments extending the franchise. Gain information on different voter registration processes, as well as absentee, mail-in and overseas voting options. Hear about voter suppression strategies that create obstacles to participation. Understand compelling demographic changes expanding potential voter participation, including the emergence of Gen Z.

**Learning Outcomes** – By the end of this class, participants will be able to:

- Name legal foundations of citizenship and voting rights
- Give an example of voter suppression laws, strategies or tactics
- Describe shifts in demographic trends impacting elections
- Engage in civil discourse--accountable for self-management and respectful inquiry

**Presenters:**

- Shannell Thomas, Med, MA--Sociology
- Jorge Fujikaki-Hernandez, PhD--History
- Howard Feinstein, JD—Political Science

## **Session 2: Understanding Elections--Electoral College and Proposed Options**

**Description:** Learn the Constitutional rationale and structure of the Electoral College vote in contrast to the popular vote. Hear about various changes to the system proposed over time by citizens, civic organizations, academics and lawmakers. Consider the impact of Electoral College results in past elections and potentially in 2020 outcomes.

**Learning Outcomes – *By the end of this class, participants will be able to:***

- *Describe the rationale of Founders for the Electoral College structure*
- *Discuss options to the system and reasons given for change*
- *Consider the impact of tensions between EC results and the popular vote*
- *Engage in civil discourse--accountable for self-management and respectful inquiry*

**Presenters:**

- Stephen Fink, MA--Sociology
- Ginger Robinson, JD—Criminal Justice

## **Session 3: Influence Elections--Campaign, Media and Funding Issues**

**Description:** Learn about traditional campaign trajectories before today's nonstop campaigning and fundraising. Understand the impact of the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling and the role of superpacs. Reflect on campaign elements, from political party conventions, speeches, debates and rallies, to media strategies.

**Learning Outcomes – *By the end of this class, participants will be able to:***

- *Describe traditional campaign patterns and modes of communication*
- *Give examples of today's 24/7 media environments and continuous campaigning*
- *Identify ways that campaigns target or miss potential voters*
- *Engage in civil discourse--accountable for self-management and respectful inquiry*

**Presenters:**

- Mitch Tropin, MA—English/Speech Communications
- Dianne Cherry, MA--Communications

## **Session 4: Understanding Elections—Global Impact of US Elections**

**Description:** Gain insight into the potential economic impact of election outcomes. Consider how campaigns, candidates and elections influence geopolitical shifts and re-alignments with adversaries or allies around the globe. What will the world look like in late January 2021?

**Learning Outcomes – *By the end of this class, participants will be able to:***

- *Understand the potential impact of political change on national economics*
- *Give examples of geopolitical possibilities of diverse outcomes*
- *Engage in civil discourse--accountable for self-management and respectful inquiry*

**Presenters:**

- Nathan Zook, PhD—Political Science/International Relations



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