CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Social Sciences

PSC-290-D01
Digital Politics
Fall 2020

COURSE OUTLINE

The course description is available on the web @ http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/psc.html

Ω *Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.*

1. Instructor Information

(a) **Instructor:** Daniel Reeve

(b) **Online Office hours:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM Wednesdays in the D2L online Collaborate space (other times can be arranged)

(c) **Location:** Paul 226A

(d) **Phone:** 250.370.3373 (it's best to email me or speak with me during online office hours)

(e) **E-mail:** reeved@camosun.ca

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. *Describe critically the intersection of digital life and politics.*
2. *Identify the link between search engine processes and political polarization.*
3. *Critically evaluate the key elements of digital campaigning; apply this knowledge to the US context.*
4. *Define and assess the political importance of misinformation and fake news on politics.*
5. *Explore social media's cultural and political influence in a variety of contexts.*
6. *Critically examine the role of online activism*

3. Required Materials

(a) All course readings will be available online in the D2L content page under "course readings" of each module.

4. Course Content and Schedule: This course is taught once per week in an online format. Each Wednesday evening students will be encouraged to join in a 2 session. The main topics to be covered in this course will be those necessary to understand both the concepts and practice of digital politics.

Week 1: September 9   Introduction assignment for Friday
Course modules, assignments, D2L, & technology

Module 1: Introduction to Digital Politics
- **Online Discussion #1 Due: #1: Thursday Sept. 24 at 11:59 PM**
- *Short Essay 1 – Due 11:59 PM on Saturday September 26*

Week 2: September 16   Political Communications Orders
RQ1: September 16 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Klyueva, Anna. 2013. "Chronology" in *Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics*. Kerric Harvey & Geoffrey J. Golson, eds. New York: Sage.

Epstein, Ben. 2018. The Only Constant Is Change: *Technology, Political Communication, and Innovation over Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Read: "The Social and Technological History of Political Change" pages 25 – 48.

Week 3: September 23   Information Curation, Echo Chambers, and Democracy
RQ2: September 23 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Sunstein, Cass R. 2018. *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Read: "The Daily Me" pages 1 – 30.

Module 2: Electoral Campaign, Digital Distortion, and Fake News
- **Online Discussion #2 Due: Thursday Oct. 15 at 11:59 PM**
- *Short Essay 2 – Due 11:59 PM on Saturday October 17*

Week 4: September 30   Electoral Campaigns & Perceived Voters
RQ3: September 30 at 5:00 PM
*Reading*s:
Hersh, Eitan. 105. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. 2015. Read: "Introduction" pages 1 – 23.
Watch: [Obama More Perfect Union Speech 2008](#)
Read: [A More Perfect Union Wikpedia](#)

Week 5: October 7   Computational Propaganda
RQ4: October 7 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Wooley, Samuel C. & Philip N. Howard Eds. 2019. *Computational Propaganda: Political Parties, Politicians, and Political Manipulation on Social Media.* New York: Oxford University Press. Read: "Introduction"

pages 1-11 & "United States" 185 – 196, (skim or skip 196 - 206), 206 - 211.

Week 6: October 14

Fake News
RQ5: October 14 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Lazer, David et al. *The science of fake news.* Science (Sept 2018).

Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. 2017. 'Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election'. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31 (2): 211–36.

Module 3: US Election Cycles in the Networked Age
- ***Online Discussion #3 Due: Thursday Nov. 5 at 11:59 PM***
- ***Short Essay 3 – Due 11:59 PM on* Saturday November 7**

Week 7: October 21

US Presidential Digital Campaigning
RQ6: October 21 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Stromer-Galley, Jennifer. 2019. *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Read: "Introduction: The Paradox of Digital Campaigning in a Democracy" pages 1 – 24.

Week 8: October 28

2008 US Election Cycle
RQ7: October 28 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Stromer-Galley, Jennifer. 2019. *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Read: "2016: Networked Campaigning and Controlled Interactivity" pages 110 – 146.

Week 9: November 4

2016 US Election Cycle & Analysis of 2020 Election
RQ8: November 4 at 5:00 PM
Reading:
Stromer-Galley, Jennifer. 2019. *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Read: "2016: The Turn to Mass-Targeted Campaigning" pages 179 – 210.

Module 4: Conspiracy, Trolls, and Digital Culture Wars
- **Online Discussion #4 - Due: 11:59 on Thursday Dec. 3**
- *Short Essay 4 – Due 11:59 PM* **on Saturday December 5**

Week 10: November 11   No Class – Remembrance Day

Week 11: November 18   QAnon, Conspiracy, and Aesthetics
                              RQ9: November 18 at 5:00 PM
                              Reading:
                              Lafrance, Adrienne. *Nothing Can Stop What is Coming.* The Atlantic.
                              June 2020, www.theatlantic.com.

                              Cushing, Ellen. *I was a Teenage Conspiracist*. The Atlantic. May 13
                              2020, www.theatlantic.com.

                              Tiffany, Kaitlyn. *How Instagram Aesthetics Repackage QAnon.* The
                              Atlantic. August 18 2020, www.theatlantic.com.
                              (This last reading is optional)
                              Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 12: November 25   A Short History of Trolling
                              RQ10: November 25 at 5:00 PM
                              *Reading*s:
                              Phillips, Whitney. 2016. *This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things*.
                              Cambridge: MIT Press. Read: "Introduction" pages 1-12; &
                              "Subcultural Origins, 2003 – 2007" pages 13 – 27.

Week 13: December 2   Digital Culture Wars
                              RQ11: December 2 at 5:00 PM
                              *Reading*s:
                              Nagle, Angela. 2017. *Kill All the Normies*. Washington: Zero Books.
                              Read: "Introduction" pages 1-10; "The leaderless digital counter-
                              revolution" pages 10 – 27; & "The online politics of transgression"
                              pages 28 – 39.

Week 14: December 9   Course Wrap Up session
                              Guest Speaker (TBA)
                              Reflection Essay & Participation Quiz - Due 11:59 PM on Dec. 12

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)
(Should be directly linked to learning outcomes.)

Marks will be determined based on the following work:

Reading Quizzes (RQ) – 10% (10 X 1%)
With each new chapter or reading students will be asked to take an online multiple-choice quiz that accompanies that week's readings. The quizzes will address ideas and core concepts from the coming week's classes. The RQs must be completed by **5:00 PM on Wednesdays** of that week's class. There will be 11 reading quizzes throughout the semester. Students will have 11 reading quizzes throughout the semester, the lowest scoring RQ will be dropped from their total.

Online Discussion Responses (OD) – 4 posts totaling 30% (Lowest graded post dropped)
At the start of each module, an online discussion question will become available. Students will create four posts in all. The post with the lowest grade will be dropped from the overall grade. Students will be required to post a response to that question. In addition to their initial remarks, students will also be expected to contribute to the conversation in that thread. In addition to their written response, students may add images, links, other content that contributes to the quality of the discussion. In total, students will be required to write to four online discussion posts (one per module). Initial posts will run approximately 200 words. Each student post will be graded according a variety of criteria (see the Online Discussion Assignment in D2L for more details).

Online discussion contribution will contribute to each student's overall engagement grade.

Student's responses to regular in class activities, such as "Definitely", "What's Big Idea", and "Three Burning Questions" will all have their own forums (organized by modules) in the Discussion section of the course.

Short Essays (SE) – 4 short essays totalling 45% (4 SE w/ the lowest dropped from the grade book).
Students will write four shorts essay throughout the semester. The short essay with the lowest grade will be dropped from the overall grade. The essays, of approximately 500 words, will answer a question from a major theme in the course. A choice of four questions will be posted at the start of each module. Students will choose from one of the four questions. Papers should be just as well-crafted as a standard essay. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. For more information, see the Assignment section of the D2L content page.

Engagement Grade - 15% (12% Reflection Essay / 3% Participation Quiz)
All students will be asked to make a meaningful contribution to online class activities. Students will be required to complete an essay that considers the learning, challenges, and insights they've gained. An online quiz accompanies the essay. Please see the Reflection Essay Assignment in the content section of the course D2L site for a full account of this task.

6. Grading System

(If any changes are made to this part, then the Approved Course description must also be changed and sent through the approval process.)
(Mark with "X" in box below to show appropriate approved grading system – see last page of this template.)

| X | Standard Grading System (GPA) |

| | Competency Based Grading System |

7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

The course will use a variety of digital technology. Access to free Wi-Fi – via Camosun's free student Wi-Fi is highly recommended.

8. College Supports, Services and Policies ⚠️

Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support
If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @ http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html or http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent

College Services
Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at http://camosun.ca/

College Policies
Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at http://camosun.ca/about/policies/. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

9. Grading Systems http://www.camosun.bc.ca/policies/policies.php

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

B. Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at http://www.camosun.bc.ca/policies/E-1.5.pdf for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	*Incomplete*: A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	*In progress*: A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.

CW	*Compulsory Withdrawal*: A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.