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*POLI 313A*

**U.S. Politics: Parties, Elections & Social Movements**

**Instructor:**
Dr. Colin Bennett (Fall 2020)

**Course description:**
Political Science 313A introduces students to the political system of the United States and concentrates on the U.S. democratic process. It is designed for students who have completed some political science and have some knowledge of American politics through the media, but who have never had a systematic introduction to the operation of US political institutions.

Of course, the events of this Fall will feature prominently in our discussions. We will examine the presidential and congressional elections closely with a view to understanding: the distinctive institutional effects of the electoral college; the nature of the current US party system; the Presidential nominating process; the polarized nature of American public opinion; explanations for voting behavior; the unique process of campaign financing; and the role of the media (traditional and online).

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course outcomes/objectives:**
- Develop a deeper understanding of the historical and contemporary development of US democracy
- Understand the roots of voter discrimination in the US and its contemporary effects
- Understand the unique party system in the U.S. and how it has been shaped by the expansion of the franchise
- Understand who votes, who does not and why
- Understand why people vote the way they do
- Understand the critical role of campaigning financing in the U.S.
- Explore how media and social media influence election outcomes

**Course delivery:**
In the Fall 2020 term, this course will mainly be delivered synchronously, with some asynchronous pre-recording of lectures as necessary.

*This online summary is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.*