

2020 Primary and Caucus Season

Presidential Election, Part 1

Course #	20SPR
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Nancy Mihevc, Jay Russell
Date and Time:	Thursday, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting Feb. 27, 2020
Location:	Smith College Campus Center, room 102
Maximum number of participants:	18
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: The presidential election in November 2020 may be the most consequential of our lifetimes. This seminar will focus on the critical prelude to that election: the primaries and caucuses being contested from February through May.

Description: This seminar will examine, as much as possible from objective and non-partisan perspectives, the structure of the nominating processes, the candidates (their biographies, qualifications and experience, their positions on the issues, how those positions may have changed over time, etc.), issues being discussed (or ignored) by the candidates, how voters make decisions in caucuses and primary elections, and aspects of the political process (e.g., the role and impact of news, opinion and social media, campaign tactics, polling, campaign finance, etc.) that shape the conduct and perhaps determine the outcome of the campaign.

Role of participants: Each participant will give a 20-25-minute presentation on a candidate, issue or aspect of the political process and will participate during the second half of each session in a round table discussion of campaign developments and participant responses to surveys circulated by the moderators prior to each session.

Resources: The moderators will provide a list of resources in a handout at the Preview.

About the Moderator: Jay is a retired attorney and LIR member since 2013, is a "political junkie" who co-moderated the 2016 election seminars with Chuck Gillies. Nancy owns a company that conducted political polling at various levels and has volunteered for campaigns since 1960. Prior to becoming an entrepreneur, she taught communication studies at UMass including seminars on political communication.