

CULTURE WARS AND THE 2022 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Will Democrats lose control of Congress this November? This class will track key races, and the active involvement of class members will be important in this process. But first, what are the issues that may dominate the discussions? While there is no doubt that much will be said about pocketbook issues like inflation, the culture wars in our highly partisan society may well be equally powerful. Topics that previously animated many candidates and some portion of the electorate may consume the debates. At the top of the list: immigration, education, and gender issues, including sexual identity and women's reproductive rights. Some candidates will undoubtedly try to make abortion the key issue. Other candidates and their supporters are likely to cast immigration as a threat to the American way of life. Education has, as a discussion topic, recently morphed in some forums into what may be covers for racism, playing on fear of little-understood concepts like critical race theory and transgender rights. These topics are leading not only to the banning of books but also to attempts to eradicate curricula or discussion of topics that critics say make some students uncomfortable, such as sexuality and the history of slavery in the United States. Some of these topics are already the subject of state legislation on curricula (e.g., book banning) and sexual identity (e.g., outlawing the use of non-binary markers on birth certificates) and have contributed to the development of concepts such as "parental rights." The class will cover as many of these issues as possible.

The 2022 Congressional elections may be the most consequential in decades. The outcomes will significantly affect the future course of the country, its governance, the economy, and foreign relations.

No text will be required for the course, but online sources and handouts will be provided. Recommended reading for background and discussion will also be listed on a syllabus to be provided before classes begin.

LEADER: Elaine Jacoby is a retired attorney who leads courses on politics.

FORMAT: Hybrid

MAXIMUM: 35

TUESDAYS 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. 8 sessions starting September 27th through November 15th