

HIU34522, Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail: Presidential Elections in American History, 1796-2024 (Geoghegan)

Assessment: essay 40% and take-home exam 60%



American presidential elections have frequently been dirty and divisive, and they have shaped and influenced how political campaigns are conducted around the world. In some ways the 2016 and 2020 elections represented something new and unprecedented, in others they shared similarities with campaigns going back to the foundation of the republic. This module takes a thematic approach to presidential elections, analysing and assessing them through a variety of lens. Each week looks at a different theme, and follows the life cycle of a presidential campaign, from primaries through to conventions, the choosing of running mates and third-party candidates, campaign ads and presidential debates, dirty tricks and speeches, all the way up to October Surprises and the impact of the Electoral College.