It is easy to dismiss American Politics as a freak show run by wealth, corruption, cynicism, lying, and power-greediness. Is the United States in fact a democracy? Does it make sense to vote when everything is decided by the 1% anyway? With questions like these, this class dives head-on into the freak show in an effort to take it seriously. What are the conditions of possibility for different aspects of American Politics? For Donald Trump? Mexicans shot at the border? The American Dream? Hawai‘i as the 50th state? The Flint water crisis? School shootings? The black Lives Matter movement? The Koch brothers? To answer these questions, we will be
looking into the structural design of the American political system, the media, specific policies, ideologies, and even national emotions. The goal is to gain a better understanding of American politics, and we will of course tie everything into the national election that happens towards the end of the semester.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Mondays**
Mondays are movie-days. These days we will watch documentaries, satires, tv-shows and news broadcastings that in different ways broaden our understanding of American Politics. *Movies TBA.*

**Wednesdays**
Each week, a group of students have been on “media-watch,” meaning they have followed American news closely. In class Wednesday, they will give a 10-minute report to the rest of the class in which they outline the biggest news events and give their analysis of them. The rest of each Wednesday class is spent on a lecture of the week’s chapter of our textbook(s). *Textbook(s) TBA.*

**Fridays**
Fridays we will discuss an assigned text. The text can be from a scientific journal, newspaper, magazine, book, etc. Each week, a group of students will present the text and ask the rest of the class questions about it. Prior to each Friday class, each student will submit a reaction paper for that week’s text. *Texts TBA.*

**Attendance**
You are allowed up to 4 unexcused absences in this class. Every absence thereafter lowers your overall grade by 3%.

**Final Paper: Letter to the new President**
Your final paper is a letter to the new US President. What do you want to tell the person who has just won the White House? You are expected to have five references to class texts (or films) in your letter, and you will be graded on your ability to critically bring the topics and texts/films of the class into a sincere and thoughtful letter to the president.

**Grading**
Weekly Friday reaction papers: 50%
Media Watch (once per student): 15%
Text presentation and running class discussion (once per student): 15%
Final Paper: 20%