

Highlanders Vote: Road to the Ballot Box

Monday- November 4, 2024

Opening Ceremony

3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. | HH 1006

Event Host: *Dr. Scott Dunn, Professor, School of Communication*

Engaging with Social Media: Mary Rose Prosinski, Kirsten Cecil, and Leonora Lynn, Strategic Communication Master's Students

Kick off the Block Party with our social media experts as they take us through the event's social media buzz! Learn how to amplify your voice by posting in real-time and sharing your election night experience with your fellow Highlanders. By engaging on social platforms, you'll help boost the conversation and create an online community around these exciting two days of civic engagement. Don't forget to tag your posts and show how Highlanders celebrate democracy!

Election Energy: Identifying the Most Important Issues: Mackenzie Wallace, Mary Rose Prosinski, and Andrew Walls, Strategic Communication Master's Students

Join some of your fellow Radford University students as they lead an interactive discussion that explores the vital issues shaping today's political landscape. Through real-time audience engagement, this dynamic session will uncover your perceptions and beliefs about the most pressing concerns in modern politics. Expect a lively discussion highlighting the issues that matter most to you and your peers and thoughtful dialogue on how these priorities may shape the future of civic engagement and political decision-making.

Panel Discussion #1: Beyond the Ballot - The Electoral College and the Path to Pragmatic Pluralism in 2024

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. | HH 1016

Moderator: *Dr. Zehui Dai, Associate Professor, School of Communication*

Speakers:

The Electoral College and the 2024 Presidential Election: Dr. Daniel Reed, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

This presentation will discuss what the Electoral College is and how it will determine the winner of the 2024 Presidential Election. This fall, the winner of the presidential race may be determined by only 7 "swing states," largely due to the rules of the Electoral College. Already, both the Harris and Trump teams are preparing for a likely battle over the voters in these states, the counting of the votes in these states, and the eventual certification of the Electoral College

winner. Join Dr. Daniel Reed for an informational session on the Electoral College, why it is important, how it works, and what sort of legal challenges may be expected over the certification of the electoral results in these battleground states.

Depolarization: Pragmatic Pluralism in Electoral Politics: Dr. Steve Fesmire, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies

This presentation will discuss American electoral politics from the perspective of the panelist's new book, "Beyond Moral Fundamentalism: Toward a Pragmatic Pluralism" (Oxford University Press, 2024). When we disagree about problems, it's one thing to reflectively conclude that others are willfully refusing to face conditions. It's quite another thing to start with the default assumption that we alone are taking the wide view. Dr. Fesmire will also discuss how the prevailing my-way-or-the-highway mentality is blocking the road toward a healthier, more just, and more sustainable future.

Panel Discussion #2: Shaping U.S. Elections - The Supreme Court, Districting, and the Power of Legal Decisions

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. | HH 1016

Moderator: *Dr. Sam Jennings, Associate Professor, School of Communication*

Speakers:

The Supreme Court and the Presidency: How Key Decisions Shape the U.S. Election

Process: Dr. Stephen Joyce, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

Dr. Stephen Joyce will examine the influence of the U.S. Supreme Court on presidential elections, focusing on key legal decisions that have shaped the election process. From rulings on campaign finance to voting rights and election procedures, the presentation will explore how the Court's decisions have impacted the way U.S. presidential elections are conducted, influencing both candidates and voters. This discussion will also highlight the pivotal role of judicial rulings in shaping the democratic process.

Shaping Democracy: The Legal and Political Landscape of Congressional Districting in

Virginia: Dr. Eric Choate, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Dr. Eric Choate will explore the complex legal and political dynamics of congressional districting in Virginia. This presentation will examine how redistricting decisions shape democratic representation, influence election outcomes, and reflect broader trends in the U.S. political landscape. By focusing on both legal precedents and statistical methodologies, Dr. Choate will provide insights into the intersection of law, mathematics, and politics in shaping the structure of Virginia's congressional districts.

Democracy Dash Raffle

6:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. | HH 1016

Facilitators: Mackenzie Wallace, Kirsten Cecil, Mary Rose Prosinski

Cap off the day with the Democracy Dash Raffle! This quick, exciting event offers the chance to win prizes that reflect the spirit of civic engagement and community. Whether you've joined panels or simply soaked in the discussions, everyone has a shot at taking home something special. It's a fun, light-hearted way to end the day's programming and celebrate your role in the democratic process. Stick around—your next winning moment could be just around the corner!

Tuesday- November 5th, 2024

Interactive Wellness Session: De-Stress for Democracy with Yoga, Therapy Dogs, and Mindful Voting

12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. | HH 1016

Facilitator: Leonora Lynn, RU Student Athlete and Yoga Instructor

Special Guests: Tartan Tails Therapy Dogs

Election season can feel overwhelming, but this unique wellness session offers a way to relax while staying engaged. Join Leonora as she leads you through a soothing yoga practice alongside the comforting presence of Tartan Tails therapy dogs. The session will guide you through stress-management techniques like deep breathing, gentle stretches, and mindfulness, helping you face the election results with calm and clarity. Take a pause from the tension, connect with therapy dogs, and leave feeling refreshed—ready to engage in democracy with a clear mind and renewed energy.

Workshop: The Art of Civic Engagement - Debate, Understanding, and Campaigning with Heart

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. | HH 1016

Speaker:

Arguing for Understanding: Hear the Biography, Not the Ideology: Dr. Sandy French, Professor, School of Communication, Riley Willis and Grace Herritage, Department of Political Science, and Keiko Klisiewicz, Department of Biology (Biomedical Sciences)

Join Dr. French and student representatives of the Republican and Democratic Parties in this workshop environment to gain valuable listening and debate skills. Participants will be given the

opportunity to share their perspectives freely. Come practice how to discuss politics in a truly civil way!

Panel Discussion #3: Foundations of Democracy - Voting Rights and Campaign Tactics Through American History

2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. | HH 3013

Moderator: Dr. Jenny Walton, Professor and Director, School of Communication

Speakers:

Histories and Realities of the 15th Amendment: Dr. Fredrick Douglas Dixon, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

This presentation will delve into the historical context and contemporary implications of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It will explore the amendment's origins, its impact on voting rights, and the ongoing challenges to its enforcement in modern-day electoral practices. The discussion will highlight both the successes and the limitations of the 15th Amendment in advancing racial equality in the American political system, offering insights into the evolving struggle for voting rights throughout U.S. history.

Barbecue, Baseball Bats, and Kissing Babies: The Evolution of the American Political Campaign: Dr. Matthew Oyos, Professor, Department of History

Since the early years of the American republic, political campaigns, particularly for the presidency, have evolved to reflect the expectations of a changing society. Candidates have sought to meet those expectations by exploiting the techniques and technologies of their time. Whether they were running a dignified front porch campaign, diving into crowds, or broadcasting to a mass audience, office seekers have sought to cast an image that resonated with their followers and brought in new adherents, and, at times, stoked passions to the boiling point. Dr. Oyos will provide an engaging discussion on the transformation of the American political campaign.

Panel Discussion #4: Beyond Election Night - From Early Calls to Post-Election Strategy

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. | HH 3021-3023

Moderator: Dr. John Brummette, SMART Lab Director and Professor, School of Communication

Speakers:

Counting the Votes: Unraveling the Mysteries Behind Early State Calls and Election Night Projections: Dr. Scott Dunn, Professor, School of Communication

Dr. Dunn will dive into the intriguing process of how states are called on election night, shedding light on the interplay between early vote counts, media reporting, and predictive models. This presentation will break down the role of pollsters, analyses, and the timing behind election projections, offering a behind-the-scenes look at how election outcomes are forecasted before all the votes are counted. Whether you're curious about the science or the strategy, this presentation will uncover the steps leading to those early calls.

Is the Election the End or Just the Beginning? Getting What You Want Over the Finish Line in Politics: Dr. Paige Tan, Professor, Department of Political Science

This presentation explores how individuals can drive political change through various impactful methods. Dr. Tan's discussion will cover strategies for influencing policy, from grassroots activism and engaging with legislators to running for office yourself. Attendees will gain practical insights into how citizens can advocate for the changes they want in the political landscape, empowering them to take action and contribute to meaningful societal change.

Panel Discussion #5: Global Perspectives on Democracy - Gen Z, Social Media, and International Insights on Elections

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. | HH 1016

Moderator: Dr. Scott Dunn, Professor, School of Communication

Speakers:

Gen Z and the Future of Democracy: Navigating Social Media, Representation, and Political Polarization: Mackenzie Wallace, Andrew Walls, Kirsten Cecil, and Maddison Griffith

This presentation will explore how Gen Z leverages humor and memes as powerful tools for political engagement, creating a new form of discourse and activism. Panelists will also discuss the impact of social media on political polarization, questioning whether platforms foster meaningful activism or deepen divisions through echo chambers. Lastly, the conversation will highlight Gen Z's demand for diversity in political leadership, emphasizing why inclusive representation is central to their political agenda. Together, these topics offer insights into how Gen Z is shaping the future of democracy in the digital age.

Leslie Knope for President! Campaigning the Knope Way, with Waffles and Heart: Dr. Jenny Walton, Director and Professor, School of Communication

Dr. Walton's presentation examines how Leslie Knope, the beloved character from Parks and Recreation, approaches election campaigns with a unique blend of humor, optimism, and dedication to public service. By exploring key moments from her political journey, this presentation highlights the effectiveness of her grassroots strategies and civic commitment. The session offers valuable insights into how her relentless enthusiasm provides lessons in

perseverance, community-building, and modern political engagement, making her an inspiring figure in both fictional and real-world contexts.

Highlanders Vote: Ballot Box Block Party

8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. | Muse Hall Basement

Prepare for the most thrilling election night experience at Radford! The Highlanders Vote: Ballot Box Block Party is where fun and democracy meet. With live music from a DJ, exciting games, tasty snacks, and real-time election results pouring in from local precincts and across the nation, this event is designed to keep the energy high. Whether you're cheering for your candidate or just soaking in the atmosphere, you'll be surrounded by fellow students, professors, and friends, all coming together to celebrate this pivotal night. Prizes, great food, and a sense of community will make this an unforgettable blend of civic engagement and entertainment. Don't miss out on the excitement—this is where democracy gets fun!