



## Teaching During Presidential Elections Dos and Don'ts

This document provides a brief overview of dos and don'ts to assist your planning for class sessions prior to and after a presidential election. For more information and resources, see [Teaching During Presidential Elections](#). To schedule a consultation about how this guidance applies to your course, email [site@psu.edu](mailto:site@psu.edu) or find your consultant at [schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/Help/Liaisons](http://schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/Help/Liaisons).

### Pre-Election Dos and Don'ts

#### Dos

- Plan for [remote, asynchronous class activities](#) on election day. If your course can't accommodate a remote, asynchronous modality, remind students to alert you to a planned absence and offer opportunities to make up class activities or assignments due on election day.
- Review departmental and university policies about [election day class attendance](#), [political activities](#), and [academic freedom](#).
- Familiarize yourself with departmental safety policies and/or ways to contact [University Police & Public Safety](#).
- Encourage students to visit [PSU Votes](#) for answers to questions about elections and voting.
- Plan for [class absences, including your own](#).
- Prepare an explanation (for yourself and to share with students) about your reasons for bringing up the election (or not) in your classroom.
- Prepare to [navigate disruptions](#) and to [respond to disruptions](#).
- Prepare written and verbal reminders about [classroom ground rules](#) and other respectful communications.
- Familiarize yourself with the [wellbeing services available for students](#).
- Have a plan to tend to [your own wellbeing](#).

#### Don'ts

- Don't offer class credit for voting. [It is unlawful to incentivize voting in any way](#).
- Don't collect voting forms or any information they may contain.
- Don't talk about the election in any way that can be construed as partisan.
- Avoid scheduling an in-class exam or due dates for large assignments on election day.

### Post-Election Dos and Don'ts

#### Dos

- Provide an opportunity to complete activities or submit assignments that were due on election day by a later date.
- In class, acknowledge that the results of the election may affect the learning community. Remind students of classroom guidelines and the [services](#) available to them.
- Explain your reasons for bringing up the election (or not) in your classroom.

- Focus on course content.
- Expect that your students are likely to bring up the election, even if you don't intend to do so.
- Expect that students may attend class in a heightened emotional state that will affect their ability to concentrate.
- Plan for varied means of class participation. Students' ability to fully engage in class discussions and activities may be affected by their reaction to the election's outcome.
- At the beginning of class, facilitate a [brief reflection](#) or [grounding activity](#) to give students space to process thoughts and emotions related to the election, with the aim of returning to class content.
- Provide additional, brief reflection opportunities during class to help students process what they've learned.

### Don'ts

- Don't make the election a topic for class discussion unless it is directly related to your course content (see [AC64 Academic Freedom](#)).
- Don't assume that your students' reactions to the election will be like yours.
- Don't call out students based on what you believe to be their political affiliation or identity group.
- Don't ignore disruptive comments or behaviors. [Take ACTION](#) to maintain a productive learning environment.