Course Title: Politics 2022: America at a Crossroads
Course Code: POL 61
Instructor Name: Professor James P. Steyer

James P. Steyer is founder and chief executive officer of Common Sense, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and impactful voice they need to thrive in the 21st century. For more than 30 years, he has taught a variety of courses on civil rights, civil liberties, and education issues at Stanford, where he is a consulting professor in the School of Education. He has authored several books and received many teaching honors, including the Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching. Steyer received a BA and a JD from Stanford.

Class Sessions and Recording
Meeting Days: The course will meet on 8 Mondays between October 3 and December 5. There will be no class on November 21. The exact schedule will be posted before class begins.

Meeting time: 5:30-7:00 pm (PT)
Meeting location: Zoom

The class sessions will be recorded. Students are encouraged to attend class live to get the full experience and credit for the course.

Course Features:
- Live session
  - Lecture with student Q&A
  - Weekly guest speakers (in person or via Zoom)
- Assignments & Coursework
  - No required coursework outside of readings posted each week in Canvas

Course Summary

We are living in extraordinary times. The historic convergence of social, economic, and public health challenges has profoundly impacted the lives of millions of Americans. In the midst of great uncertainty, the 2022 U.S. midterm elections will be among the most important in our lifetimes. Will the Trump wing of the Republican party dominate their approaching re-election amidst deep political polarization and the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, which has upended life as we know it? Or will a diverse yet fractured Democratic party prevail in the House and Senate?
We will assemble a wide range of expert speakers—including preeminent political, business, foreign policy, and academic leaders—to explore these questions, and more, as we seek to cultivate a broad and informed view of these pivotal elections and the overall state of American politics and democratic institutions.

Each week, the course will examine major topics at stake for the country. Anticipated topics include: widening inequality across America; the role of technology and media in the election and our democracy; the state of our economy; gender politics and racial violence; the Supreme Court and the rule of law; education policy; foreign policy; and the state of our democracy in a global context.

Note: This course is designed for the entire Stanford community, and Continuing Studies students will be joined by Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies students, Stanford undergraduates, and Stanford graduate and professional students.

Grade Options and Requirements
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend and/or watch at least 6 class sessions.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Textbooks/Required Materials


REQUIRED: Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns, This Will Not Pass: Trump, Biden, and the Battle for America's Future (2022)


Addition weekly readings and select works noted below.
Tentative Weekly Outline

(Note some speakers listed below are tentative)

**Monday, October 3 (Week 1)**
State of American Democracy: Part 1

*Guest Speakers:*

Representative Jamie Raskin (D-MD)

Steve Schmidt, political analyst, long-time Republican campaign strategist (for Gov. Schwarzenegger and Sen. McCain, among others).

Secretary Margaret Spellings, President and CEO of Texas 2036, former U.S. Secretary of Education for President George W. Bush and President of the University of North Carolina.

*Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.*

**Monday, October 10 (Week 2)**
State of American Democracy: Part 2

*Guest Speakers:*

Secretary Hillary Clinton, former secretary of state, U.S. senator, and two-time candidate for president.

Nicholas Kristof, an American journalist and political commentator. A winner of two Pulitzer Prizes, he is a regular CNN contributor and has written an op-ed column for The New York Times since November 2001.

*Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.*

**Week 3**
State of Kids in America

*Guest Speakers:*

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
John King, former Secretary of Education and President and CEO, The Education Trust.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, 19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States under President Obama and President Biden

Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford Graduate School of Education; founding president, Learning Policy Institute.

**Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.**

**Week 4**  
**The Supreme Court**

**Guest Speakers:**

Representative Adam Schiff (D-CA)

Professor Pam Karlan, Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Professor of Public Interest Law and founder and co-director of the Supreme Court Litigation Clinic at Stanford Law School.

Ruth Marcus, the Washington Post

**Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.**

**Week 5**  
**Foreign Policy**

**Guest Speakers:**

Michael McFaul, Director, Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Professor of International Studies, Department of Political Science.

Thomas Friedman, three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning political commentator and author, current weekly columnist for the New York Times.

Other guest TBA

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continuingstudies@stanford.edu  
650-725-2650
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**Week 6**  
**Technology & Democracy**

*Guest Speakers:*

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet/Google

Reid Hoffman, Partner, Greylock and Co-Founder and former Executive Chairman, LinkedIn

Jonathan Zittrain, Co-Chair, Harvard Kennedy School Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society and George Bemis Professor of International Law at Harvard Law School.

Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.

**Week 7**  
**Immigration & Society [TBD]**

*Guest Speakers:*

Tomás R. Jiménez, Professor of Sociology and Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Stanford University

Julian Castro, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Mayor of San Antonio, Texas

Other guest TBA

Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.

**Week 8**  
**America’s Political Future: Where We Go from Here**

*Guest Speakers:*

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365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ)

Governor Gavin Newsom, Governor of California

David Axelrod, former Senior Advisor to President Obama, CNN political commentator, and Director of the University of Chicago Institute of Politics.

Speaker bios and readings for this class session will be distributed one week in advance of this session. The syllabus will be updated to reflect these additions accordingly.