



Spencer: Spring 2020 - Election Law (21567 : 01)

Number of Enrollments: 72

Number of Responses: 49

Notes on Responses:

The averages are calculated by: Sum of all Responses / Total # of Responses

*The percent recommending the course is calculated by: # of YES answers / Total # of Responses) * 100*

Questions for: Election Law (Spencer: Spring 2020)		Responses
1	Overall, how would you rate the quality of the class materials for Election Law?	4.47
2	Compared to other YLS classes, how much out-of-class preparation, reading, and writing does Election Law require?	3.2
3	How would you rate the professor(s)'s Election Law management of class discussions?	4.27
4	Overall, how would you rate the professor(s)'s responsiveness to student comments, questions and concerns?	4.92
5	How would you rate the professor(s)'s availability to students outside of class?	4.78
6	Compared to other YLS classes, how valuable was in-class time in Election Law?	4.35
7	Did the professor create an equitable environment in which all students of diverse backgrounds felt that they were respected, empowered to participate, had equal access to opportunities, and were not inappropriately singled out or expected to take on disproportionate responsibilities? Please comment in item 10 on how the professor could have done more, as an instructor, classroom manager, mentor, and leader, to create such an equitable environment.	4.9
8	In your opinion, compared to other YLS professors you've had, how good a teacher was the professor(s)?	4.67
9	Would you recommend Election Law to other students? (% of YES responses)	100%

Comment(s)

Professor Spencer was amazing! One of the best instructors I've had in three years at YLS. The class ended up being a large lecture class and so he couldn't delve in as deeply as a seminar would've allowed, but he still managed a full lecture class so well. He brings so much knowledge, energy, and kindness to the classroom. The best part of Professor Spencer is just how INCREDIBLE his feedback on papers and written work is. I don't think I've ever had a professor give as helpful feedback and guidance on papers, so I especially recommend him if you're interested in a professor that will actually take time to help you hone your ideas and writing. He'd be a real gem for YLS to hire full time. The class was way too oversubscribed and so YLS should definitely listen and bring on a new faculty member like Spencer to teach election law courses (preferably seminars) annually.

n/a

I thought election law with Professor Spencer was excellent. Because of the size and time limitations, it was basically taught as a lecture, and they were really engaging, informative, and enjoyable. We got exposure to the key issues in election law, but because of the nature of the course we didn't get into them in a ton of depth. Professor Spencer teaches the course with a blend of case law and political science research, which I really enjoyed and thought worked really well. For the most part we didn't spend class discussing individual cases in depth, but rather just connecting the topline doctrine to the research. I found this refreshing, especially since election law doctrine is such a mess, but it is different than a lot of law school classes. The writing assignments were more practical than most, and not too onerous--though I think you get out of them what you put in. While it was unfortunate we had to move online midway through the semester, Professor Spencer was extremely accommodating and did a great job shifting online.

Professor Spencer is really nice and the material is very interesting; however, it would have been nice if class discussions engaged a bit more deeply with the case law and other readings

Professor Spencer is among the kindest and most caring individuals with whom I have ever crossed paths. He was a steadying presence during this difficult semester, acknowledging the strange transition to Zoom School of Law, celebrating what he learned about us, and letting us into his life by introducing his children and his suit / pj pants combo. I was grateful to kick off each week with his warmth and generosity. As a doctrinal class, meeting for just two hours just one time each week was not enough. We did not have much opportunity to grapple with the material, even though it was exceptionally interesting and Professor Spencer effectively scaffolded it for us. I wished it had instead been a three credit course meeting twice per week.

Prof. Spencer was the best Professor I've had at YLS. His lectures are well organized and engaging. He does an excellent job of incorporating current events. Prof. Spencer genuinely cares about each and every student and takes the time to get to know you. He has excellent availability and was a joy writing my substantial with. I highly recommend election law or really any class with Prof. Spencer.

Professor Spencer was a great addition to the YLS faculty for the semester. He is an energetic lecturer who clearly puts a lot of time and effort into preparing for class, and he managed to create an engaging learning environment even at 8:00am on Mondays. Although he was not around much outside class because of his commuting schedule, he made an effort to be responsive to emails, available on Zoom/by phone, and held extended office hours for a few days early in the semester. He also provided detailed feedback on writing assignments, which was very helpful. This was a very good introduction to election law, which provided a solid overview of the field as it has developed and stands today. I also enjoyed how Professor Spencer connected lecture material to current events, but I would caution that I think he spent too much time on current events some weeks, which detracted from engaging with the readings and lecture materials. Overall, I really enjoyed the course.

Professor Spencer has been my favorite professor at YLS so far! His class was always engaging, even during COVID and on Zoom. I appreciate how much effort he made to talk with all interested students during his office hours. I hope that other students at YLS will have the opportunity to take Election Law with Professor Spencer in the future.

Prof. Spencer is excellent, engaging, committed. For those writing research papers he offered very useful input early on during office hours, and I enjoyed the class discussions he helped facilitate. Definitely should have more Election Law classes like his available in the future. He was also very understanding as things changed with COVID-19, and managed to keep lectures interesting even when we were all waking up at 8am ET (or 5am for some on the west coast). Would definitely recommend.

Professor Spencer is such a kind person. Yale does a disservice to its students if it doesn't invite him back (or, better yet, hire him permanently)! Election law is a fascinating topic. There is a balance of black letter law and policy, though the class might have been a bit policy heavy but nothing out of the ordinary at Yale. I wrote a paper for the class, and Professor Spencer provided detailed and helpful feedback. Also, despite the fact that he lives out-of-town and was only on campus once a week, he went above and beyond to make sure students would have the opportunity to meet for office hours. Definitely recommend this class!

Professor Spencer was an extremely engaged professor and attentive to student concerns. He was really a model of how professors should provide detailed and prompt feedback to students. The textbook and online materials were excellent. However, it would have been more effective if more class time had been devoted to discussing the doctrine and details of each case, rather than current events. I also thought that there was an excessive amount of time devoted to student discussion and it might have been more effective to have a robust cold call system where we talked through the doctrine in each area of election law.

Professor Spencer is incredible--probably the best professor I've had at Yale Law School. It is truly a shame the tenured faculty includes trash like James Whitman, who wastes everyone's time and doesn't teach anything, but doesn't include the truly tremendous teachers like Professor Spencer. YLS needs to HIRE HIM. He has written practical, empirical scholarship that is far more relevant than the philosophical drivel the faculty here tends to publish. He was, out of all of the professors I have had at YLS, the most committed to teaching us--he made himself as available as humanly possible despite commuting to New Haven from Chicago on Mondays. When I chose to write a paper for this class, he helped me pick a topic and provided me with a wealth of resources to begin researching with. He checked in on me mid-way through the semester. And, when I turned it in for the first time in my two years at Yale Law School, I finally received truly substantive feedback on my work. Professor Spencer wrote a full page of detailed notes about how to improve the paper and future directions to go with it. He was very encouraging and kind. I am thrilled I got to take this class with him and truly hopes YLS makes him an offer..

I really enjoyed this class overall. Professor Spencer blew me away in terms of his accessibility to students and support for student projects. He is a dedicated and kind professor and I felt like he went above and beyond to be available to students. I am disappointed he was only visiting for the semester. I liked the class structure. In particular, I liked that he had a segment at the start of class that was about election law in the news, especially in an election year. I do wish there had been a deeper dive into legal doctrine and less so into social science research around election law, but it's possible that election law is just a field that is steeped in this type of empirical research. I did think there was too much reading for a two credit class some weeks, but since there's no exam, if you aren't at all interested in a topic, you don't have to read it in great depth.

Professor Spencer was fantastic. I wrote my Substantial with him. He was always available to meet with me about the paper and other election law issues. He was a wonderful lecturer. Very passionate and knowledgeable about the issues. Very equitable. I wish he were a full-time YLS professor!

Election Law with professor Spencer was terrific. He was able to both re-teach (and in some cases teach for the first time) critical doctrine from Constitutional law in a relevant and accessible way to prime us for the election law context, and delve into the subjective nuance of election law topics. I felt that I learned how to analyze and apply equal protection doctrine and Supreme Court balancing tests better in this class than my 1L Constitutional law class, while learning lots of election law along the way. Professor Spencer also provided great individualized feedback on our legal writing assignments. For me, this was the first time at YLS that a professor had ever provided detailed written feedback on a writing project. Definitely a great class to take if offered.

Doug Spencer is an incredibly warm, nice, and funny professor. This is a good offering for Election Law. I think the legal materials and level of the lectures seemed that they were geared a bit more towards 1Ls than 2Ls or 3Ls, and as such the course felt a bit slow at times. Also, the recaps at the beginning of each class would sometimes run long and felt a bit repetitive. All in all, though, the course materials were stellar - Prof. Spencer puts a ton of effort and time into crafting the assignments and making them feel timely and relevant. He also gives incredibly thoughtful feedback on written work - this is maybe the first class in law school after three years where I actually got helpful, substantive feedback on writing assignments, which is really appreciated. Also, just a major shout-out to Prof. Spencer for expertly navigating the move to online learning. This semester was hard for everyone because of Covid - Prof. Spencer brought the same great energy and enthusiasm to Zoom as he did to the classroom, which is not an easy thing to do, and made waking up for 8 AM remote class feel worth it. I recommend taking this class in the future if Professor Spencer teaches it again and you are interested in a foundational course in Election Law.

Election Law was the best course that I have taken at YLS, and Professor Spencer is one of the best teachers I've had at any level. If YLS is looking to hire anytime soon, I really hope they will take Professor Spencer. The lectures in the course were engaging, interesting, and fun. Professor Spencer explained the course materials and legal doctrine better than any professor I have had at YLS. Beyond being knowledgeable about the doctrine, Professor Spencer presented interesting theoretical questions about hot button election law topics, like gerrymandering and campaign finance reform. Professor Spencer's lectures often challenged us to think beyond our typical assumptions about these issues, which, like many issues in election law, are often highly politicized. I really appreciated how Professor Spencer was able to raise thoughtful critiques in a nonpartisan manner. The course assignments were also quite helpful, worthwhile, and well-designed. The first writing assignment prompts helped us both learn some election law doctrine in-depth and practice legal writing. The second helped us explore our own ideas about important election law topics. Both assignments provided high value while also being very straightforward and low-stress. Professor Spencer was also a great mentor for students. He was very available outside of class and was genuinely interested in hearing students' thoughts about the materials. I don't remember ever having a professor in college or in law school who was willing to take so much time to listen to and have conversations with students. His dedication to students and encouragement made me very enthused to come to class and learn the materials. If Professor Spencer ever returns to YLS to teach Election Law, I wholeheartedly recommend students who have any interest in the subject to take the course with him.

Professor Spencer is a gem -- highly recommend getting to know him! One of the sweetest and most invested professors I've had at the law school.

Generally enjoyed this class a lot, and thought that the Professor did an excellent job of conveying the material. I found both of the assignments interesting, and all of the reading to be very engaging. One point of improvement is that I think he might have managed cold-calls a little bit better -- the questions tended to be a little open-ended, which made it difficult to follow.

This class was interesting, but a little bit more basic than I would have liked. We spent a lot of time discussing Equal Protection analysis generally, rather than going over the reading or other more specific material. I wish we had spent less time on the foundation (which most of us already knew from other YLS classes), and more time on election law. That said, Professor Spencer is incredibly engaging and a fantastic professor. I really appreciated that he spent time every class discussing election-related issues in the news from the past week.

Professor Spencer is a gem. He is very kind, patient, and considerate. His assignments are pretty painless too and he is willing to work with students if they are struggling to get them done. The only thing is that the class was very policy-focused, which is not what I expected.

To YLS Professors and Administrators En Masse: Professor Spencer's course was, without doubt, the best course I took during my time at YLS. He should teach a course to the majority of the faculty on how to effectively engage students and prepare them for success. Why is Professor Spencer not a member of our faculty? He should be teaching every single semester. -His expectations were crystal clear -He was accommodating of student needs -Each of his out-of-class reading assignments was useful and accessible -He provided meaningful feedback to student work -He was responsive to email and made himself available to students despite living in Chicago -His in-class teaching style was engaging, accessible, and effective. We owe a lot to his incredible preparation as a lecturer -If he doesn't make teaching and learning the centerpiece of his work as a professor then he could have fooled me I cannot say enough good things about this course and I genuinely hope that YLS will deeply consider the merits of having Professor Spencer provide more instructions to our students here.

Doug is an excellent professor. His lectures are clear, his cold calls seemed fair, and he is hyper-responsive to students and clearly cares very deeply about our learning. His feedback on our writing assignments was extensive and insightful, particularly given the number of students in the class. As an added and unexpected bonus, Doug taught me more about con law than Professor Kahn did in my small group. That said, I'm not sure the 2-credit format worked well for the class, a lot of the material felt rushed. I think this would be better as a standard 4-credit blackletter. I also think that class time was occasionally too focused on current events. Other than that, I highly recommend this course and sincerely hope that Doug teaches at YLS again soon.

Professor Spencer is a wonderful professor-- truly caring about his students, mindful of the classroom culture, and thoughtful about the material he assigned and the course structure. My only recommendation would be for Professor Spencer to incorporate more of the readings-- which were fascinating-- into the lectures, particularly at the beginning of the course.

This was a superlative class. I was so happy that this was offered, since it rarely is at YLS, and this class met and exceeded all of my expectations. I feel like I have an excellent understanding of the various doctrines related to election law, at least at a survey level. I thought much more deeply about the political process than I ever have. There were even several extremely helpful refreshers about elements of ConLaw. Professor Spencer is a gem and an absolute delight. His selection of materials and topics was thorough and thoughtful. He managed to make an 8am lecture feel exciting and lively. He lectures clearly and thoughtfully and he pulls a lot out of his students. He clearly has a great mastery of the material, and he is able draw connections to both current events and wider areas of the law. Outside of class, he made every effort to be available and supportive, and he was everything a student could hope for in a paper supervisor: he expected a lot, gave lots of insight, advice, and literature recommendations, and was enthusiastic and encouraging throughout in helping me achieve my own vision for my paper. It was unfortunate that he was commuting from Chicago, which did place practical limits on his availability to students. If YLS has the chance to snag Doug Spencer as a full time permanent professor, they should leap at it.

Professor Spencer is wonderful and should certainly be brought into the Yale community. There's clear interest in having more consistent and in depth course offerings on election law. Professor Spencer is incredibly welcome and opening and put a huge amount of thought into his assignments and courses. The writing assignments he created were not a lot of work, but were great opportunities to better understand particular areas of election law and to develop legal writing skills. He also gave extensive feedback. Professor Spencer is very accessible and that showed both in office hours and in class discussions, which were dynamic and brought in a number of voices. He also was consistently willing to challenge peoples' points of view and bring in many perspectives, deftly handling a course that can be politically fraught. This course was a very brief overview of election law, but I'd imagine that Professor Spencer has much to offer in more in depth conversations.

Doug Spencer is an incredibly kind and supportive professor. He was especially accommodating during the pandemic and made a big effort to make sure the classes remained relevant and engaging. I didn't like the text book however, which was really expensive, not very well written, and not the standard election law text book most classes use. I also think we spent too long on the VRA and should have spent more time on issues like voting administration (voter ID laws, early/mail in voting, etc). He also had a kind of bizarre cold call system where he maybe cold called one person the whole class asking primarily opinion-based questions. It would have been more engaging for the class discussions and cold calls to be more based on the readings and cases, rather than people's general thoughts, which often led to just a few people who were willing to participate sharing their views without a clear connection to the reading or the case law. This class tried to create a seminar-style discussion in a lecture format, and would have benefitted from a more traditional lecture approach. That being said, I really enjoyed the class and Professor Spencer as a professor - he is extremely supportive, knowledgeable, and engaging.

This class was amazing and I really wish it was taught at YLS more often! There was a significant amount of reading, but the class was only once per week so it just required good time management.

Great professor.

Super clear and provocative. He is unbiased and gives it to you straight, but also provides a political lens to election issues and helps place curriculum in the real world.

Prof. Spencer is an incredibly thoughtful professor and teacher. Teaching a large Election Law class in a lecture format without an exam is a challenge--especially when classes are switched online--but he made it work. As promised, this was a survey class that introduced us to the major themes in election law. And perhaps most impressively, he gave us all detailed feedback on our writing assignments, easily more than I have gotten from any other non-clinical professor at the law school ever. If he comes back to teach Election Law again, I'd recommend it for anyone interested in the subject!

Wow, what a great semester. Spencer is one of the best lecturers I've had. Really engaging, well prepared, and professional. And election law was super interesting. Highly recommend. Also, there were 2 assignments that made up your grade: (1) drafting a complaint and (2) writing a 1500 word response to an academic article we read. It was my first time drafting a complaint and I learned so much from the experience.

This class was a great introductory survey of election law! Professor Spencer is a lovely person and does a great job of making himself available to students outside class. I wrote a paper for this class, and Professor Spencer gave very clear, quick, and helpful feedback on my drafts. All around a great experience! My one suggestion is that the reading might be a little heavy for a two-credit course (some weeks we had more reading than my three and four-credit courses, for example).

Election law was exactly what I hoped it would be: an engaging survey of many of the big issues in election law and 2 low-pressure assignments (made even lower pressure by the school wide change in grading policy). I knew going into the class that I will almost certainly never work on election law issues, but I wanted to learn about it because I care a lot about the issues. Professor Spencer was an excellent lecturer: few professors at YLS manage to be so genuinely excited to teach students at 8am, and to hold the attention of a 70+ person class for 2 hours that early in the morning. I really appreciate the passion that Professor Spencer brought to the issue, and the clarity with which he explained doctrine. This is the type of class that you get out of what you put in: in my case, I have a surface understanding of most of the topics we talked about, and a slightly deeper understanding of the issue I wrote my Response paper on. But if I hadn't been a 3L set in my ways, I think I would have been inspired by the class to get more involved in election law issues. Two things that I appreciated a lot about Professor Spencer's class management are: (1) he would highlight bad or cherry-picked arguments about certain legal issues made by both liberals and conservatives (e.g., theories about the popular vote); and (2) he would offer his own opinion about things and discuss the evolution of his thinking, and clearly demarcate when he was doing this. I really liked the two assignments we had; in particular, the response paper assignment was a lot of fun. I probably wouldn't have taken this class if it involved a seminar paper or exam, so I hope the 2-assignment format continues. All in all, Professor Spencer was just a very kind person and excellent lecturer, and I'd recommend any class he teaches.

Professor Spencer was so kind, great to talk to in office hours, and gave wonderful feedback on assignments. If he comes back to YLS, take him!

Prof. Spencer was a FANTASTIC professor. Better than many other tenured faculty at Yale. I wish he is able to come back to Yale and teach an advanced Election Law course. We have the interest in our student body for this type of course and immensely benefit from his pedagogy and expertise.

Professor Spencer was exceptional-- 10/10 would recommend bringing him back.

Douglas Spencer is an absolute sweetheart and being in his class was such a treat. He gave individual feedback to all of us on our work, and took the time to hold numerous office hours--even though he was commuting from Chicago. He is so open and wonderful and friendly, he is also very passionate and knowledgeable about the subject area. I do kind of wish this were a four unit doctrinal class because there is so much information and we definitely barely scratched the surface!!
