

# POSC 143



## ELECTIONS & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



Summer 2014<sup>1</sup>

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**Office:** HMNSS 1001 (mailbox in HMNSS 1102) or WAT 2211

**Office Hours:** TR 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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**Course Info:** TR 3:10 – 6:00 p.m., SPR 2339 (Sproul Hall)

### Course Overview and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to examine political behavior in the United States with an emphasis on political participation and voting behavior. The objectives for this course are fourfold: 1) To gain a mastery of current events surrounding upcoming elections. 2) To better understand and evaluate the nature of American democracy and the institutions that structure political behavior and shape electoral outcomes, e.g. the role and influence of money and the media, the composition of the electorate, the nature of the two-party system, the ability of elections to maximize democratic and/or republican values, and the array of the dominant and marginalized forces in American society. 3) To assess, with a critical eye, current practices in both elections and the manner in which people participate in the electoral system. 4) To improve student's ability to present cogent analytical arguments, both in writing and in oral discussion.

### Reading

You are responsible for completing each reading by the time we meet. For example, you must have read the materials for Day 2 by the time our class meets for Day 2. There are sources of required reading for this course:

- 1) Donovan, Todd, and Shaun Bowler. 2003. *Reforming the Republic: Democratic Institutions for the New America*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. [ISBN 978-0130994554]
- 2) Dalton, Russell J. 2008. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*, Revised Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. [ISBN 978-1-60426-556-9]
- 3) Selected articles available on iLearn

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<sup>1</sup> **Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to alter the contents, requirements, grading and/or scheduling as he sees fit in order to best fulfill the objectives of the course. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class.

The first will be the text we use to understand American *electoral institutions* – how they are set up now and how they could be reformed. The second text has a focus on *behavioral patterns* within the American electorate, providing data that allows for a comparison of types of participation across generations. Given this, we are not simply learning what American participation is but what it could be given both: a) reforms to the system, and b) changes in participation. The lecture material will often reinforce the reading material, but the lectures and readings will NOT always overlap. Some concepts in the readings will not be covered in the lectures; some concepts in the lectures will not be in the readings, so actively attend and read accordingly.

### **Academic Honesty**

You should be familiar with the University's policies on academic honest, which can be found at: <http://conduct.ucr.edu/learnpolicies/academicintegrity.html> Plagiarism and cheating will result in an "F" in the course and notification to SCAIP. It is expected that students have read the university's policies. Any confusion should be addressed before papers and exams, not after. This statement in the syllabus constitutes your warning.

### **ILearn & Email**

I will often use both ILearn *and the campus email* to communicate so you MUST frequent both via the campus portal to stay up to date. Failing to do either of these is ***not*** an acceptable excuse.

### **Ideological Diversity**

You will not be graded according to whether you share the political opinions or ideologies of the instructor or authors of the assigned texts. I do ask that you be open-minded and respectful, both of your fellow students and instructor and of diversity of opinion. I hope that you will view this diversity as valuable for your learning. As Stuart Mill once wrote: "All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility." In this course, no one is infallible.

### **Class Decorum & Participation**

I begin with the premise that each student enrolled in this course is highly intelligent and capable and I have high expectations for both your academic commitment and personal behavior. You are responsible for your success in this course and the course is designed such that if you work hard you will do quite well. The course has all the ingredients necessary to engage and challenge you. I expect students to refrain from engaging in any distracting or disruptive behavior such as—but not limited to—showing up late, using cell phones, texting, surfing the web, engaging in side discussions. This sort of behavior is disrespectful not only because it makes it difficult for other students to concentrate in class, but it also makes it difficult for me to do my job. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior and will refer egregious cases to Student Affairs. I expect you to participate by attending lecture, completing small assignments beyond the major tasks described below, and being active in group and class activities. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the course material. We will aim to integrate discussion into each class meeting, as there is no separate section for this course. This will require active participation of all students for its success. Much of our learning will take place in these discussions, as you share insights and ideas with each other.

### **Grade Breakdown**

1) Short Assignments	10%
2) Quizzes	30%
3) Paper	30%
4) Final Exam	30%

**There are no options for extra credit.**

### **Short Assignments**

These assignments will aid in class activities and discussion.

### **Quizzes**

You will be quizzed on the assigned readings throughout the term. The purpose of random quizzes is to ensure students attend class and keep up with the assigned readings, as well as to serve as a way to discuss readings when we correct the quiz in class. Your quiz total will be scored out of the highest total score earned (i.e. these will be curved, nothing else will). No quiz make-ups are allowed; if you are not in attendance for the quiz you cannot gain points for that quiz. The quizzes may cover a variety of information across that week's readings, OR they may focus entirely on one reading. We will aim to integrate discussion into class meetings, as there is no separate section for this course.

### **Paper**

The paper is due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday July 22nd**. Late and emailed papers will not be accepted. You must submit the paper to SafeAssign and turn in a hard copy at class start.

### **Final Exam**

You will be asked to identify and explain concepts covered in the class as well as write an in-class essay. Makeup exams (as with all late work) will generally not be allowed, though I will consider extreme medical emergencies with original and complete documentation.

## **- Lecture & Reading Schedule -**

### **Week 1**

#### **Day 1 – Tuesday June 24<sup>th</sup> – Introductions & Overview + Why Citizen Participation & Elections Matter**

- Donovan & Bowler [DB] – Preface, Chs. 1 & 2
- Diamond, “The Electoral College and the American Idea of Democracy” (iLearn)

#### *Optional Resources:*

- Electoral College calculator <http://www.270towin.com/>
- Updated state and national polling <http://pollster.com>

#### **Day 2 – Thursday June 26<sup>th</sup> – Counting the Votes**

- DB – Chs. 5 & 9
- United States Commission on Civil Rights “Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election Chapter 9 Findings and Recommendations” (iLearn)

- *Recount* [film] – will watch in class

*Optional Readings:*

- The New York Times Recount Project for the 2000 Election  
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/recount/>
- Steven Hill. *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics*
- Myrna Perez (Brennan Center for Justice), *Voter Purges*

## WEEK 2

### Day 3 – Tuesday July 1<sup>st</sup> – Is There a Better Way to Elect Congress?

- DB – Chs. 3 & 4
- **Short Assignment #1 Due** / Group Activity

### Day 4 – Thursday July 3<sup>rd</sup> – Money in Politics

- DB – Ch. 8
- Stratmann, “Some Talk: Money in Politics. A (Partial) Review of the Literature.” [iLearn]  
NOTE: skim for findings & debates in this area of the lit.

*Optional Resources on Inequality & Representation:*

- Gilens & Page. 2014. *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens* (iLearn)
- *Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy* by the American Political Science Association (iLearn)
- Larry Bartels. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*.
- Open Secrets Website (tracks donations) <http://www.opensecrets.org/>
- Explore the Fairvote.org website at <http://www.fairvote.org/irv/>

## WEEK 3

### Day 5 – Tuesday July 8<sup>th</sup> – Field Experiments on Mobilization & Negative Attack Ads

- Rosenstone & Hansen – Ch. 6 (iLearn)
- Green & Gerber (iLearn)
- *Ansolabehere et al. (iLearn)*
- *Finkel & Geer (iLearn)*
- **Short Assignment #2 Due** / Class Activity

### Day 6 – Thursday July 10<sup>th</sup> – What Do Americans Know About Politics? & Theories of Nonvoting & Participation

- Delli Carpini (iLearn)
- Lau & Redlawsk (iLearn)
- Rosenstone & Hansen. Chapters 2 & 3 (iLearn)
- Manza & Uggen (iLearn)

*Optional Readings:*

- Keyssar. 2000. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the U.S.*

## WEEK 4

### Day 7 – Tuesday July 15<sup>th</sup> – Citizenship Norms

- Dalton Intro & Chs. 1 & 2

### Day 8 – Thursday July 17<sup>th</sup> – Groups: New Repertoires, Tolerance, & Interaction

- Dalton Chs. 3, 4 & 5

#### *Optional Readings:*

- Stein et al. (iLearn)
- Oliver & Wong (iLearn)

## WEEK 5

### Day 9 – Tuesday July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Inside a Modern Political Campaign (*Street Fight* [film]) + Final Review (**PAPER DUE: no late or emailed papers will be accepted. Upload to SafeAssign & turn in physical copy at class start**)

#### *Optional Readings:*

- The entire series of *The Hard Part* from the New York Times (iLearn), and here: <http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/newyorkandregion/series/thehardpart/index.html>
- Han Noel, “Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don’t” (iLearn)

### Day 10 – Thursday July 24<sup>th</sup> – **In-class Final Exam**