

POSC 310: Political Behavior & Motivation

Spring 2014¹ – Section 1

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Course Info: Monday & Wednesday 5:30-6:45 p.m., H 228 (Humanities Building)

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.

This course satisfies the University General Education requirement for category III.C.2. (Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences). Courses in this category are intended to help students understand broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives; to solve complex problems that require social scientific reasoning; and to relate the social sciences to significant social problems or to other related disciplines.

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 0-13-099455-3]
- 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 TITANium: <http://www.fullerton.edu/Titanium/>

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

¹ **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.

American electorate, providing data that allows for a comparison of types of participation across generations, allowing for projections into the future regarding how the youth are reforming methods of participation. 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 norms of participation.

The lecture material will often reinforce the reading material, but the lectures and readings will not always overlap. Lectures, course discussions and reading materials are all part of the course, and students are responsible for all of them. Some concepts in the readings will not be covered in the lectures; some concepts in the lectures will not be in the readings. Students are responsible for all of it.

Academic Honesty

You should be familiar with the University's policies on academic honest, which can be found at: <http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/judicial/pdfs/UPS300-021.pdf> Plagiarism and cheating will result in an "F" in the course and notification of the Vice President for Student Services. 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. See also:

<http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/judicial/pdfs/Guide%20to%20Avoiding%20Plagarism.pdf>

Disabilities

The University requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), located in UH-101 and at (657) 278-3117, in order to received prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability. Students requesting accommodations should inform the instructor during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs that may require specific arrangements/accommodations related to attending class sessions, completing course assignments, writing papers or taking quizzes and examinations. For more information, visit the DSS website: <http://www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices/>

TITANium & Email

I will often use both TITANium *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, taking pictures, talking to their classmates. 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

any 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 students share insights and ideas with each other.

Grade Breakdown

1) Quizzes & Short Assignments	15%
2) Midterm	25%
3) Paper	30%
4) Final Exam	30%

Quizzes & Short Assignments

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. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. 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. Short assignments will aid group in class activities. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the course material. This will require active participation of all students for its success.

Paper

The paper is due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday April 30th**. Late and emailed papers will not be accepted. Students must submit their paper to Turnitin [plagiarism checker] as well as turn in a hard copy.

Midterm & Final Exam

You will be asked to identify and explain important concepts covered in the class as well as write a few short (1-2 page) in-class essays. Makeup exams will generally not be allowed, though I will consider extreme medical emergencies with original and complete documentation.

Late work will not be accepted without both prior approval and documented evidence of a university approved excuse (e.g. medical emergency).

This course will assign pluses and minuses. **There are no options for extra credit.** Grades will be determined on the traditional scale. That means the following cutoffs:

Grade	Cutoff	Grade	Cutoff	Grade	Cutoff
A+	97	B	83	C-	70
A	93	B-	80	D+	67
A-	90	C+	77	D	63
B+	87	C	73	D-	60

- Lecture & Reading Schedule -

WEEK 1 Introductions

Day 1 – Wednesday Jan. 22nd

- Course syllabus

WEEK 2 Why Citizen Participation & Elections Matter

Day 2 – Monday Jan. 27th

- Donovan & Bowler [DB] – Preface & Ch.1

Day 3 – Wednesday Jan. 29th

- DB Ch. 2

WEEK 3 Counting the Votes

Day 4 – Monday Feb. 3rd

- DB Ch. 5
- Martin Diamond, “The Electoral College and the American Idea of Democracy” (TITANIum)

Additional Resources:

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

Day 5 – Wednesday Feb. 5th

- DB Ch. 9
- United States Commission on Civil Rights “Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election Chapter 9 Findings and Recommendations” (TITANIum)

Optional Readings:

- *Recount* [film]
- 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 4 Is There a Better Way to Elect Congress?

Day 6 – Monday Feb. 10th ****Short Assignment #1 Due****

- DB Ch. 3

Day 7 – Wednesday Feb. 12th

- DB Ch. 4 & Ch. 10

WEEK 5

Money in Politics

Day 8 – Wednesday Feb. 19th

- DB Ch. 8
- Thomas Stratmann, “Some Talk: Money in Politics. A (Partial) Review of the Literature.”

Additional Resources:

- Open Secrets Website (tracks donations) <http://www.opensecrets.org/>
- Explore the Fairvote.org website at <http://www.fairvote.org/irv/>

WEEK 6

Field Experiments on Mobilization & Negative Attack Ads

Day 9 – Monday Feb. 24th

- Rosenstone & Hansen Ch. 6 (TITANium)

Day 10 – Wednesday Feb. 26th ****Short Assignment #2 Due****

- Green & Gerber (TITANium)
- *Ansolabehere et al.* (TITANium)
- *Finkel & Geer* (TITANium)

Optional Readings:

- *Sasha Issenberg*, “Obama campaign ads: How the Analyst Institute is helping him hone his message”

WEEK 7

What Do Americans Know About politics? / Theories of Nonvoting & Participation

Day 11 – Monday Mar. 3rd

- Delli Carpini (TITANium)
- Lau & Redlawsk (TITANium)

Day 12 – Wednesday Mar. 5th

- Rosenstone & Hansen. Ch. 2 & Ch. 3 (TITANium)
- Manza & Uggen (TITANium)

Optional Readings:

- Alexander Keyssar. 2000. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*
- Michelle Alexander. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.*

WEEK 8

Inequality & Democracy

Day 13 – Monday Mar. 10th

- Verba et al.: Introduction, Ch. 2 & Ch. 3 (TITANium)
- Verba et al.: Ch. 17 (TITANium)
- *Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy* by the American Political Science Association (TITANium)

Optional Readings:

- Larry Bartels. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*.

Day 14 – Wednesday Mar. 12th

****MIDTERM – In-class Essay Exam – BRING BLUE BOOK****

WEEK 9

Inside a Modern Political Campaign

Day 15 – Monday Mar. 17th

- *Street Fight* [in class viewing]
- Read the entire series of *The Hard Part* from the New York Times (TITANium), and here: <http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/newyorkandregion/series/thehardpart/index.html>

Day 16 – Wednesday Mar. 19th

- Read paper writing tips documents (TITANium)
- Finish documentary & discuss paper writing

WEEK 10

Citizenship

Day 17 – Monday Mar. 24th

- Dalton Intro & Ch. 1

Day 18 – Wednesday Mar. 26th

- Dalton Ch. 2

WEEK 11

Groups & Norms

Day 19 – Monday Apr. 7th

- Dalton Ch. 3

Day 20 – Wednesday Apr. 9th

- Dalton Ch. 4

Optional Readings:

- Schaffner, Brian F. 2005. "Priming Gender: Campaigning on Women's Issues in U.S. Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 803-817.

WEEK 12

Toleration & Group Interaction

Day 21 – Monday Apr. 14th

- Dalton Ch. 5

Day 22 – Wednesday Apr. 16th

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

WEEK 13

Government Role & Strength

Day 23 – Monday Apr. 21st

- Dalton Ch. 6

Day 24 – Wednesday Apr. 23rd

- Dalton Ch. 7

WEEK 14

Tocqueville

Day 25 – Monday Apr. 28th

- Dalton Ch. 8

Day 26 – Wednesday Apr. 30th

****PAPER DUE: no late or emailed papers will be accepted. Remember to upload to Turnitin as well as hand in a physical copy in class****

- Dalton Ch. 9

WEEK 15

Wrap-up & Review

Day 27 – Monday May 5th

- Dalton Epilogue: Engaged Citizens & the 2008 Presidential Election
- CIRCLE's "The Youth Vote in 2012" (TITANium)

Day 28 – Wednesday May 7th

- Final exam review day
- Review your reading notes & lecture slides!

Optional Reading:

- Han Noel, "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't" (TITANium)

DAY 29 – MONDAY MAY 12th 5:00-6:50 PM **FINAL EXAM**