

POSC 143
ELECTIONS & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
Fall 2003

Martin Johnson
Department of Political Science
University of California, Riverside

Office: Watkins Hall, Room 2222
Tel: 787-4612 (on-campus, 8-4612)
e-mail: martin.johnson@ucr.edu

Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
and by appointment

On-line web course materials through <http://ilearn.ucr.edu/>

Required Reading

Donovan, Todd, and Shaun Bowler. 2003. *Reforming the Republic: Democratic Institutions for the New America*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Dudley, Robert L., and Alan R. Gitelson. 2002. *American Elections: The Rules Matter*. New York: Longman.

Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Longman.

Several readings will come from other sources, listed below. These will be placed on reserve at Rivera Library and where possible on electronic reserve.

Course Requirements

Literature review proposal, due October 17	10%
Book review, due November 14	20%
Mid-term examination, in-class November 3	20%
Literature review, due December 1	20%
Final examination, December 8	30%

Course Description

This course is an examination of elections and political participation in the U.S. with an emphasis on voters. The course is designed to introduce you to theoretical perspectives on elections as well as the practical operation of electoral politics in the U.S.

The course is organized around three very broad explanations for why voters participate in elections: They vote because they can, they want to, and/or they were asked to vote.

In the first part of the course, we will examine the idea that people participate in politics because they can, meaning both that U.S. institutions allow some but not other people to vote and that some people struggle to participate because they lack resources that would help them be more involved. Next we will consider the possibility that people are motivated to participate because they want to – standing something to gain, perhaps even materially, from their participation, although some people appreciate knowing they have contributed to sustaining U.S. democracy. The flipside of this is that some people do not participate in politics because they perceive there is nothing for them in the U.S. political system. Finally, we will discuss voter mobilizations and the efforts of partisan and non-partisan organizations to encourage turnout.

Much class time will be allocated to lecture material, however you will have opportunities to express your thoughts on readings and related topics. I expect you to pay close attention to the readings and keep up with them. My office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. Please do not hesitate to come by during these scheduled times or contact me to schedule an appointment.

Literature Review, Proposal, and Book Review

You are responsible for a review of literature on a topic related to elections and political participation, 7-10 pages in length. Choose a promising research question about elections/voting and develop a review of the literature on that question. For some examples, what does Political Science have to tell us about economic voting, ballot roll-off, the use of languages other than English and voting in the U.S.? The topic will be narrower than "elections." This is an opportunity for you to develop your own interest in an area of research. For this paper, you will be required to choose and read 6 or more research articles and books outside of the readings on the syllabus. We will talk more about what I mean by a literature review during the course of the quarter. The paper will be due by the end of class, in class, December 1.

In order to help you take full advantage of this opportunity to explore your interests in elections, I have designed a couple of assignments related to the larger literature review. First, I would like each of you to propose a topic for your literature review in a brief, 1-2 page memorandum due October 17 at the end of class, in class. This memorandum will note the research question you will consider in the literature review, why you think the question is interesting, and list several sources you intend to incorporate. Based on your proposal, I can make suggestions aimed at helping you with the literature review.

On November 14, you will turn in a book to review. It is also due at the end of class, in class. This book must be a piece of scholarly research related to your literature review proposal. You should include the book you plan to review on your preliminary list of sources in the proposal. The book review will be 2-4 pages, identifying the research question, theoretical perspective, data and conclusions, as well as your own evaluation of the research.

Late papers will be graded, but with a letter-grade penalty for each week they are late. Any paper that is turned in will receive at least partial credit. Plagiarism and cheating will result in a loss of credit on the spoiled assignment and all cases will be referred to the Student Judicial Affairs Office.

Examinations

You will also complete two examinations. The mid-term is scheduled for November 3 in class. If you are unable to take the mid-term at the scheduled time, you may schedule an alternate time by contacting me prior to the scheduled exam time and providing appropriate original-copies documentation (medical, military, etc.) for your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time. Scheduling a makeup exam is your responsibility. I will consider extreme medical emergencies, again with complete original documentation. The final exam will have a similar but longer format. It is scheduled for Dec. 8, 3-6 p.m.

Course Schedule

Sept. 26	Course introduction
Topic 1:	<u>Opportunity</u>
Sept. 29	Suffrage in the U.S. Dudley and Gitelson. Ch. 1, "Defining the Electorate"
Oct. 1	Democratization in candidate selection: Caucuses, conventions, primaries Dudley and Gitelson. Ch. 2, "The Nomination Process"
Oct. 3	Civil rights, Voting Rights Act Key, V.O. 1949. <i>Southern Politics in State and Nation</i> . Ch. 25, 26. "Southern Suffrage Restrictions," "The Literacy Test."
Oct. 6	Contemporary voter registration Hansen, John Mark. 2001. <i>Report for the Task Force on the Federal Election System</i> . http://millercenter.virginia.edu/programs/natl_commissions/final_report.html Ch. 2, "Voter Registration"
Oct. 8	Contemporary voter registration Donovan and Bowler. Ch. 9, "The Mechanics of Running Elections."

- Oct 10 Contemporary voter registration and the electorate
 Jackson, Robert A., Robert D. Brown, and Gerald C. Wright. 1998. "Registration, Turnout, and the Electoral Representativeness of U.S. State Electorates." *American Politics Quarterly* 26:259-82.
- Mitchell, Glenn, and Christopher Wlezien. 1995. "The Impact of Legal Constraints on Voter Registration, Turnout and the Composition of the American Electorate" *Political Behavior* 17:179-202.
- Oct. 13 Felon disenfranchisement
 Hansen. Ch. 8, "Disenfranchisement of Felons"
http://millercenter.virginia.edu/programs/natl_commissions/final_report.html
- Oct. 15 Other resources: Social status, political efficacy
 Rosenstone and Hansen. Ch. 5, "Participation in Electoral Politics."
- Oct. 17 Making it easier to vote*
 Hansen. Ch. 5. "Early Voting, Unrestricted Absentee Voting, and by Mail"
http://millercenter.virginia.edu/programs/natl_commissions/final_report.html
- Stein, Robert M. 1998. "Early voting" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62:57-69.
- *Literature Review Proposal Due, end of class**
- Oct. 20 Cost/Benefit analysis of voting
 Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Row. Ch. 3, "The Basic Logic of Voting."
- Oct. 22 Information as a cost
 Downs, Ch 11-14.: "Part III: Specific Effects of Information Costs"
- Topic 2: Motivation – Positive
- Oct. 24 Benefits: Candidate differential
- Oct. 27 Social benefits
 Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. Simon and Schuster. Ch. 1-2, "Thinking about Social Change in America", "Political Participation."
- Knack, Stephen. 1992. "Civic Norms, Social Sanctions, and Voter Turnout." *Rationality and Society* 4(2):133-156.
- Oct. 29 Group benefits
 Tate, Katherine. 1991. "Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Elections." *American Political Science Review*, 85(4):1159-1176
- Bobo, Lawrence, and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84(2):377-393.
- Lien, Pei-te. 1994. "Ethnicity and Political Participation: A Comparison between Asian and Mexican Americans." *Political Behavior* 16(2):237-264.
- Oct. 31 Mid-Term Review
 Nov. 3 **Mid-Term Examination**

<u>Topic 3: Motivation – Negative</u>	
Nov. 5	Candidate competition and convergence
Nov. 7	Candidate competition and convergence Bianco, William T. 2001. <i>American Politics</i> . Ch. 5, "Winning & Holding Elective Office." Downs. Ch. 7-8, "The Development of Political Ideologies as a Means of Getting Votes," "The Statics and Dynamics of Party Ideologies."
Nov. 10	The Two-Party system Donovan and Bowler. Ch. 3, "Pathologies of Congressional Elections."
Nov. 12	Proportional representation Donovan and Bowler. Ch. 4, "Are There Better Ways to Elect a Congress?"
Nov. 14	Disproportionality and Presidential Elections* Donovan and Bowler. Ch. 5, "Electing the President." Dudley and Gitelson. Ch. 6, "A Special Case Study: The Electoral College." *Book review due, end of class
Nov. 17	Gerrymandering and more Voting Rights Act Dudley and Gitelson. Review Ch. 1, especially "Apportionment and Districting."
Nov. 19	Money and Politics: Campaign finance Donovan and Bowler. Ch.7-8, "Direct Democracy," "Campaign Finance" Dudley and Gitelson. Ch. 3-4, "Money Constituency," "Campaigning to Election Day."
Nov. 21	Negative Campaigning Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" <i>American Political Science Review</i> 88(4):829-838. Finkel, Steven E., and John G. Geer. 1998. "A Spot Check: Casting Doubt on the Demobilizing Effect of Attack Advertising." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 42(2):573-595.
<u>Topic 4: Mobilization</u>	
Nov. 24	Mobilization Rosenstone and Hansen. Ch. 1-3, 6-8.
Nov. 26	Party mobilization
Dec. 1	Candidates and GOTV (get out the vote) efforts* *Literature review due, end of class
Dec. 3	Field research on mobilization: What works? Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber . "Getting Out the Youth Vote: Randomized Field Experiments." Yale University. http://www.yale.edu/isps/publications/YouthVote.pdf
Dec. 5	Exam Review
Dec. 8	Final Exam, 3-6 p.m.