

Electoral Behavior

POLS 4520, Spring 2015

Tues. & Thurs. 8:00-9:15

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Office hours: T & R 2:00-3:00

Course Description and Goals

This course is devoted to understanding how election outcomes are shaped by the relevant institutions and participating actors. These actors include but are not limited to members of Congress, failed candidates for seats in Congress, the president, interest groups, and of course voters. This course primarily focuses on voters and members of Congress. By the end of this course, students should be able to exhibit a clear understanding of the role each of these actors play in determining election outcomes, as well as how their actions are constrained and influenced by electoral institutions (such as chamber rules, redistricting, and the media.) Furthermore, students should be able to summarize, synthesize, and critically analyze academic research and weigh the merits of competing arguments.

Reading

Required texts:

- Jacobson, Gary C. 2013. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780205251766
- Mayhew, David. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN-13: 9780300105872
- Niemi, Richard G., Herbert F. Weisberg, and David Kimball. 2010. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 5th ed. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN-13: 9780872894679

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from Disabilities Services, please present it to me as soon as possible. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 706-542-8719. If you cannot reach the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. To qualify the application of the policy in this course: tests and written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance	10 percent
Participation	10 percent
Writing Assignments	30 percent
Midterm	25 percent
Final	25 percent

Attendance: Each student will be granted 2 unexcused absences. After those are exhausted, the attendance grade will be a proportion of all classes attended. For example, a student who attends all classes will received all 10 points. A student who attended all but 2 classes will also receive all 10 points. A student who missed 2 classes but had a university approved excuse will also receive all 10 points. However, a student who used both "freebies" but also missed 10 percent of the classes will only receive 90 percent of the available points, or 9 out of 10 points.

Participation: Each student is expected to arrive on time and to have completed the assigned reading beforehand. Students who consistently attend class and demonstrate through class discussion that they have completed and understand the material can expect to receive most, if not all, of the ten available points. A detailed rubric can be found on page 4.

Writing Assignments: Each student will be asked to write six 2-3 page papers that will be worth a total of 30 points toward their final grade. Each assignment will summarize one week's readings, but full credit will be reserved for papers that provide a clear and concise summary and discuss how that week's readings relate to other material previously covered. At least 3 of the 6 assignments should be completed and turned in before Spring Break. Once a week has been covered, students can no longer turn in a paper on those readings. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and printed using 12 point Times New Roman font. Spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation will all be factored into the paper's grade. A detailed rubric can be found on the next page.

Midterm: There will be one midterm exam administered during the semester. This exam will consist of a small number of short answer prompts and will be related to readings and discussion from all previous class meetings. Make-up exams will only be given to

students who provide university approved excuses. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible.

Final: The final will be formatted similarly to the midterm and will only cover material since the midterm. Make-up finals will only be given to students who provide university approved excuses. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible.

Overall Grades: Grades are constructed to reflect the university standards posted at http://bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/acad/Grades.html, which are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

A- = 90-92	A = 93-100	
B- = 80-82	B = 83-86	B+ = 87-89
C- = 70-72	C = 73-76	C+ = 77-79
D = 60-69		
F = 0-59		

How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by using UGA's academic services. The Academic Resource Center offers tutoring in Study Strategies that can help with test preparation and in Writing. You can set an appointment at <http://tutor.uga.edu/arc/tutoring/> and the phone number is 706-542-7575. You also may check out opportunities at the Miller Learning Center (<http://mlc.uga.edu/>) and the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.english.uga.edu/>).

Participation Rubric

- A Student attends every class while consistently demonstrating that he or she has completed and understands the assigned readings by participating in class discussion meaningfully.
- B Student only attends most class meetings while completing all readings and actively participating in a meaningful way.
- C Student has perfect attendance but regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- D Student only attends most class meetings and regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- F Student misses classes regularly, does not complete assigned readings, does not engage in class discussion meaningfully, or is disruptive or disrespectful.

Writing Assignment Rubric

- A Student clearly and concisely summarizes each of the week's assigned readings. Additionally, he or she has discussed at length how the readings relate to one another as well as any relevant readings from previous weeks. The paper will be organized in a coherent manner, properly formatted, and will be free of any spelling and grammatical errors.
- B Student fails to meet one of the above criteria.
- C Student fails to meet multiple criteria listed above.
- D Student fails to meet any of the listed criteria.
- F Student fails to complete the assignment.

Course Schedule

Date	Reading
Week One: Introduction	
Jan. 6	Introduction and Syllabus
Jan. 8	<i>Controversies</i> Introduction p.1-18
Week Two: Rational Choice	
Jan. 13	Anthony Downs <i>An Economic Theory of Democracy</i>
Jan. 15	TBD
Week Three: Political Participation	
Jan. 20 & 22	<i>Controversies</i> p. 23-74
Week Four: Political Information	
Jan. 27 & 29	<i>Controversies</i> p. 75-140
Week Five: Economic Conditions	
Feb. 3 & 5	<i>Controversies</i> p. 167-218
Week Six: Partisanship	
Feb. 10 & 12	<i>Controversies</i> p. 266-318
Week Seven: Agenda Setting & Priming	
Feb. 17	"The Slant of News: How Editorial Endorsements Influence Campaign Coverage and Citizens' Views of Candidates."
Feb. 19	"Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments: Reassessing the Impact of News Discourse on Presidential Approval." "The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media."
Week Eight: Framing Effects	
Feb. 24	"Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies"
Feb. 26	"Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)Relevance of Framing Effects." "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?"
Week Nine: Exam Week	
Mar. 3	Review
Mar. 5	Midterm Exam

Course Schedule Continued

Date	Reading
	Week Ten: Spring Break
Mar. 10 & 12	No Class: Spring Break
	Week Eleven: The Electoral Connection
Mar. 17 & 19	David Mayhew <i>The Electoral Connection</i>
	Week Twelve: Primary Elections
Mar. 24 & 26	<i>Getting Primaried</i> "Ideological Representativeness of Presidential Primary Voters"
	Week Thirteen: Incumbency Advantage
Mar. 31 & Apr. 2	Jacobson Ch. 3 "House Reelections and Senate Defeats: The Role of the Challenger"
	Week Fourteen: Money in Elections
Apr. 7 & 9	Jacobson Ch. 4 "A Dynamic Analysis of the Role of War Chests in Campaign Strategy" "The Financial Incumbency Advantage: Causes and Consequences"
	Week Fifteen: Redistricting
Apr. 14	Jacobson Ch. 2 "Re-evaluating the Effects of Redistricting on Electoral Competition, 1972-2012" "The Gerrymanderers Are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It"
Apr. 16	TBD
	Week Sixteen: Polarization
Apr. 21	<i>Polarized America</i>
Apr. 23	Review
	Final Exam
Apr. 30	8:00-11:00am

All dates and assignments are subject to change.