

Political Science 227
Voting, Participation, and Social Differences
Fall 2009

Time: MWF; 9:00AM -9:45AM
Location: 311 2BSB
Professor Michael Fortner
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00PM

Contact Information:
1122 2BSB
(312) 996-5156
mfortner@uic.edu

Course Description

Voting is at the very heart of democratic theory and democracy practice. Without voting individuals cannot register their preferences and desires. Without voting power would not rest in the hands of the people. Despite its importance, voter turnout rates are not as robust as some would like. Furthermore, voting patterns differ across socioeconomic categories. This course attempts to explain why some individuals vote and others do not, why individuals vote they way to do, and why voting behavior differs across various socioeconomic groups.

This course begins by providing a broad historical review of voting patterns in the United States. Then the course reviews dominant theoretical and analytical approaches to political participation. Next, the course will examine the voting behavior of specific social groups, assessing the factors that influence their behavioral and partisan tendencies. Finally, we will employ the theories, concepts, and empirical evidence we will have covered throughout the semester to evaluate whether and why a “culture war” brews in American politics.

Course Organization and Requirements

The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The lectures will not only cover the themes addressed in assigned readings but will also provide a broad overview of those topics. I will reserve time at the end of each class for questions and brief discussions. Occasionally, entire classes will be discussion-based.

Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Midterm exam (20%)
- Final exam (25%)
- Paper (25%)
- Participation/presentations (30%)

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scoring scheme.

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F below 60

Exams

The midterm and final exams will feature a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer and essay questions. The midterm exam will cover topics addressed in course readings and class lectures from August 25 until September 24. The final exam is cumulative. It will encompass themes and topics addressed in course readings, class lectures, films and debates. I will hold a review session outside of class before each exam to make sure that you are as prepared as possible. Review sessions will be scheduled at a later date.

Final Paper

A final paper (7-9 pages) is due December 7. By the end of the semester, we will have examined the voting behavior of a variety of groups. Your final papers will assess the state of the literature on the voting behavior of a particular group. Drawing upon a variety of sources, these papers should answer the following questions: What are the main voting trends in this population? What are the partisan and ideological tendencies of these populations? What theory or theories of voting behavior best explain these observed patterns? These papers should include at least five journal articles and at least two books. You will receive a memo detailing the specifics of this assignment on October 19. A paper proposal is due in class on November 11. These proposals should identify your topic (i.e. the social category you will be studying), feature a preliminary question, and identify a list of sources.

Participation/presentations

Attendance is mandatory. A sign-in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. All students must come to class prepared, having completed all assigned readings prior to class. Students should be ready to respond questions and engage in serious discussion. We will also use our Blackboard site to continue class discussions or start new ones. Feel free to post questions about the readings or your initial thoughts. Our Blackboard site will provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their engagement with course materials and boost their participation grade. Your attendance/discussion grade represents 40% of your participation grade.

We will watch two films in November. No readings are assigned for those days, but a two-page memo on each film is due a couple of days after the class. Your grade on these memos (an average of the two) represents 20% of your participation grade.

After the midterm, each class will begin with student presentations. Individual students or groups of students will make substantive presentations on the topic of day. Drawing upon the assigned readings and a little outside research, these presentations will discuss the major voting trends within particular social categories. Students will have five minutes to describe the voting behavior of particular groups and offer causal explanations for those patterns. These presentations will be graded on the quality and creativity of the presentations as well as the strength of the arguments and evidence. Your grade on the presentation represents 20% of your participation grade.

On the last two class sessions, we will debate the "Culture Wars." Three weeks before the debate, I will hand out a memo detailing the debate question and offering sources that the debate teams should consult. Each team should submit a one-page memo to me at beginning of the

class. These memos should list the team's major arguments and key supporting evidence. Each team will receive a grade, and these grades will be based on the quality of the presentation, the strength and sophistication of the arguments, and the quality and appropriateness of the evidence. Your team's grade will also serve as your individual grade. Your grade on this debate represents 20% of your participation grade.

Late Work

There will be no make-exams offered. If you miss an exam, you receive a zero. I will make exceptions for medical emergencies and deaths in the family, both of which require documentation. If you know in advance that you absolutely have to miss an exam, notify me at least one week in advance and you will be able to take the test before the scheduled test date, but not after.

Your final paper is due December 3, and will be collected in class. Extensions will not be granted for this assignment unless I receive a notification of the medical and family emergencies noted above. In the absence of such notification, students will lose one letter grade (e.g. A to B, C to D) for each day that the assignment is late.

Academic Honesty

Students should follow the university's regulations regarding academic integrity as laid out in the Student Handbook. Students are strongly advised to read and familiarize themselves with these regulations. If students violate standards of academic honesty they will receive a failing grade in the class and may face expulsion from the University.

Required Texts

M. Margaret Conway. 2000. *Political Participation in the United States*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. **ISBN:** 0871877929

Earl Black and Merle Black. 2008. *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics*. New York: Simon & Schuster. **ISBN:** 0743262069

Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. **ISBN:** 0674006607

William H. Flanigan and Nancy H. Zingale. 2002. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* (10th Ed.) Washington, DC: CQ Press. **ISBN:** 1933116676

Thomas Frank. 2005. *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Holt Paperbacks. **ISBN:** 080507774X

David Park, Boris Shor, Joseph Bafumi, and Jeronimo Cortina. 2008. *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. **ISBN:** 069113927X

Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. **ISBN:** 0674942930

Recommended:

Earl Black and Merle Black. 2003. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University. **ISBN:** 0674012488

Morris P. Fiorina. 2006. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Longman. **ISBN:** 0321366061

Alexander Keyssar. 2009. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. New York: Basic Books. **ISBN:** 0465005020

Historical Context of Voting and Voting Rights

Aug 24 **Democracy and Voting**
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 1

Aug 26 **Democracy and Voting**
Conway, Chaps. 1, 8
Verba et al., Chap. 1

Aug 28 **Suffrage**
Conway, Chap. 5.
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 2

Recommended:

Alexander Keyssar. 2009. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. New York: Basic Books.

Aug 31 **Voting Rights Act**
Chandler Davidson. 1994. "The Recent Evolution of Voting Rights Law Affecting Racial and Language Minorities," in *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act 1965-1990*, eds. Chandler Davidson and Bernard Grofman. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (*On reserve*)

McCrary et al. 1994. "Alabama," in *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act 1965-1990*, eds. Chandler Davidson and Bernard Grofman. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (*On reserve*)

Recommended:

Alexander Keyssar. 2009. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. New York: Basic Books.

Sept 2 **Who votes? Who doesn't?**
Conway, Chap. 2
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 3

- Sept 4** **Who votes? Who doesn't?**
Verba et al., Chaps. 7-8
- Sept 7** **No Class**
- Sept 9** **How do regions vote?**
Flanigan and Zingale, Chaps. 5, 8

Theoretical and Analytical Approaches to Voting

- Sept 11** **Rationality and Voting**
Conway, Chap. 6
- Sept 14** **Psychology and Voting**
Conway, Chap. 3
- Sept 16** **Media and Information**
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 7
Conway, pgs. 89-97.
- Sept 18** **Party Structures**
Conway, Chap. 4
- Sept 21** **Party Structures**
Flanigan and Zingale, Chaps. 3-4
- Sept 23** **Civic Voluntarism Model**
Verba et al., Chaps. 9-10
- Sept 25** **Civic Voluntarism Model**
Verba et al., Chaps. 11-12
- Sept 28** **Civic Voluntarism Model**
Verba et al., Chaps. 13-14
- Sept 30** **Midterm**
- Oct 2** **Gender and Voting**
Burns et al., Chaps. 2, 4
- Oct 5** **Gender and Voting**
Burns et al., Chaps. 8-9
- Oct 7** **Gender and Voting**

Burns et al., Chaps. 10-11

- Oct 9** **African Americans and Voting**
Katherine Tate. 1993. *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Introduction, Chap. 4
(On reserve)
- Oct 12** **African Americans and Voting**
Dawson, Michael. 1993. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chaps 3.
(On reserve)
- Claudine Gay. 2004. "Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes," *The American Political Science Review*, 98(4): 547-562. (Available via JSTOR)
- Oct 14** **African Americans and Voting**
Claudine Gay. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation," *The American Political Science Review* 95(3): 589-602.
(Available via JSTOR)
- Oct 16** **Latinos and Voting**
Rodolfo Espino, ed. 2008. *Latino Politics: Identity, Mobilization, and Representation*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
Chaps. 1-3. (On reserve)
- Oct 19** **Latinos and Voting**
Robert A. Jackson. 2003. "Differential Influences on Latino Electoral Participation," *Political Behavior* 25(4): 339-366. (Available via JSTOR)
- Oct 21** **Latinos and Voting**
David L. Leal. 2002. "Political Participation by Latino Non-Citizens in the United States," *British Journal of Political Science*, 32(2): 353-370. (Available via JSTOR)
- Oct 23** **Asians and Voting**
Pei-te Lien. 2004. *The Politics of Asian Americans: Diversity and Community*. New York: Routledge. Chap. 4 (On reserve)
- Oct 26** **Asians and Voting**
Pei-te Lien. 2004. *The Politics of Asian Americans: Diversity and Community*. New York: Routledge. Chap. 5 (On reserve)
- Oct 28** **Immigrants and Voting**

S. Ramakrishnan. 2005. *Democracy in Immigrant America: Changing Demographics and Political Participation*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press. Chap. 4

Oct 30

Immigrants and Voting

S. Ramakrishnan. 2005. *Democracy in Immigrant America: Changing Demographics and Political Participation*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press. Chap. 5 (*On reserve*)

Culture Wars

Nov 2

Regional Voting Patterns

Black and Black, Chap. 2
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 5

Nov 4

Regional Voting Patterns

Black and Black, Chap. 3
Flanigan and Zingale, Chap. 6

Recommended:

Earl Black and Merle Black. 2003. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Nov 6

Regional Voting Patters

Black and Black, Chap. 4

Recommended:

Earl Black and Merle Black. 2003. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Nov 9

Regional Voting Patters

Black and Black Chap. 5

Nov 11

“Real America”

Frank 2005, Introduction, Chaps. 1-2

Nov 13

“Real America”

Frank 2005, Chaps 3-5

Nov 16

“Real America”

Frank 2005, Chaps. 6, 8-9

Nov 18

Film

“Friends of God: A Road Trip with Alexandra Pelosi”

The film memo is due Friday, November 20 in class.

Nov 20

Film

“Right America: Feeling Wronged - Some Voices from the Campaign Trail”

The film memo is due Monday, November 22 by 5:00pm.

Nov 23

Culture War?

Park et al. Chap. 1-3

Recommended:

Morris P. Fiorina. 2006. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Longman.

Nov 25

Culture War?

Park et al. Chap. 4-6

Recommended:

Morris P. Fiorina. 2006. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Longman.

Nov 27

No Class

Dec 2

Culture War?

Park et al. Chap. 7-9

Recommended:

Morris P. Fiorina. 2006. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Longman.

Dec 4

Debate-Part I

Question: Is there a culture war in American politics?

Dec 7

Debate-Part II

Question: Is there a culture war in American politics?

Paper Due

Final Exam