

Political Behavior

Political Science 206

Fall 2007

(T R: 11:00am-12:15pm at 1115-2 BSB)

Instructor: Dukhong Kim

Office Hours: T R: 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Contact Information

Email: dukhongk@uic.edu

office: 312-996-5156

Course Description

In this class we will cover three main areas of political behaviors: public opinion, non-voting political participation, and voting behaviors. Topics from these areas of study include how public opinion and political preferences are formed, what are the political, social psychological, and economical factors that affect attitudes and election choices, and what motivates citizens to participate in such political behaviors as voting, campaigning, protesting, or donating money.

Teaching format: The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. I will lecture based on the text book, covering the main points of the chapters and providing illustrations from the readings or current news sources. To encourage discussion, I will regularly ask questions of the class. Students are strongly encouraged to bring their own questions, comments, and ideas to participate in the discussion.

Evaluation: Grades will be determined as follows.

1. Midterm exam (20%)
2. Final exam (30%)
3. Paper (25%)
4. Participation/presentation (25%)

Exams: There will be two exams - midterm and final. Both exams will include short essay questions. The final will be cumulative, but will be weighted toward the topics covered after the midterm. The questions will be drawn from the text book and the readings.

Paper: Each student must write a short paper on the questions that are listed below after they read the relevant texts. The length of the paper should be within 10 pages double spaced with 12 font size and one-inch margins. The paper needs to address the question directly with coherent arguments and evidence to support your main thesis. The

due date of the essay is December 6. Students should submit a hard copy of the essay to the instructor by the end of the class on the due date. The paper topic will be discussed as class progresses.

Discussion and Presentation: I believe in the exchange of ideas, discussions, and debates as important tools for learning about American politics. Thus, it is important to engage in constructive debates in the class as well as to make good comments on the subjects and issues. It is necessary to read the text and the other books in advance to prepare and participate in the discussions. Each student (or a group of students) will have at least one chance to present topics that they choose for themselves. The format of the presentations is informal. We will organize the presentation schedule as the class progresses.

Students should turn off their cell phones before class, and should refrain from surfing the internet or responding to email or IM during class.

Outside speaker on Voting and National Student Issues Convention: These two events are scheduled to occur at noon on September 24 (Monday) and at 9 am on November 9 (Friday). The outside speaker will talk about voting choices in the coming elections. Major party workers or candidates will talk in the convention, which will give you chances to hear directly from the party activists. Since the two events are going to be held outside of our regular schedule, those students who participate in those events will get extra credit. To encourage you to participate in these events, the classes on September 25 and November 8 will be canceled. We will discuss the events in the classes after the events.

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

A range: 90-100%

B range: 80-89%

C range: 70-79%

D range: 60-69%

F range: below 60%

Note: If an emergency arises during the quarter that makes fulfillment of class requirements difficult, please discuss the situation with me as early as possible, so we can discuss how to resolve the problem and maintain your good standing. Also if you need special assistance, you need to inform me on the first day of class.

Academic honesty: Students should follow the University regulations regarding aca-

demic integrity which are 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 -i.e., by cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or academic interference- they will get a failing grade for the class and may face expulsion from the University.

Required Texts:

1. William H. Flanigan and Nancy H. Zingale. 2006. *Political behavior of the American electorate*. CQ Press
2. Herbert Asher. 2007. *Polling and the Public*. CQ Press.
3. Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rhode. 2007. *Change and Continuity in the 2004 and 2006 elections*. CQ Press.
4. Martin Wattenberg. 2002. *Where have all the voters gone?* Harvard University Press
5. Steven J. Rosenstone and Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*. MacMillan.
6. Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin 2007. *American Public Opinion*. Pearson Longman

Reading schedule¹

Week 1 (Aug. 28): Introduction to the Course and Public Opinion and Democracy
Erikson ch 1. and 6.

Week 2 (Sept. 4): Measuring Public Opinion
Reading assignment: Asher 1-6, 9; Erikson ch 2

Week 3 (Sept. 11): Political socialization and Media
Reading assignment: Erikson ch 5, Erikson ch 8 and Asher ch 6

Week 4 (Sept. 18): Sources of Public Opinion
Reading assignment: Erikson ch 3, and 7.

Week 5 (Sept 25): outside speaker, Framing
Reading assignment: Druckman and Nelson: “ Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens’

¹This schedule is subject to change according to the progress of the class.

Conversations Limit Elite Influence,” *American Journal of Political Science*. 47. 2003. 728-44.

Gershkoff and Kushner. “Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration’s Rhetoric.” *Perspectives on Politics*. Sept. 2005. 525-37.

Week 6 (Oct 2): Midterm review/Midterm

Week 7 (Oct 9): Racial attitudes and information and opinion

Reading assignment: Claudine. 2004. “Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes.” *American Political Science Review*. 98(Nov):547-62

Chong and Kim. 2006. “The Experiences and Effects of Economic Status among Racial and Ethnic Minorities.” *American Political Science Review*. 100. 335-51.

Chong, McClosky, and Zaller. 1983. Patterns of Support for Democratic and Capitalist Values.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 401-440.

Bartels. 2005. “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 3. 15-31.

Week 8 (Oct 16): Who votes?, Young voters

Reading assignment: Wattenberg ch 1-5. Abramson, Aldrich, and Rhode (AAR) ch 4.

Week 9 (Oct 23): Partisanship and Ideology:

Reading assignment: AAR ch 8., Flanigan and Zingale ch 3 and 4,

Week 10 (Oct 30): Campaign and the Media; Mobilization

Reading assignment: Wattenberg ch 7,

Gerber and Green. 2000. “The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review*. 653-663.

Rosenstone/Hansen ch 6.

Week 11 (Nov 6): Vote choices, ; National Student Issues Convention

Reading assignment: Flanigan and Zingale ch 6. AAR ch 6.

Week 12 (Nov 13): The 2004 Presidential elections and the congressional elections

Reading assignment: Abramson, Aldrich, and Rhode ch 2, 3,5, 9-11.

Week 13 (Nov 20): Non-voting participation

Reading assignment: Rosenstone/Hansen ch 1, 2

Week 14 (Nov 27): Participation in government
Reading assignment: Rosenstone/Hansen ch 3

Week 15 (Dec 4): How to improve U.S. turnout rates. final review
Reading assignment: Rosenstone/Hansen ch. 7, Wattenberg ch. 8

Dec 13: Final exam