

# Political Science 151: Voting and Elections

Fall 2006

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<http://www.polsci.ucsb.edu/faculty/glasgow/PS151.html>

Class meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00-1:50pm in Chem 1171.

## 1 Description

This course examines how politicians (and ultimately public policies) are selected by voters in elections. We begin with what could be called an “idealized” model of the election process, the spatial model of elections. We then examine the actual behavior of voters, the important role of electoral institutions in shaping election outcomes, and the strategies pursued by candidates for office. Links between the different theories and findings presented and the normative implications of what we discover will be discussed throughout the course.

## 2 Course Requirements

Grades will be based on four components:

- *Reading/Participation*: Readings are assigned for most class meetings. Even though you will not be formally graded on participation, you should do the readings before each class and participate actively during the lecture in order to get the most of the class.
- *A midterm examination (30%)*: The midterm will be held in class *Wednesday, November 8th*. The midterm will consist of several short-answer questions designed to test your understanding of the readings covered up to this point.
- *A final examination (35%)*: The final will be held on *Thursday, December 14th, 4-7pm* in our usual room. It will be comprehensive, though focusing more heavily on material covered since the midterm, and will consist of both short-answer questions and an essay question.
- *An 8-10 page research paper (35%)*: It will be due at the start of the final exam, *Thursday, December 14th, at 4pm*. A handout describing the paper assignment in greater detail is available on my website.

Regrades on assignments are possible if you believe there was an **error in grading**. If you feel your grade is mistaken, you can bring the paper or test to me along **with a 1-page typewritten memo** explaining where you feel the mistake in grading is, and I'll consider it. All the usual warnings about plagiarism and cheating apply (i.e., don't do it). Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic F in the class and disciplinary action by the Dean of Students. If you are having trouble with the class don't do anything desperate or dishonest — come see me for help.

### 3 Required Readings

There are no required textbooks for the class. All required readings for the course are in a reader available from the Alternative Copy Shop, located at 6556 Pardall Road in Isla Vista.

### 4 Class Schedule (Tentative)

**September 29:** Introduction, motivation, and administration.

- No readings.

**October 2, 4, and 6:** The Spatial Model of Elections.

- Frank, Thomas. *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, Introduction.
- Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Chapter 3.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Mark S. Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics*, pp. 104-115.

**October 9, 11, and 13:** Participation in Politics.

- Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, Chapter 2.
- Putnam, Robert D. "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America."
- Lijphart, Arend. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma."

**October 16, 18, and 20:** Social-Psychological Models of Voting.

- Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*, Chapter 6.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. *The American Voter*, Chapters 6 and 7.
- Judis, John B., and Ruy Teixeira. *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, Chapter 1.

**October 23 and 25:** Attitude Coherence and Stability.

- Converse, Philip E. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” (abridged version)
- Zaller, John. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, Chapter 2.
- Jacoby, Jeff. “The Ignorant American Voter.”

**October 25 and 27:** Limited Information and Voting.

- Popkin, Samuel L. “Information Shortcuts and the Reasoning Voter.”
- Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. “Voting Correctly.”
- Bartels, Larry M. “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind.”

**October 30 and November 1:** Retrospective Voting: The Theory

- Fiorina, Morris P. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, Chapters 1 and 10.

**November 3 and 6:** Retrospective Voting: The Evidence

- Lewis-Beck, Michael S. *Economics and Elections*, Chapters 1 and 3.
- Achen, Chris, and Larry M. Bartels. “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks.”

**November 8: Midterm Examination**

**November 10: No Class Meeting (Veteran’s Day)**

**November 13, 15, 17, and 20:** Electoral Institutions.

- Lijphart, Arend. *Patterns of Democracy*, Chapter 8.
- Blais, Andre. “The Debate over Electoral Systems.”
- Dunleavy, Patrick, and Helen Margetts. “Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform.”
- Lijphart, Arend. “Reforming the House: Three Moderately Radical Proposals.”
- Monmonier, Mark. *Bushmanders & Bullwinkles*, Chapter 1.
- Paulos, John A. “Lani ‘Quota Queen’ Guinier: Voting, Power, and Mathematics.”
- Alvarez, R. Michael, D.E. “Betsy” Sinclair, and Catherine H. Wilson. “Counting Ballots and the 2000 Election: What Went Wrong?”

**November 22 and 24:** No Class Meetings (Thanksgiving)

**November 27 and 29, December 1:** Candidates and the Incumbency Advantage.

- Jacobson, Gary C. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 3, pp. 21-40 and 46-50.
- Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina. *The Personal Vote*, Chapter 9.

**December 4 and 6:** Campaign Strategy and Finance.

- Jacobson, Gary C. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, Chapter 3, pp. 40-46.
- Feingold, Russell D. “Representative Democracy versus Corporate Democracy: How Soft Money Erodes the Principle of ‘One Person, One Vote’.”
- Doolittle, John. “The Case for Campaign Finance Reform.”
- Freedman, Paul, Michael Franz, and Kenneth Goldstein. “Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship.”

**December 8:** The Future of Democracy.

- Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. “Opinion and Policy: A Global View.”
- Dalton, Russell J. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices*, Chapter 9.