

VOTING BEHAVIOR AND ELECTIONS

30:157

T/Th; 9:30-10:45; 15 Schaeffer Hall

Professor David Redlawsk
Office Hours: TTH 3:45-5:00
Or by appointment

Department of Political Science
375 Schaeffer Hall
335-2352

Syllabus

Why do people vote? Why don't they vote? This course examines recent research into voting behavior and political participation. There has been much concern in the past few years that citizens are disengaging from the political process, as shown by the continuing decline in voter turnout at all levels of elections. This leads to serious questions of legitimacy. If fewer than half of all eligible citizens vote and a winning candidate receives 50% +1 of the vote, what can we say about mandates? About the power to govern? From a broader perspective, is the lack of voting diagnostic of a lack of all kinds of political participation? Are non-voters completely disengaged, or simply engaged in other kinds of political activities that they find more satisfying and more likely to affect their lives?

This course will examine these questions and more, within the context of American campaigns at all levels. We will look hard to learn why people are turned off of politics, if they are, and consider what kinds of changes might be necessary to rekindle the interest of voters, in order to ensure the legitimacy of elections in the future. In particular we will focus on participation -- or rather non-participation -- as well as on traditional and newer models of voting behavior designed to understand the antecedents and processes of voter choices. We'll conclude the semester by examining the election context of voting, and in particular the role played by the media. We'll also consider alternative election systems.

I have a site at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~c030111> where this syllabus is posted along with other information which might be of interest to the class. Any changes in the syllabus will be posted at the web site.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation

For this course to work well, all students must come to class prepared, having completed all assigned readings prior to class. I will generally provide an overview lecture for each area we study and then will expect class members to participate in discussion about the research we read. Your course participation grade will depend upon you completing the readings and participating in discussion.

Research Paper

Each student will prepare a research paper on a topic related to voting behavior and political participation. This research paper may be a literature review of relevant work in the field, may be the development of a student's own theory or approach to some topic, or may be creation of a research design to test one of the theories of elections and voting. Those students who are well-versed in statistics may choose to actually analyze national survey data that we will collect ourselves. The point here is that the papers may be wide-ranging; none of the above is meant to limit you, as long as your focus remains voting and participation.

You will have access to the data from the UI Hawkeye Poll if you wish to use it for your paper. Please let me know as part of your paper proposal (See below).

The final version of the paper will be due the last day of class. A proposal describing what you intend to do for your paper will be due as noted on the syllabus. This will include a list of sources (at least 5) that you expect to use for the paper, with a brief description of what you expect to find in those sources and at least four or five paragraphs describing the research question and why it is worth examining. I will read your proposal, assess it and return it with comments. A rough draft of your paper will be due approximately two-thirds of the way through the semester. This is expected to be a complete paper. I will assess your rough draft and provide you with comments. You will then rewrite the paper into a final version due ~~the last day of class.~~ **DUE ON MONDAY, MAY 12, by 4:00PM in my office.** I will be available at any time to discuss your paper proposal and progress with you personally.

UI Hawkeye Poll

You will participate in a survey research effort to collect data about the presidential primaries and voters. Because the Super Tuesday primaries come so early – February 5 – we will begin the course with this project. The UI Hawkeye Poll got a lot of press during fall semester when we were polling for the Iowa Caucuses. Now we are doing a national poll to understand the effects of Iowa and New Hampshire on the rest of the country. The Hawkeye Poll will be in the field from Feb 1-4 and 7-10.

The polling project will require that you be “human subjects” certified if you are not already. The certification process is on-line and takes about two hours or so. Details on the process will be provided in class on the first day. Calling will require that you commit 15 hours of time during the eight days of our calling – this time will replace our in-class and reading assignments during that week. You are expected to complete 25 surveys during this time. Calling will take place at the Social Science Research Center in 305 Calvin Hall. You will work in shifts of 4 hours at a time between Noon and 11:00 PM during weekday/Sunday calling days and 9:00AM and 9:00PM on Sunday. This class will do all of its calling between Feb 1 and Feb 4 inclusive.

Survey research is the key methodology for voting behavior research. Your involvement in this project will provide you with a clearer understanding of how survey data is collected and the challenges of doing so. You will also get to work with actual data about registered voters nationwide.

Exams

All students will take a Midterm and a Final exam.

Grading

Research Paper		30%
Initial Proposal	5%	
Rough Draft	10%	
Final Draft	15%	
Hawkeye Poll Participation		10%
Midterm Exam		20%
Final Exam		25%
Class Participation		15%

Feb 12 Reviewing the Hawkeye Poll – What did we learn about Survey Research?

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: DECLINING OR RESURGENT?

Feb 14 Who turns out to vote?

Read: Flanigan & Zingale, Ch 2.
Nardulli, et al. in DiClerico, pp. 130-147.
Lijphart in DiClerico, pp. 148-152.

NOTE: The proposal for your paper is due Feb 14

Feb 19 Who DOESN'T turn out to vote?

What are the non-voters like? Doers & Unplugged

Read: Doppelt & Shearer, Chs. 1 - 4

Feb 21 CLASS CANCELED

FEB 26 The rest of the non-voters: Irritables, Don't Knows, Alienateds, and Can't Shows

Read: Doppelt & Shearer, Chs. 5 through 9

FEB 28 Why don't people participate? The role of social capital.

Read: Putnam, Section I & II, with particular focus on Chs. 2, 3 & 9

MAR 4 What happened to social capital?

Read: Putnam, Section III

MAR 6 Why do we care about participation and social capital? & Some Responses

Read: Putnam, Section IV & V, with particular focus on Chs. 21, 23 & 24

Read: Michael Schudson, "What if Civic Life didn't Die?"
Theda Skocpol, "Unravelling From Above"

~~Claude S. Fisher, "Bowling Alone: What's the Score?" (Do not read)~~
(All three online, linked on our website)

Mar 11 Why is turnout low and does it even matter?

Read: Niemi and Weisberg, Ch. 2
Teixeira in DiClerico, pp 152-163.

Mar 13 MIDTERM EXAM

VOTING BEHAVIOR: WHY DO PEOPLE VOTE THE WAY THEY DO?

Mar 25 Partisanship and partisan change

Read: Flanigan and Zingale, Chs. 3, 4, & 5

- Mar 27** **Partisanship and voting: Re-alignment**
 Read: DiClerico, Ch. 6, pages 191-229 -- includes articles by Ladd, and
 Abramowitz & Saunders
 DiClerico, pages 178-180 -- article by Wolfinger
- Apr 1** **Changes in the Party System**
 Read: Niemi and Weisberg, Chs 21, 22, 23.
- NOTE: The rough draft of your paper is due April 1***
- Apr 3** **Public Opinion and Ideology**
 Read: Flanigan and Zingale, Ch. 6
 Niemi and Weisberg, Chs. 6 & 9
- Apr 8** **What Determines the Vote?**
 Read: Niemi and Weisberg, Chs. 11 & 12
 Flanigan and Zingale, Ch 8
- NOTE: The rough draft of your paper is due April 8***
- Apr 10** **Making sense of Politics with Limited Information**
 Read: Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*, Chs 1-4. (Online on ICON)
- Apr 15** **Do Shortcuts and Low Information Rationality work?**
 Read: Bartels, Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections,
American Journal of Political Science, 1996. available on the web at:
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28199602%2940%3C194%3AUVIEIP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-X>
- Lau & Redlawsk, Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Cognitive Heuristics
 in Political Decision Making. *American Journal of Political Science*,
 2001. available on the web at:
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28200110%2945%3A4%3C951%3AAADOCH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T>
- ELECTIONS: DO WE NEED A CHANGE IN OUR SYSTEM?**
- Apr 17** **Media and elections**
 Read: Flanigan and Zingale, Ch. 7.
 DiClerico, Ch 3
- Apr 22** **Parties, Elections, and Governance**
 Read: Dahl, in DiClerico, pp. 251-268.
 Pomper, in DiClerico, pp. 269-285.
- April 24** **Fixing Elections – Introduction**
 Read: Hill Chs 1-3
- April 29** **Fixing Elections – What’s wrong with the current system?**
 Read: Hill, Chs 4-7

- May 1** **Fixing Elections – Who is to blame?**
Read: Hill, Chs 8-11
- May 6** **Fixing Elections – So What can be Done?**
Read: Hill, Chs. 12-15, Epilogue
- May 8** **Fixing Elections – Reflections, What do WE think?**
Course Wrap Up – What do we know about voting and elections?

***NOTE: The final draft of your research paper is due TODAY (last day of class.)
MONDAY, MAY 12, 4:00pm IN MY OFFICE (375 SH).***

FINAL EXAM: THURS MAY 15, 9:45-11:45AM

Political Science Web Site Information

Please visit the Political Science Department's web site: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~polisci/>. It is frequently updated regarding new events and procedures in our department, changes in the Schedule of Courses, plus TA and faculty hours when available. You may also find current information on pre-advising, and registration. Our Vernon Van Dyke Computing Facility (Political Science ITC) is located in Room 21 Schaeffer Hall. Available hours are listed at our web site and also posted outside SH 21.

Using Email and this class:

Please feel free to email me if you have questions at any time during the semester at *david-redlawsk@uiowa.edu*. I will try to respond to email questions within 24 hours.

IMPORTANT: Do not submit your assignments to me via email. Assignments submitted via email will not be accepted. Part of each assignment is attendance and participation in class on the day the assignment is due. If you are unable to attend class on an assignment due date then a paper copy of the assignment (non-electronic) will be accepted if accompanied with a documented excuse for your absence.