

Department of Political Science  
POSC 143S: Elections and Political Participation

**Contact Information**

Course Instructor: Professor Jennifer Merolla

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 10:00 to 11:00, Thursdays 2:00 to 3:00

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Office hours: 12pm-2pm on Wednesday and by appointment

**Course Schedule**

Quarter: Spring 2019

Meeting day, time: TTh, 11:10-12:30

Course Location: Olmsted I Room 1212

**Course Description**

In this class, we look at why individuals participate in U.S. elections, the factors that influence their voting decisions, and the role of campaigns in this process. The first section will examine why some individuals choose to vote in U.S. elections, while others choose to stay home. We will also consider strategies to increase citizen engagement in elections. We then spend a section of the course looking at what factors influence the decision of for whom to vote, paying close attention to presidential elections. In the final section of the course, we look at the role of the campaign in influencing both turnout and voting decisions. We consider the rules of the game, campaign strategy, as well as campaign information.

The primary goal of the course is to help you gain an understanding of voting, campaigning, and elections in the U.S. political system. Another important goal is to learn how to apply what you learn to current and future elections. Finally, you will learn how to do basic analyses of election data.

**Background Preparations (Prerequisites)**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Understand campaigns, voting, and elections in the U.S.
2. Assess the factors that shape turnout and voting decisions.
3. Apply the readings to past, current, and future elections.
4. Develop a get out the vote strategy.
5. Conduct a basic analysis of election survey data.
6. Develop a campaign strategy for a candidate.
7. Further improve critical thinking and communication skills in class participation and assignments.
8. Improve writing skills.

## **Course Requirements & Assignments:**

### Short Quizzes: 10%

You are expected to attend class and do the readings prior to attending lecture. There will be four pop quizzes spread throughout the quarter to assess both attendance and knowledge of course readings. I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

### Attendance and Participation in Section: 10%

You are expected to attend and actively participate in section. Half of your section grade will consist of attendance, while the other half consists of active participation.

### Group Mobilization Project: 20%

You will work with a team of students (about five per group) to develop a mobilization project geared toward college students for the current presidential election. You will submit a two to three page write up of your strategy over email (to myself and the teaching assistant), and through Safe Assignment on April 25th. You will also present your strategy to the class. Details on the assignment will be posted on i-Learn and will be reviewed in lecture. Late assignments are subject to one-third grade decrement for each *day* they are late.

### Voting Paper: 20%

You will write a four to five page (double-spaced) paper in which you analyze some factors that may have influenced voting decisions in the 2016 presidential election. Details on the assignment will be posted on i-Learn. A typed hard-copy of the paper is due by the end of class on May 30<sup>th</sup>. An electronic copy must be simultaneously submitted through Safe Assignment as well. Late papers are subject to one-third grade decrement for each *day* they are late.

### Midterm and Final Exam (20% each):

Each exam will consist of identification, multiple choice, and short answer/essay questions based off of readings and lecture. The mid-term will focus on the first half of the course, while the final will focus on the second half. The final exam is NOT cumulative. The midterm will be in class, while the final exam will take place during the designated final exam time.

All course assignments are due on the date assigned. No extensions, make-up exams, or incompletes will be given without prior approval. All course requirements must be completed in order to pass this course.

## **Important Dates**

Mobilization Group Assignment Due: April 25<sup>th</sup>

Midterm exam: May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Voting Paper Due: Paper due May 30<sup>th</sup>

Final Exam: June 10<sup>th</sup>

## **Blackboard (iLearn)**

All assignments will be available on Blackboard (<http://ilearn.ucr.edu>). I will also post announcements. If you need help accessing Blackboard, consult the Computing and Communications website: [http://www.cnc.ucr.edu/index.php?content=blackboard\\_help](http://www.cnc.ucr.edu/index.php?content=blackboard_help)

### **Class Cancellation**

In the event a class is canceled (due to natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.

### **Office Hours**

I am available to meet with you in my office during office hours from 10:00 to 11:00 on Tuesdays or 2:00 to 3:00 on Thursdays. If you cannot make this time, we can schedule an appointment.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student has to miss a class, he or she should arrange to get notes from a fellow student.

### **Scientific and Professional Ethics**

The work you do in this course must be your own. Feel free to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others but, when you do, make it known whose ideas you are working with. You must explicitly acknowledge when your work builds on someone else's ideas, including ideas of classmates, professors, and authors you read. If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own, ask the course professor who will give you guidance.

**Plagiarism Policy: Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Students engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will both receive an 'F' in the course and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.**

### **Instructor Feedback and Communication**

The best way to get in touch with me is via email. If you do not hear from me in three business days, please re-send your message as it may have gone to spam.

### **Expectations and Logistics**

The class format is a lecture, but I will ask for your participation and we will break up into discussion groups from time to time. It is expected that you will have completed and thought about the reading before attending class. It is incumbent on every participant in the class (instructor and students alike) to maintain an environment conducive to learning. We should always remember that people bring differences with them into the classroom and that these differences should be respected. It is imperative that each of us maintain civility and professionalism when asking questions and making comments.

It is fine to take notes on a computer or tablet if the instructor is lecturing. It is expected that you are not using the computer for other activities during class (e.g. checking instagram, twitter, etc.). If students are using computers for things unrelated to class, then we will revisit the computer policy.

Please respect your fellow classmates—be on time, don't be disruptive, turn off your cell phones, and really listen to them when they participate.

Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should speak with me in the first few weeks of the course so we can make proper arrangements for course assignments.

### **Texts and Journal References**

The following books are available in the bookstore (one is also available as an e-book through the library).

Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. Green. 2015. *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Brookings Institution. (Also available as an e-book through the library or on reserve at the library).

Sides, John, Daron Shaw, Matt Grossman and Keena Lipsitz. 2015. *Campaigns & Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, and Choice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.

a. The ebook is available [here](#) and is \$30 for 180 days of access.

b. The textbook is also available in the library reserves.

Sides, John, Michael Tesler and Lynn Vavreck, L. 2018. *Identity crisis: The 2016 presidential campaign and the battle for the meaning of America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

a. This is also available as a kindle book or in the library reserves.

Journal articles and other book chapters are listed in the list of weekly readings section. Unless otherwise stated, journal articles can be accessed through the library website (I will also post some to iLearn). Chapters from other books will be available through i-Learn.

## Course Calendar

Students are expected to come to lecture and section having read the assigned readings for each date. The lecture topic dates are approximate. We may cover more or less material depending on the pace of the course.

### April 2nd: Organizational Meeting

#### April 4th: Background and Election Post-Mortem

*Campaigns & Elections*, Chapter 1 and 2

Five Key Lessons from Trump's Victory, John Sides:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/09/five-key-lessons-from-donald-trumps-surprising-victory/?utm\\_term=.2961b276d5ee](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/09/five-key-lessons-from-donald-trumps-surprising-victory/?utm_term=.2961b276d5ee)

These Five Charts Explain who Voted how in the 2018 Midterm Election, Brian Schaffner

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/10/these-5-charts-explain-who-voted-how-in-the-2018-midterm-election/?utm\\_term=.b2841adc71ec](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/10/these-5-charts-explain-who-voted-how-in-the-2018-midterm-election/?utm_term=.b2841adc71ec)

\*\*I am out of town, so I will deliver this lecture on April 2<sup>nd</sup>

## Section I: Citizen Participation in Elections

### April 9th: Introduction to Citizen Participation

*Campaigns & Elections*, Chapter 12

**Section:** Gerber and Green, Cp 1, start to discuss assignment and assign groups

### April 11th: Mobilization

Donald P. Green and Allan Gerber. 2015. *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Brookings Institution, Chapters 2-4, available as an e-book through the library.

### **April 16th: Mobilization**

Green and Gerber, Chapters 5-7

**Section:** Review Gerber and Green Cp. 8-10, discuss chapters, meet in groups

### **April 18th: Mobilization**

Green and Gerber, Chapters 11-12

Valenzuela, Ali, and Melissa Michelson. 2016. "Turnout, Status, and Identity: Mobilizing Latinos to Vote with Group Appeals." *American Political Science Review* 110 (4): 615-630.

### **April 23rd: Rational Choice and Resource Based Models of Turnout**

Downs, Anthony, Chapters 3, 11, 13 and 14. On iLearn

Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review* 89: 271-294.

**Section:** Discuss readings from Monday and the paper below:

Philpot, Tasha S., Daron Shaw, and Ernest McGowan. 2009. "Winning the Race: Black Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(5): 995-1022.

### **April 25th: Psychological Factors, Institutions, and Participation**

Campbell, Angus, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, Chapter 5. (on iLearn)

Merolla, Jennifer, Ivy C. Melgar, Juana Mora and Adrian D. Pantoja. 2013. "From Coverage to Action: The Immigration Debate and Its Effects on Participation." *Political Research Quarterly* 66(2): 322-335.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/01/how-donald-trump-helped-turn-teenage-girls-into-political-activists/?utm\\_term=.fb6bdc2d4355](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/01/how-donald-trump-helped-turn-teenage-girls-into-political-activists/?utm_term=.fb6bdc2d4355)

<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-we-know-about-voter-id-laws/>

### **Group Paper Due**

#### **Section II: General Models of Voting**

### **April 30th: Social Psychological Model and Partisanship**

Sides et al textbook, Chapter 13

Campbell, Angus, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chapter 6 (on iLearn)

<https://blog.oup.com/2017/01/partisanship-voting-presidential-election/>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/05/a-new-poll-shows-the-secret-truth-of-2018-not-much-has-changed-in-months/?utm\\_term=.7253a6bdc656](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/05/a-new-poll-shows-the-secret-truth-of-2018-not-much-has-changed-in-months/?utm_term=.7253a6bdc656)

\*note: this is from earlier in the quarter

**Section:** Midterm exam review

### **May 2nd: Midterm Exam**

### **May 7<sup>th</sup>: Sociodemographics, Groups and Voting**

Katherine Kramer Walsh, *The Politics of Resentment*, Chapter 1

Junn, Jane. 2017. "The Trump Majority: white womanhood and the making of female voters in the U.S." *Politics, Groups, & Identities* 5(2): 343-352.

**Section:** discuss article below and review readings from Tuesday

Funk, Carolyn L. 1999. "Bringing the candidate into models of candidate evaluation." *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 700-720.

### May 9<sup>th</sup>: Candidate Traits

Merolla, Jennifer L. and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister 2009. "Terrorist Threat, Leadership and the Vote: Evidence from Three Experiments." *Political Behavior* 31(4): 575-601.

Fridkin, Kim and Patrick Kenney. 2011. "The Role of Candidate Traits in Campaigns." *Journal of Politics* 73(1): 61-73.

### May 14<sup>th</sup>: Issue Voting

Hinich and Munger, Chapters 1 and 2 (on iLearn)

Petrocik, John R., William L. Benoit, and Glenn J. Hansen. 2003/2004. "Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952-2000." *Political Science Quarterly* 40: 599-626.

Gomez, Brad T. and J. Matthew Wilson. 2001. "Political Sophistication and Economic Voting in the American Electorate: A Theory of Heterogeneous Attribution." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 899-914.

<http://beta.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-schiller-trump-victory-economy-20161109-story.html>

**Section:** Introduction to SDA, read article below

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6 (on iLearn)

### May 16<sup>th</sup>: Issues of Bias Gender and Race

Hayes, Danny and Jennifer Lawless. 2015. "A Non-Gendered Lens: Media, Voters, and Candidates in Contemporary Congressional Elections." *Perspectives on Politics* 13: 95-118.

Schaffner, Brian F., Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta. 2018. "[Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism.](#)" *Political Science Quarterly*.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/02/28/what-differentiates-trump-supporters-from-other-republicans-ethnocentrism/?tid=a\\_inl](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/02/28/what-differentiates-trump-supporters-from-other-republicans-ethnocentrism/?tid=a_inl)

## Section III: Campaigns

### May 21st: Campaign Background

Sides et al textbook, Chapters 3-6

**Section:** Work more on SDA, review articles below relevant to prior week

Pasek, Josh, et al. 2009. "Determinants of Turnout and Candidate Choice in the 2008 Presidential Election: Illuminating the Impact of Racial Prejudice and other Considerations." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73: 943-994.

Bauer, Nichole. 2015. "Emotional, Sensitive and Unfit for Office? Gender Stereotype Activation and Support for Female Candidates." *Political Psychology* 36: 691-708.

**May 23rd: The Role of Interest Groups and the Media**

Sides et al textbook, Chapters 7-8

Guess, Nyhan, and Reifler. "Selective Exposure to Misinformation: Evidence from the Consumption of Fake News during the 2016 Presidential Election Campaign." On iLearn.

**May 28<sup>th</sup>: Presidential Nominating Campaigns and Electoral Strategies**

Sides et al textbook, Chapter 9

*The Party Decides*, Chapter 1

Shaw, Daron. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 (skim) and 3. Available as e-book through the library.

**Section:** Review any lingering SDA questions and review chapter below:

Shaw, Daron. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4. Available as e-book through the library

**May 30<sup>th</sup>: No Lecture, but turn in papers by at the end of class**

**June 4th: Further processing the 2016 Presidential Election**

*Identity Crisis*, Chapters 1-4

**Section:** Exam Review

**June 6<sup>th</sup>: Further processing the 2016 Presidential Election**

*Identity Crisis*, Chapters 5-8

**June 10<sup>th</sup>: Final Exam 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**