Course Outline

I. Introduction to Course
   A. The Political Climate, 2012
   B. A Big Political Year: the 2012 Presidential and Congressional Elections
   C. What we can learn by watching and analyzing the campaign and elections?
   D. The best Internet political sites to access.
   E. Political Campaign Strategies and Tactics
   F. Turning to the basics

II. Political Culture and Socialization
   A. Democratic beliefs and values
   B. Childhood socialization and politics
   C. Citizen roles and systems support
   D. Protest, violence, and America's political future
   E. Maintaining a stable democratic society
   F. Summary

III. Suffrage and Turnout
   A. Extensions of suffrage
   B. Restrictions on suffrage
   C. The eligible electorate
   D. Registration and voting turnout
   E. High and low stimulus elections
   F. Why citizens vote and why they don't
   G. Summary

IV. Making Our Elections Fair and Honest
   A. A Brief History of Election Corruption
   B. Yes, in America We Still Have Vote Fraud
   C. Yes, in America We Still Have Voter Suppression
   D. Yes, in America We Still Have Problems Counting The Votes
   F. Election Verification Exit Polls
   G. Summary

V. Partisanship
   A. Party Loyalty
   B. Party identification
   C. Patterns of electoral change
   D. Electoral realignments
   E. Party systems and realignments
F. Summary

VI. Partisans and Partisan Change
A. Partisan voting behavior
B. Independent voters
C. Third party movements
D. Partisan behavior today
E. Can a third party candidate win the presidency?
F. Summary

VII. Social Characteristics of Partisans and Independents
A. Social composition of partisan groups
B. Social group analysis
C. Social cross-pressures

VIII. Explaining and analyzing recent elections and looking toward 2012
A. Clinton's win in 1992
B. The Republican sweep of 1994
C. The 1996 presidential election
D. The 2000 presidential election
E. The 2002 and 2004 elections
F. The 2006 election
H. The 2008 presidential election: The election of America’s first black president: Does race now not matter?
I. The 2010 congressional elections: an overview: The Year of the Tea Party
J. The 2012 presidential election: The Decline of the Tea Party

IX. Public Opinion and Ideology
A. Public opinion formation
B. Public opinion on issues
C. Impact on elections
D. Analyzing public opinion in the context of specific issues
E. Ideology and its significance
F. Summary

X. Public Opinion Polling: Its Methods and its value
A. What are public opinion polls?
B. How are they conducted?
C. What controversies plague public opinion polling?
D. In Defense of Public Opinion Polling
E. Summary

XI. Political Communication and the Mass Media
A. Functions of opinions
B. Opinion consistency and dissonance
C. Political communication
D. Political campaigns
E. Campaign participation and its impact
F. The role of the mass media in campaigns
G. Impact of election campaigns
H. Campaign strategies and tactics: Revisiting class projects/start presentations
I. Political polling
J. Summary

XII. Vote Choice and Electoral Decisions
A. Candidate image
B. Packaging and selling candidates
C. Party images
D. Issues and their significance in campaigns
E. Determinants of vote choice
F. The meaning of an election victory
G. Summary

Required Readings


NOTE: Reading assignments will be made in class and "hand-out-readings" will be distributed or assigned on a timely basis. In this particular class, lectures will cover material, especially very current electoral behavior, which will supplement significantly what is in the texts, so class attendance is very important. The course outline reflects the general subject order, but it is not always possible to not "skip around" somewhat when trying to present complex material meaningfully, especially in an important presidential and congressional election year when breaking topics need to be discussed and placed in context. We will devote considerable attention to breaking news stories pertaining to electoral behavior. Also, presented materials may often seem to be presented in a redundant way in the book and in my lectures. This is due to the nature of the material where similar topics are presented with slightly different twists/applications. If you are sincerely interested in politics, this is a fascinating course because it is filled with tidbits on what makes American voters and politicians tick.

You will be required to do a class project/term paper on something related to electoral behavior. The paper should run about 10 pages and consist of not just description, but analysis. Toward the end of the semester students will present their findings in class. The paper/project requirements will be explained fully in class.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend class since lectures and class participation are important. Lectures will cover numerous topics that are not covered in the book and students will be expected to participate in class discussions related to these
topics. Students cannot miss more than six classes in the semester and get credit for the course. This does not mean that students should miss six classes, since this is a lot. Excused absences (e.g., illness, death in the family) are exempt.

**Grading Policy**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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My phone numbers: 977-3036 (office); 977-3035 (department office); 963-0451 (home office --- call here only when very important)

Office, McGannon Hall, Room 135

Office Hours: immediately before and after class hours and by appointment or any time you can find me in my office. I also can be reached by phone at the above numbers.

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The numerical equivalents of letter grades are:

- 94-100 = A
- 91-93 = A-
- 88-90 = B+
- 82-87 = B
- 80-81 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 65-69 = D
- Below 65 = F

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**Course Objectives**

Basically, I have a twofold objective in teaching this course. Firstly, I want students to learn a lot about the academic and practical field of electoral behavior. Secondly, I want students to develop a critical understanding of electoral behavior. That means I want students to learn to think in a conceptually scholarly way about campaigns, elections, and electoral behavior. That is, I want students to learn electoral behavior and then apply their knowledge in a critically insightful way to political campaigns and elections. I want them to be able to predict election outcomes based on their knowledge and insights into electoral behavior. This is the test of a good political analyst.

**Modes of Assessment and Skills/Knowledge Being Assessed**

Students will be assessed on their ability to learn and retain course materials, as well as on their ability to think critically about the subject matter, through a midterm and a final, a term paper, and their class participation. As the semester progresses students should
improve in their ability to apply what they have learned about electoral behavior and elections and in their ability to think critically about voting behavior and elections, allowing them to make sound judgments on likely election outcomes. Students will be evaluated on their ability to apply what they have learned about electoral behavior to actual elections in a sophisticated manner. In other words, students will assessed in how well they develop as electoral behavior/political analysts.

In-Class Activities

In-class activities will consist of standard lectures combined with a lot of class discussions on issues pertaining to campaigns, elections, and electoral behavior. Students will be expected to keep up with the reading assignments, especially the assigned current articles from the Internet and other articles so that they can participate meaningfully in class discussions. Participation will count 40 points or 10% of a student’s final grade in this course.

COURSE EVALUATION

During the last week of the semester, students will need to complete a course evaluation.

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed on-line at http://www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/ under “Quicklinks for Students” or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.
Students with Special Needs - Disability Services

Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course – as outlined in the syllabus – due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. Please telephone the office at 314-977-8885, or visit DuBourg Hall Room 36. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.