

Political Science 4212: Elections

Spring 2005

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Course website http://bdm.wustl.edu/classes05/ps4212_05.html

Course Description This course examines how politicians and policies are selected by citizens in democracies. The literatures exploring voter behavior and the rules and procedures that govern elections are perhaps the most theoretically and empirically sophisticated body of knowledge in the scientific study of politics. We will explore how differences in these institutional rules across a variety of democracies shape the types of choices voters make, the coalitions that legislators form, whose interests are represented, the career paths of politicians, and the policies that governments pursues. We will further investigate the dynamics of campaigns, campaign finance, and the politics underlying changes to electoral systems. The course, while having no formal prerequisites, will cover technical material. Statistical and game theoretic methods will be introduced and used throughout. A familiarity with high school level math is assumed.

Course Requirements The course has three requirements: participation, problem sets, and two exams.

- *Reading/Participation:* Articles or book chapters are assigned for each class meeting. You should do the readings prior to the class for which they are assigned and participate actively in class. All of the readings are available either from the universities electronic reserve, online at JSTOR, or website links are provided on the syllabus.

- *Problem Sets (15% each)*: Three problem sets will be assigned during the course. They will be due in class one week after they are assigned.
- *Midterm Exam (20%)*: There will be one midterm.
- *Final Exam (35%)*: The final will be comprehensive, covering the entire course, though focusing more heavily on the second half.

Course Materials Most of the readings are available online, from ERes, JSTOR, or another electronic journal archive to which Wash U subscribes. I use the following three markings:

- **JSTOR** for those available on JSTOR (www.jstor.org from a Wash U computer or from your home computer through the proxy server)
- **ERES** for those available on our course ERes page.
- **ELIB** for those available online through another electronic journal archive that Wash U subscribes to. To find these, find the journal on Wash U's library's webpage for full text electronic journals (<http://library.wustl.edu/fulltext/ej/>).

Any readings not marked with one of these three will either have a url next to it or can be found in one of the following two books:

1. Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
2. Jacobson, Gary. 2001. *The Politics of Congressional Elections, 5th edition*. (Longman).

Course Schedule

January 18 – Introduction

Foundational Issues

January 20 – What is the roll of voting in democracies?

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1762. *The Social Contract, Book 2*. Available online at <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.02.htm>

Shepsle, Kenneth and Mark Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics*. Chapter 7. **ERES**

Voter Behavior

January 25 – Party identification

Campbell, Angus, Phillip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. “The Impact and Development of Party Identification.” In *Classics of Voting Behavior*. **ERES**

Nie, Norman, Sidney Verba, and John Petrocik. “The Decline of Partisanship” In *Classics of Voting Behavior*. **ERES**

Fiorina, Morris. “Explorations of a political theory of party identification” in *Classics of Voting Behavior*. **ERES**.

January 27 – Sophistication and Mass Belief Systems

Converse, Phillip. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” **ERES**

Nie, Norman and Kristi Anderesen. 1974. “Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure.” *Journal of Politics* 36(3):540-591. **JSTOR**

Pierece, John C. 1970. “Party identification and the changing role of ideology in American politics.” *Midwest Journal of Political Science*. **JSTOR**

Participation

February 1 – Rational Turnout and Collective Action

⇒ Problem Set 1 distributed

Edlin, Aaron, Andrew Gelman, and Noah Kaplan. 2003. “Rational Voting and Voter Turnout.” **ERES**

Schlozman, Kay, Sidney Verba, and Henry Brady. 1995. “Participation’s Not a Paradox: The View from American Activists.” *British Journal of Political Science* 25(1):1-36. **JSTOR**

February 3 – Activism and Vanishing Voters

McDonald, Michael and Sam Popkin. 2001. “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter.” *American Political Science Review*. **ERES**

Green, Donald and Alan Gerber. “Getting Out the Youth Vote: Results from Randomized Field Experiments.” **ERES**.

Polling

February 8 – Understanding polls ⇒ Problem Set 1 due

Voss, D. Stephen, Andrew Gelman, and Gary King. 1995. “Pre-Election Survey Methodology: Details from Eight Polling Organizations, 1988 and 1992.” **ERES**

February 10 – Polls and information (in class experiment)

No reading

February 15 – Predicting Elections

Fair, Ray. 1996. “Econometrics and Presidential Elections.” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(3):89-102. <http://fairmodel.econ.yale.edu/rayfair/pdf/1996B200.PDF>

Incumbents

February 17 – Sources of the incumbency advantage

Fenno, Richard. 1977. “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration.” *American Political Science Review* 72(3):883-917. **JSTOR**

Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina. 1984. “The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament.” *American Political Science Review* 78(1):110-125. **JSTOR**

February 22 – Measuring the incumbency advantage

Levitt, Steven D. and Catherine D. Wolfram. 1997. “Decomposing the Sources of Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22:45-60. **JSTOR**

Ansolabehere, Stephen and James Snyder. 2000. “Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Estimate the Incumbency Advantage.” *American Journal of Political Science*. **JSTOR**.

Campaign Finance

February 24 – Measuring the effect of campaign spending

Jacobson, chapter 4.

Gerber, Alan. 1998. “Estimating the Effect of Campaign Spending on Senate Election Outcomes Using Instrumental Variables.” *American Political Science Review*. **JSTOR**

March 1 – Campaign finance reform

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Erik C. Snowberg and James Snyder. “Unrepresentative Information: The Case of Newspaper Reporting on Campaign Finance” Unpublished paper. http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/snyder/files/CampaignFinanceReporting_Final.pdf

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James Snyder and Michiko Ueda. “Do Firms Profit from Soft Money” Unpublished paper. http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/snyder/files/BCRA_sda2.pdf

Levitt, Steve. “Policy Watch: Congressional Campaign Finance Reform.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9(1):183-193. **JSTOR**

March 3 – Midterm

The Media

March 15 – Campaigns and the media

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. “Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?” *American Political Science Review* 88(4):829-838. **JSTOR**

Strömberg, David. Forthcoming. “Radio’s Impact on Public Spending.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Available at <http://www.iies.su.se/~stromber/Radio.pdf>

Rational electioneering

March 17 – The median voter theorem

Shepsle, Kenneth and Mark Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics*, Chapter 5. **ERES**

March 22 – Non-convergence and evidence

Romer, Thomas and Howard Rosenthal. 1979. “The Elusive Median Voter.” *Journal of Public Economics* 12. **ERES**

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James Snyder and Charles Stewart. 2001. “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1):136-159. **JSTOR**

March 24 – Elections and the economy

⇒ Problem Set 2 distributed

No reading

Elections and Representation

March 29 – Affecting or Electing Policy

Levitt, Steven D. 1996. “How Do Senators Voter? Disentangling the Role of Voter Preferences, Party Affiliation, and Senator Ideology.” *American Economic Review* 86:425—441. **JSTOR**

Lee, David S., Enrico Moretti, and Matthew J. Butler. 2004. “Do Voters Affect or Elect Policies: Evidence from the U.S. House.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3):807—860. **ELIB**

March 31 – Descriptive versus Substantive Representation ⇒ Problem Set 2 due

Pande, Rohini. 2003. “Can Mandated Political Representation Increase Policy Influence for Disadvantaged Minorities? Theory and Evidence from India.” *American Economic Review* 93(4):1132—1151. **ERES**

Washington, Ebonya. 2004. “Family Matters: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers’ Voting on Women’s Issues.” Yale University typescript. **ERES**

April 5—Race and Elections

Washington, Ebonya. “How Black Candidates Affect Voter Turnout and Candidate Positioning.” Yale University typescript.

http://bpp.wharton.upenn.edu/Acrobat/Washington_AEW_paper_2_25_04.pdf

April 7– Midwest Political Science Association Meetings, no class.

Comparative Electoral Systems

April 12 – Duverger’s law

Cox, chapter 2

Riker. 1982. “Duverger’s Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science.” *American Political Science Review*. **JSTOR**

April 14 – Election Timing

Smith, Alastair. “Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments.” Available at http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/smith/election_time_apsa2000.pdf.

April 19 – Electoral reform

⇒ Problem Set 3 distributed

Boix, Carles. 1999. “Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies.” *American Political Science Review*. **JSTOR**

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2000. “Strategic and Non-Policy Voting: A Coalitional Analysis of Israeli Electoral Reform.” *Comparative Politics* 33(1):63-80. **ERES**

April 21 – Who gets to vote

Lizzeri, Alessandro and Nicola Persico. 2004. “Why Did the Elites Extend the Suffrage? Democracy and the Scope of Government, With an Application to Britain’s ‘Age of Reform’” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(2):705—763. **ELIB**

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2000. “Why did the West Extend the Franchise? Democracy, Inequality, and Growth in Historical Perspective.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115(4):1167—1199. **ELIB**

April 26 – Corruption

⇒ Problem Set 3 due

Persson, Torsten, Guido Tabellini, and Francesco Trebbi. 2003. “Electoral Rules and Corruption.” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 1(4):958—989. **ELIB**

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 2001. “Political Institutions and Incentives to Govern Effectively.” *Journal of Democracy* 12:58—72. **ELIB**

April 28 – Wrap-up