

# Political Science 4212: Elections

## Spring 2007

**Professor** Ethan Bueno de Mesquita

**Office** Eliot 335

**Office Hours** Tuesday 2:00–3:00

**Office Phone** 935-5834

**Email** ebuenode@artsci.wustl.edu

**TA** Tony Madonna

**Office** Eliot 300 (Weidenbaum Center)

**Office Hours** Monday 9:00–11:00

**Email** ajmadonn@wustl.edu

**Course website** <http://bdm.wustl.edu/classes07/ps4212.07.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 pursue. 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](http://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, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. (Longman).

## Course Schedule

January 16 – Introduction

### Foundational Issues

January 18 – 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](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_02.htm)

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

### Voter Behavior

January 23 – 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 25 – 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

January 30 – Rational Turnout and Collective Action

⇒ Problem Set 1 distributed

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

Fowler, James. 2006. "Altruism and Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 68(3):674–683.  
[http://jhffowler.ucsd.edu/altruism\\_and\\_turnout.pdf](http://jhffowler.ucsd.edu/altruism_and_turnout.pdf)

February 1 – 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**

Ashworth, Scott and Joshua D. Clinton. Forthcoming. "Does Advertising Exposure Affect Turnout?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.  
[http://www.princeton.edu/~sashwort/AC\\_IV.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~sashwort/AC_IV.pdf)

February 6 – 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**.

## Forecasting

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 13 – 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 15 – 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**

Ashworth, Scott and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. "Electoral Selection, Challenger Quality, and the Incumbency Advantage." Washington University typescript.  
[http://bdm.wustl.edu/PDF/inc\\_adv.pdf](http://bdm.wustl.edu/PDF/inc_adv.pdf)

February 20 – 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**.

February 22 – Term Limits

Masket, Seth E. and Jeffrey B. Lewis. 2007. "A Return to Normalcy? Revisiting the Effects of Term Limits on Competitiveness and Spending in California Assembly Elections." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*. 7(1):20–38.  
<http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/lewis/pdf/MasketLewis.pdf>

Alt, James, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, and Shanna Rose. "Accountability, Selection, and Term Limits: Theory and Evidence from U.S. State Elections." Harvard University typescript.  
[http://bdm.wustl.edu/PDF/term\\_limits.pdf](http://bdm.wustl.edu/PDF/term_limits.pdf)

## Campaign Finance

February 27– 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 – Who Gives and Why?

Ansolabehere, Stephen, John de Figueiredo, and James Snyder. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1):105–130.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James Snyder and Michiko Ueda. 2004. "Did Firms Profit from Soft Money?" *Election Law Journal* 3(2):193–198.  
[http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/snyder/files/BCRA\\_sda2.pdf](http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/snyder/files/BCRA_sda2.pdf)

Gordon, Sanford, Catherine Hafer, and Dimitri Landa. "Consumption or Investment? On Motivations for Political Giving." NYU Typescript.  
<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/hafer/ghl6.2.pdf>

March 6 – Campaign Donations and Voter Welfare

Ashworth, Scott. Forthcoming. "The Economics of Campaign Finance." *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2e. [http://www.princeton.edu/~sashwort/campaign\\_survey\\_final.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~sashwort/campaign_survey_final.pdf)

Snyder, James M. Riccardo Puglisi, and Andrea Prat. 2005. "Is Private Campaign Finance a Good Thing? Estimates of the Potential Information Benefits." MIT working paper. [http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/download\\_pdf.php?id=1370](http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/download_pdf.php?id=1370)

### March 8 – Midterm

March 20 – No class

### Rational electioneering

March 22 – The median voter theorem

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

March 27 – Non-convergence and evidence

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

Ansola-behere, 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 29 – Elections and the economy

⇒ Problem Set 2 distributed

No reading

### Elections and Representation

April 3 – Affecting or Electing Policy

Levitt, Steven D. 1996. "How Do Senators Vote? 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**

Strömberg, David. 2004. "Radio's Impact on Public Spending." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 119(1). <http://www.iies.su.se/~stromber/Radio.pdf>

April 5 – 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 Legislators' Fathers' Voting on Women's Issues." Yale University typescript. **ERES**

April 10 – The "Culture Wars"

Karol, David and Edward Miguel. Forthcoming. "The Electoral Costs of War: Iraq Casualties and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election." *Journal of Politics*. [http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~emiguel/miguel\\_iraq.pdf](http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~emiguel/miguel_iraq.pdf)

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden, and James Snyder. “Purple America.” MIT typescript. [http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/download\\_pdf.php?id=1266](http://econ-www.mit.edu/faculty/download_pdf.php?id=1266)

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, Howard Rosenthal. “Political Participation and Income Inequality.” Princeton typescript. <http://www.princeton.edu/~nmccarty/ineqold.pdf>

## 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 17 – Election Timing

Smith, Alastair. “Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments.” Available at [http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/smith/election\\_time\\_apsa2000.pdf](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 24 – 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**

May 1 – Wrap-up