

**POLS 4520 – Electoral Behavior**  
**Class Time: MWF 10:10 – 11:00am**  
**Instructor: Jeffrey M. Glas, PhD**

**Contact Information:**

Office Hours: Open/By Appointment

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**I. Course Description**

Popular sovereignty...these two words form the foundation of republicanism and modern democratic governance. *We the People* are the sole source of political power in the United States and it is through elections that we choose who will use the powers of government. But who votes? How are they deciding who to vote for? How do the conduct of campaigns and elections in the US impact voter behaviors? These are the motivating questions behind the design of this course and their answers invariably have profound implications for American government. By the end of this course you will:

- (1.1) **Obtain broad exposure** to the political science literature on voter turnout and decision making, as well as the relationship between our political institutions and the People of the United States.
- (1.2) **Understand** the psychological, sociological, institutional, and economic forces behind voting and participatory behaviors.
- (1.3) **Think** in a more nuanced and scientific way about voting behavior and elections.
- (1.4) **Collect and Analyze** data on elections and voting behaviors.

**II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation**

**(2.1) Required Textbooks**

None! This class is will make use of the tremendous, publicly available resources made available to us by the public good we call scientific knowledge. Most of our class readings will be journal articles published in reputable peer-reviewed academic journals as well as book/book chapters made available electronically to you as students at the University of Georgia (Go Dawgs!).

## (2.2) Course Assignments

Learning is an active exercise. Students at all levels of learning and accomplishment benefit when they are actively engaged with course material. Your grade in this class will be assessed through class participation, three short papers, and three exams. Short papers will be due on exam day

September 21 <sup>st</sup>	Short Paper 1 Due	10%
	Exam 1	20%
October 21 <sup>st</sup>	Short Paper 2 Due	10%
	Exam 2	20%
December 9 <sup>th</sup>	Short Paper 3 Due	10%
	Exam 3	20%
Weekly	Participation	10%

## (2.3) Grading

All grades (including final grades) will be assigned following the system depicted below. You must earn a C or higher to pass this class. Grades will not be curved.

A	=	94-100	C+	=	77
A-	=	90	C	=	74
B+	=	87	C-	=	70
B	=	84	D	=	60 – 69
B-	=	80	F	≤	59

## III. Class Policies

### (3.1) Disability Disclosure Statement

Abled-ness should not impede your intellectual development. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about any accommodations you need in the classroom and for exams. We have some amazing resources for you here at UGA. For testing accommodations please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. For more information please check out the DRC's website ([www.uga.drc.edu](http://www.uga.drc.edu)). The DRC is located at 825 Lumpkin Street (Clark-Howell Hall) and can be contacted by phone at 706.542.8719.

### (3.2) Student Athletes

Representing our university in athletics places some unusual scheduling obligations on you. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about your schedule so we can make sure you are able to achieve in the classroom as well as on the field or in the arena.

### **(3.3) Absences**

John Lennon once said, “Life happens while you’re busy making other plans.” Attending class is critical for your success in this class. Participation is a significant portion of your grade and there is a significant amount of course content that we will cover in our class meetings and breakout sessions. Absences will be excused for legitimate reasons (and I am reasonable).

Please do not come to class if you are ill. The UGA Health Center ([www.uhs.uga.edu](http://www.uhs.uga.edu)) is located at 55 Carlton Street (across the street from Ramsey).

### **(3.4) Makeup Exams**

If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero (which means passing the class will be unlikely). If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. Make-up exams are only given to students with legitimate excuses. All make-up exams are administered by the Department of Political Science, but require my permission.

### **(3.5) Missed/Late Assignments**

Missed assignments are awarded a grade of zero. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of five points for each calendar day late.

### **(3.6) Cheating and Academic Misconduct**

Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an “F” in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, please examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

### **(3.7) Problems and Emergencies**

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam or coming to class, you should contact me (Dr. Glas) as soon as possible.

### **(3.8) Policy on Disruptive Behavior**

- 1) Turn communication devices to silent...or turn them off entirely.
- 2) Be polite during class discussion.

### **(3.9) Withdraw Policy**

Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a “WF”.

#### **IV. Course Schedule and Assignments<sup>1</sup>**

##### **Week 1 – August 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> – The Scientific Study of Electoral Behavior**

Syllabus

Class Handout – Study Sheet

##### **Week 2 – August 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> – Thinking Formally about Electoral Behavior**

Downs, A. (1957). “An economic theory of political action in a democracy.” *The Journal of political economy*, 135-150.

Riker, W. H., & Ordeshook, P. C. (1968). “A Theory of the Calculus of Voting.” *American political science review*, 62(01), 25-42.

Goodman, N., & Stokes, L. C. (2018). Reducing the cost of voting: an evaluation of internet voting’s effect on turnout. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-13.

Blais, A., & Achen, C. H. (2019). Civic duty and voter turnout. *Political Behavior*, 41(2), 473-497.

##### **Week 3 – August 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> – Electoral Systems and Voter Turnout**

Geys, B. (2006). “Explaining voter turnout: A review of aggregate-level research.” *Electoral studies*, 25(4), 637-663.

Grofman, B. (2016). Perspectives on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. *Annual review of political science*, 19, 523-540.

Charles R. Hunt, (2018). “When does redistricting matter? Changing conditions and their effects on voter turnout.” *Electoral Studies* Volume 54: 128-138

##### **Week 4 – September 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> – Institutional Barriers**

McDonald, M. P., & Popkin, S. L. (2001). The myth of the vanishing voter. *American Political Science Review*, 95(4), 963-974.

Brians, Craig, and Bernard Grofman. 2001. “Election Day Registration’s Effect on US Voter Turnout.” *Social Science Quarterly* 82: 170-83.

Richey, S. (2008). “Voting by mail: Turnout and institutional reform in Oregon.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(4), 902-915.

Alvarez, R. M., Bailey, D., & Katz, J. N. (2008). “The effect of voter identification laws on turnout.” *California Institute of Technology Social Science Working Paper*, (1267R).

\*\*\*No Class – Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> – Labor Day\*\*\*

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<sup>1</sup> The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

### **Week 5 – September 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> – Who Votes?**

Brians, C. L., & Grofman, B. (1999). When registration barriers fall, who votes?: An empirical test of a rational choice model. *Public Choice*, 99(1-2), 161-176.

Berinsky, A. J., Burns, N., & Traugott, M. W. (2001). “Who votes by mail?: A dynamic model of the individual-level consequences of voting-by-mail systems.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 65(2), 178-197.

Uggen, C., & Manza, J. (2002). Democratic contraction? Political consequences of felon disenfranchisement in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, 777-803.

Stewart III, C. (2013). Voter ID: Who has them; who shows them. *Okla. L. Rev.*, 66, 21.

### **Week 6 – September 16<sup>th</sup> – Exam 1**

\*\*\*Short Paper 1 Due and Exam 1\*\*\*

### **Week 7 – September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> – Working with Election Data**

\*\*\*See Associated Folder in eLC\*\*\*

### **Week 8 – September 30<sup>th</sup>, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> – Social Influences on Electoral Behavior**

Skocpol, T., Ganz, M., & Munson, Z. (2000). “A nation of organizers: The institutional origins of civic voluntarism in the United States.” *American Political Science Review*, 94(03), 527-546.

Cho, W. K. T., Gimpel, J. G., & Dyck, J. J. (2006). “Residential concentration, political socialization, and voter turnout.” *Journal of Politics*, 68(1), 156-167.

Cebula, Richard J. (2017). “Unemployment and voter turnout revisited: A brief note.” *Electoral Studies* 48: 149-152

\*\*\*Semester Midpoint\*\*\*

### **Week 9 - October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> – Media and Participation**

Prior, M. (2005). “News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 577-592.

Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., & Brady, H. E. (2010). “Weapon of the strong? Participatory inequality and the Internet.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(02), 487-509.

Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). “A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization.” *Nature*, 489(7415), 295.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). “Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation.” *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 17(3), 319-336.

## **Week 10 – October 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> – Campaign Effects [and the Lack Thereof]**

Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2018). The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, 112(1), 148-166.

Kruikemeier, S., Sezgin, M., & Boerman, S. C. (2016). Political microtargeting: Relationship between personalized advertising on facebook and voters' responses. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 19(6), 367-372.

Zuiderveen Borgesius, F., Möller, J., Kruikemeier, S., Ó Fathaigh, R., Irion, K., Dobber, T., ... & de Vreese, C. H. (2018). Online political microtargeting: Promises and threats for democracy. *Utrecht Law Review*, 14(1), 82-96.

Endres, K., & Kelly, K. J. (2018). Does microtargeting matter? Campaign contact strategies and young voters. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 28(1), 1-18.

## **Week 11 – October 21<sup>st</sup> – Exam 2**

\*\*\*Short Paper 2 Due and Exam 2\*\*\*

## **Week 12 – October 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> – Working with Voter Data**

\*\*\*See Associated Folder in eLC\*\*\*

\*\*\*Fall Break, November 1<sup>st</sup> – No Classes\*\*\*

## **Week 13 - November 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> – How Voters Decide**

Selection from:

Lau and Redlawsk (2006) How Voters Decide. (on eLC)

Abramowitz, A. I. (1989). "Viability, electability, and candidate choice in a presidential primary election: A test of competing models." *The Journal of Politics*, 51(04), 977-992.

Lewis-Beck, Michael and Mary Stagmeir. "[Economic Voting](#)." in Congleton et al (2019) Oxford Handbook of Public Choice. *Oxford University Press*

## **Week 14 – November 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> – Information Shortcuts**

Popkin, S. L. (1995). "Information shortcuts and the reasoning voter." *Information, participation and choice: An economic theory of democracy in perspective*, 17-35.

Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in California insurance reform elections. *American Political Science Review*, 88(1), 63-76.

Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2001). "Advantages and disadvantages of cognitive heuristics in political decision making." *American Journal of Political Science*, 951-971.

## **Week 15 – November 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> –\_Partisanship**

Selection from:

Green, D. P., Palmquist, B., & Schickler, E. (2004). *Partisan hearts and minds: Political parties and the social identities of voters*. Yale University Press.

Weinschenk, Aaron C. (2013). "Partisanship and Voting Behavior: An Update." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43(3): 607-617.

Abramowitz, A. I., & Webster, S. (2016). "The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of US elections in the 21st century." *Electoral Studies*, 41, 12-22.

## **Week 16 – November 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> – Rainy Day Readings & Thanksgiving Break**

Pacheco, J., & Fletcher, J. (2015). Incorporating health into studies of political behavior: Evidence for turnout and partisanship. *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(1), 104-116.

Ojeda, C. (2015). Depression and political participation. *Social Science Quarterly*, 96(5), 1226-1243.

Gomez, B. T., Hansford, T. G., & Krause, G. A. (2007). "The Republicans should pray for rain: Weather, turnout, and voting in US presidential elections." *The Journal of Politics*, 69(3), 649-663.

Fraga, B. L., & Hersh, E. (2010). "Voting costs and voter turnout in competitive elections." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*

\*\*\*No Class\*\*\*

## **Week 17 – December 2<sup>nd</sup> – Final Thoughts**

Powell, G. B. (1986). "American voter turnout in comparative perspective." *American Political Science Review*, 80(1), 17-43.

## **Week 18 – December 9<sup>th</sup> @ 8am – Exam 3**

\*\*\*Short Paper 3 Due and Exam 3\*\*\*