

POS 6259: Political Participation

Fall 2025 | 3 credits

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: Mondays Period 8 - 10 (3:00 PM - 6:00 PM)

Class location: Turlington 2346 or Anderson 216

Instructor(s):

Name: Professor Michael D. Martinez

Office Building/Number: Anderson 209

Phone: 352-273-2363

Email: martinez@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1-4 pm

Course Description

This seminar will review the scholarly literature on political participation and provide students with the theoretical background and empirical tools to write a research paper about the subject.

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Completion of or current enrollment in a graduate course in a social science Research Methods course is strongly recommended.

Course Materials

- Holbein, John B., and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2020. *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-10: 110872633X (Library E-book)
- Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now?: Demographics, Issues, Inequality and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9781400848621 (Library E-book)
- Green, Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber. 2023. *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. ISBN 978-0815740636 (Library E-book)
- Fraga, Bernard L. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-10: 1108465927 (Library E-book)

- Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press. (Library E-book)
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. (Library reserve)
- R is freely downloadable at <https://cloud.r-project.org/>
- SPSS is available for lease at <https://onthehub.com/spss/>
- Stata is available for lease at <https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/>

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives: In this course, we will

- review the scholarly literature on political participation in the United States and in some non-US settings.
- provide students with empirical tools to conduct basic secondary analysis of data which addresses the conditions that foster (or inhibit) political participation.

Student Learning Outcomes: A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Synthesize and critique the scholarly literature on political participation
- Produce preliminary empirical analyses of political participation using secondary data
- Apply the scholarly literature on political participation in political campaigns

III. Course Structure

This course is divided into a prologue, four modules, and an epilogue.

In the first week in each module, we will read a set of articles and chapters that explore different aspects of the main question. In the second week, we will discuss a contemporary book and how well it synthesizes, challenges, or advances the perspectives of the authors in the preceding week. In the third week, students will either (1) present some basic empirical analyses of secondary data showing the basic relationships discussed in the previous two weeks, or (2) write a synthetic essay of the module's readings. (See Module 1 essay or empirical analysis, below.)

Over the course of the four modules, PhD students are required to submit at least one synthetic essay and at least one empirical analysis. MA students are required to submit at least one synthetic essay. MA students are not required to submit an empirical analysis, but they have the option of doing so.

IV. Graded Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Graded Components

Attendance in seminars (5%): Students who can reasonably anticipate an absence must inform the instructor by email as soon as practical and prior to the anticipated absence. Absences from seminar may be excused with documentation of a University, military, or legal obligation, illness, or bereavement. Please request excused absences for religious observances as soon as foreseeable.

Participation in seminars (15%): The weekly meetings of the seminar should be viewed as opportunities for the exchange of ideas among scholars. You may, on occasion, be able to tell that I am the leader of the seminar, but its overall success depends on the informed participation of everyone. Each student is expected to have completed the readings for the week, and to have something to say about those readings when seminar begins. Participation will be evaluated based on listening (attentiveness), preparation for class discussion, quality of the contributions, and impact on the class.

Module 1 essay or empirical analysis (15%) [September 15]: Each student will either:

- Submit an essay (of about five pages) which synthesizes and critiques the readings addressed in the module. Essays should note the major theoretical questions addressed by the book and the articles, substantive or methodological innovations or controversies, and either
 - propose research questions that emanate from this set of readings, or
 - discuss how the ideas in the book and articles can be applied by government or political actors (including campaigns).
- OR
- Submit and present an empirical analysis of secondary data that focuses on the major questions addressed in the literature, and how the relationships might vary over time, across space, or across different groups. The submission will include a short paper (of about five pages, including tables and figures) which outlines the origin of the research question, the data, the findings, and a conclusion. Presentation slides should also be uploaded on the evening before seminar.

Module 2 essay or empirical analysis (15%) [October 6]

Module 3 essay or empirical analysis (15%) [October 27]

Module 4 essay or empirical analysis (15%) [November 17]

Presentation of final paper (5%) [December 1; Required for PhD students; option 1 for MA students]:

Students will present a research proposal that reviews and synthesizes literature on aspect of political participation, proposes an empirical research question, and presents preliminary research findings on that question. This may be a preliminary PhD qualifying paper or chapter of an MA thesis or PhD dissertation. Presentation slides are due November 30 at 6 pm.

Final paper (15%) [December 8, 6 pm; Required for PhD students; option 1 for MA students]: For PhD students, this paper will substantially reflect the ideas presented on December 1, but may also incorporate feedback received from the seminar on December 1. (Expected length: 15 to 20 pp, plus tables and references).

Alternative Final Paper (20%) [December 8, 6 pm; option 2 for MA students]: MA students may present a research proposal or an application of the literature on political participation to a political campaign. This may take the form of a letter addressed to a party leader or campaign professional that articulates how the literature on political participation can inform political campaign strategy or tactics. (Expected length: 12 to 15 pp, plus tables and references).

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale

Grade	Percent	Grade points		Grade	Percent	Grade points		Grade	Percent	Grade points
A	100-93.0	4.00		B-	82.9-80.0	2.67		D+	69.9-67.0	1.33
A-	92.9-90.0	3.67		C+	79.9-77.0	2.33		D	66.9-63.0	1.00
B+	89.9-87.0	3.33		C	76.9-73.0	2.00		D-	62.9-60.0	0.67
B	86.9-83.0	3.00		C-	72.9-70.0	1.67		E	59.9-0	0.00

Note that two grades below “B-” are grounds for dismissal from the UF Political Science MA and PhD programs.

IV. Calendar

Prologue: What is political participation?

August 25: Article and Chapter

Introduction to Datasets

McDonald, Michael P. and Samuel L. Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter." *American Political Science Review* 95 (4, December): 963-974.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Chapter 2.

Module 1: Does education matter?

In this module, we will review the empirical relationships between formal levels of education and political participation, arguments about whether that relationship is spurious, and which aspects of education are most important in promoting civic participation.

August 25: Review essay

Willeck, Claire, and Tali Mendelberg. 2022. "Education and Political Participation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 25: 89-110.

Articles and chapters

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Chapters 11-12.

Condon, Meghan. 2015. "Voice Lessons: Rethinking the Relationship between Education and Political Participation." *Political Behavior* 37: 819-43.

Mendelberg, Tali, Vittorio Mérola, Tanika Raychaudhuri, and Adam Thal. 2021. "When Poor Students Attend Rich Schools: Do Affluent Social Environments Increase or Decrease Participation?" *Perspectives on Politics* 19: 807-23.

Croke, Kevin, Guy Grossman, Horacio A. Larreguy, and John Marshall. 2016. "Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes." *American Political Science Review* 110: 579-600.

September 8: Book discussion

Holbein, John B., and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2019. *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

September 14, 6 pm: Work Due: Module 1 empirical analysis slides

September 15, 3 pm: Work Due: Module 1 essays

September 15: Controversy

Kam, Cindy D. and Carl L. Palmer. 2008. "Reconsidering the Effects of Education on Political Participation," *Journal of Politics* 70 (3, July): 612-631.

Berinsky, Adam J, and Gabriel S Lenz. 2011. "Education and Political Participation: Exploring the Causal Link." *Political Behavior* 33: 357-73.

Jensen, Andreas Videbæk. 2025. "Educating for Democracy? Going to College Increases Political Participation." *British Journal of Political Science* 55: e1.

Module 2: Do institutions matter?

In this module, we will review the literature on how institutions, registration laws, and recent “reforms” affect rates of participation.

September 22: Articles and Chapters

Wolfinger, Raymond E. and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 4.

Kostelka, Filip. and Blais, André, 2021. “The Generational and Institutional Sources of the Global Decline in Voter Turnout.” *World Politics*, 73(4): 629-667.

Machado, Fabiana, Scartascini, Carlos, and Tommasi, Mariano. 2011. “Political Institutions and Street Protests in Latin America.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55(3), 340-365.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States." *American Politics Research* 33: 471-91.

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Seth J. Hill. 2013. "Do Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy Influence Turnout? Results from a Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (3):537-551.

Engstrom, Erik J. 2012. "The Rise and Decline of Turnout in Congressional Elections: Electoral Institutions, Competition, and Strategic Mobilization." *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (2, April): 373–386.

Gray, Thomas R., and Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2025. “Estimating Disenfranchisement in US Elections, 1870–1970.” *Perspectives on Politics* 23(1): 55–75.

September 29: Book discussion

Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now?: Demographics, Issues, Inequality and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

October 5, 6 pm: Work Due: Module 2 empirical analysis slides

October 6, 3 pm: Work Due: Module 2 essays

October 6: Controversy

Brockington, David. 2004. "The Paradox of Proportional Representation: The Effect of Party Systems and Coalitions on Individuals' Electoral Participation." *Political Studies*, 52(3), 469-490.

Karp, Jeffrey A. and Susan A. Banducci. 2008. "Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(2): 311-34.

Module 3: Do campaigns matter?

In this module, we will explore whether campaigns are effective in mobilizing their supporters, how they do it, and whether social media are effective modes of mobilization.

October 13: Review Essay

Cox, Gary W. (2015). "Electoral rules, mobilization, and turnout." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18(1), 49-68.

Articles and Chapters

Holbrook, Thomas M., and Scott D. McClurg. 2005. "The Mobilization of Core Supporters: Campaigns, Turnout, and Electoral Composition in United States Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (4):689-703.

Gray, Mark and Miki Caul. 2000. "Declining voter turnout in advanced industrial democracies, 1950 to 1997 - The effects of declining group mobilization." *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (9, November): 1091-1122.

Valenzuela, A. A., and M. R. Michelson. 2016. "Turnout, Status, and Identity: Mobilizing Latinos to Vote with Group Appeals." *American Political Science Review* 110: 615-30.

Bond, R.M. et al. 2012. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization" *Nature* 489 (Issue 7415): 295-298.

Larson, Jennifer M., Jonathan Nagler, Jonathan Ronen, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2019. "Social Networks and Protest Participation: Evidence from 130 Million Twitter Users." *American Journal of Political Science* 63: 690-705.

Arceneaux, Kevin, & Nickerson, David W. 2009. "Who is mobilized to vote? A re-analysis of 11 field experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 1-16.

October 20: Book Discussion

Green, Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber. 2023. *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

October 26, 6 pm: Work Due: Module 3 empirical analysis slides

October 27, 3 pm: Work Due: Module 3 essays

October 27: Controversy

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829–38.

Finkel, Steven E., and John G. Geer. 1998. "A Spot Check: Casting Doubt on the Demobilizing Effect of Attack Advertising." *American Journal of Political Science* 42(2): 573–95.

Krupnikov, Yanna. 2011. "When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 797-813.

Module 4: Does race matter?

November 3: Articles and Chapters

Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84 (2, June): 377-393.

Banducci, Susan A., Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. 2004. "Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation." *Journal of Politics* 66 (2, May): 534-556.

Keele, Luke J., et al. 2017. "Black Candidates and Black Turnout: A Study of Viability in Louisiana Mayoral Elections." *Journal of Politics* 79: 780-91.

Anoll, Allison P. 2018. "What Makes a Good Neighbor? Race, Place, and Norms of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 112: 494-508.

Shaw, Todd C., Kirk A. Foster, and Barbara Harris Combs. 2019. "Race and Poverty Matters: Black and Latino Linked Fate, Neighborhood Effects, and Political Participation." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7: 663-72.

November 10: Book discussion

Fraga, Bernard L. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

November 16, 6 pm: Work Due: Module 4 empirical analysis slides

November 17, 3 pm: Work Due: Module 4 essays

November 17: Controversy

Brace, Kimball, Handley, Lisa, Niemi, Richard G., & Stanley, Harold W. 1995. "Minority Turnout and the Creation of Majority-Minority Districts." *American Politics Quarterly*, 23(2), 190-203.

Griffin, John D. and Keane, Michael. 2006. "Descriptive Representation and the Composition of African American Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 998-1012.

Keele, Luke J., and Ismail K. White. 2019. "African American Turnout and African American Candidates." *Political Science Research and Methods* 7(3): 431–49.

November 24: Thanksgiving Break

Epilogue: Does Participation Matter?

December 1: Articles

Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 91 (1, March): 1-14.

Hajnal, Zoltan and Jessica Trounstein. 2005. "Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics" *Journal of Politics* 67:2, 515-535.

Martinez, Michael D. and Jeff Gill. 2005. "The Effects of Turnout on Partisan Outcomes in U.S. Presidential Elections 1960-2000." *Journal of Politics* 67 (4, November): 1248-1274.

November 30, 6pm: Work due: Presentation slides

December 1 (seminar): Work due: student presentations

December 8, 6 pm: Final Papers due

V. University Policies and Resources

Italicized entries below are inserted by this course instructor.

Attendance policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Academic Honesty Policy

Students may not submit AI generated text (or edited versions of AI generated text) as their own work.

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which

these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. *In such a proceeding, the recording may be used as evidence either in support of or against the interests of the person making the recording.* All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Ben Smith (Professor and Chair, (bbsmith@ufl.edu, 352-392-0262). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call [352-392-1111](#) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call [352-733-0111](#) or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call [352-273-4450](#).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](#) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](#). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](#) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](#), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](#). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](#) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).