

POS 3204
Political Behavior
Fall 2019

Mr. Craig
209 Anderson Hall
Phone: 273-2377
Office Hours: Tu/Th 9:30-10:30,
We 2:00-3:00, and by appointment
sccraig@ufl.edu
www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sccraig/

Required Text:

Elizabeth A. Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, 14th ed. (CQ Press, 2018).

In addition, most of the assigned readings listed below (except for chapters in Theiss-Morse et al.) can be accessed either directly online or via e-learning/Canvas at <https://elearning.ufl.edu>.

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to several major themes relating to public opinion, voting behavior, and political participation – primarily, though not exclusively, in the United States. How much do ordinary citizens know about politics and government? How complete is their understanding of important issues, and to what extent do their preferences on those issues guide their voting choices? Why don't more Americans participate in politics, either at the polls or in other ways? Do low participation rates mean that the United States (or any other country) is less "democratic" than its citizens would like to believe? Why have citizens become increasingly mistrustful of their governmental leaders and institutions? These are just a few of the questions that we will examine over the next few months.

Grades in this course will be based on the following:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Midterm exam | 20 percent (Thursday, Oct 10, in class) |
| Attendance and participation | 20 percent |
| Periodic written assignments | 30 percent |
| Final exam | 30 percent (Thursday, Dec 12, 7:30 a.m.)* |

*The final will probably be an open-book, take-home exam (to be decided after discussion with the class). If so, it will be administered at the same day and time.

The nature and content of midterm and final exams will be discussed in class. No make-ups will be given except in the case of a fully documented medical or other emergency; anyone who fails to take either exam without such documentation will receive a score of zero. The attendance/participation component of your grade will be determined based on three criteria: (a) daily attendance sign-in (I will provide the sheet of paper, but you are responsible for ensuring that your name is on it); (b) whether or not you make *informed* (showing familiarity with assigned readings) contributions to class discussions; and (c) an occasional pop quiz covering those readings (questions will be simple and answers fairly obvious for anyone who has done the work).

The written assignments are based on topics identified in the course outline provided below. For each, students must find an Internet reading relevant to the topic and prepare a short (roughly 3 pages, double-spaced) essay briefly summarizing the content of that reading and relating it to themes covered in class. For the twelve topics listed, you should choose six on which to write essays (all of which will be graded for content and grammar and returned with comments). Don't lose track of where you stand because there will be no opportunities for extra credit at the end. *Note: Internet articles that appear on the syllabus or are discussed in class should not be selected for these assignments.*

TWO NOTES: First, a hard copy of both your essay and the Internet article on which it is based should be handed in during class on the day the essay is due. Second, the main purpose of these assignments is for you to see how ideas discussed in class play out in the real world – so do not base your essay on an academic source (journal article or book chapter) – or on a Pew, Gallup, or other poll report – without first getting approval of

the instructor. Material written by academics, or about academic research, for a lay audience is acceptable (the articles found on Monkey Cage being a good, but not the only, example).

Minus grades will (if appropriate) be assigned in this course. Information about grades and grading policies at UF can be found at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Students are bound by the University of Florida's Student Code of Conduct. Anyone who commits an act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on exams or committing plagiarism on the written essays, will suffer appropriate sanctions and be referred to university authorities for further action.

Any student with a handicap or special need should notify me (and coordinate with Student Services at 202 Peabody Hall) as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. Every effort will be made to accommodate your situation within the guidelines set forth by the university.

A class listserv has been established so that I can send you occasional announcements and keep you informed about any changes that might occur in the schedule. You are automatically on the list by virtue of being enrolled in this course. You must, however, be sure either to check the email in your gatorlink account on a regular basis, or to forward all gatorlink messages to an account that you use more frequently.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Aug 22): Introduction/Measuring Public Opinion

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Appendix: Survey Research Methods.

Nate Silver, "The Polls Are All Right," fivethirtyeight.com (5/30/18)

Grace Sparks, "Poll Explainer: The Way a Question Is Asked Can have a Major Effect on the Way It's Answered," cnn.com (3/22/19).

Philip Bump, "Five Things to Keep in Mind Whenever Trump Tweets about Polling," *Washington Post* (4/16/18).

Lucy Morgan, "From the Archives: Lawton Chiles' Camp Admits to 'Mystery' Calls against Jeb Bush Campaign," *Tampa Bay Times* (6/8/15).

Week 2 (Aug 26-Sep 3): Voter Competence (no class on Thursday, Aug 29)

Assigned Readings:

Barbara A. Bardes and Robert W. Oldendick, *Public Opinion: Measuring the American Mind*, 5th ed. Ch. 6.

Catherine Rampell, "Americans – Especially But Not Exclusively Trump Voters – Believe Crazy, Wrong Things," *Washington Post* (12/28/16).

Eric W. Dolan, "Study: People with Less Political Knowledge Think They Know a Lot about Politics," *PsyPost* (4/16/18).

Elizabeth Suhay, "Science Denial Is Bipartisan," *U.S. News and World Report* (4/8/15).

Reuben Hurst et al., "Americans Love to Hate Foreign Aid, But the Right Argument Makes Them Like It a Lot More," *Monkey Cage* (5/4/17).

Internet essay #1 due Sep 3 (topic: polling).

Week 3 (Sep 5-10): Partisanship

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 4.

Yascha Mounk, "Republicans Don't Understand Democrats – and Democrats Don't Understand Republicans," *The Atlantic* (6/23/19).

Larry Bartels, "Here's How Little Americans Have Learned about Donald Trump," *Monkey Cage* (2/21/18).

Christopher Weber et al., "How Authoritarianism Is Shaping American Politics (and It's Not Just about Trump)," *Monkey Cage* (5/10/17).

Benjamin Toff and Elizabeth Suhay, "How Worried Are You about an Impending Trade War? That Might Depend on What Your Fellow Party Members Think," *Monkey Cage* (7/12/18).

Lilliana Mason and Nathan Kalmoe, "Surprised by the Anger toward McCain? Party Loyalists Can Hate Apostates as Much as Opponents," *Monkey Cage* (5/16/18).

Internet essay #2 due Sep 10 (topic: voter competence).

Week 4 (Sep 12-17): Ideology

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 6.

Robert N. Lupton et al., "Republicans Are the Party of Ideological Inconsistency," *Monkey Cage* (10/2/17).

Ezra Klein, "For Elites, Politics Is Driven by Ideology. For Voters, It's Not," *Vox* (11/9/17).

Peter Dreier, "Most Americans Are Liberal, Even If They Don't Know It," *The American Prospect* (11/10/17).

Sasha Issenberg, "Born This Way: The New Weird Science of Hardwired Political Identity," *New York Magazine* (4/8/12).

Internet essay #3 due Sep 17 (topic: partisanship).

Week 5 (Sep 19-24): Political Learning: Where Do Our Opinions Come From?

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 7.

Shana Gadarian, "How Sensationalist TV Stories on Terrorism Make Americans More Hawkish," *Monkey Cage* (10/9/14).

Andrew Gelman, "How Do You Reduce Prejudice toward Transgender People? This New Study Explains," *Monkey Cage* (4/7/16).

Eitan D. Hersh, "Long-Term Effect of September 11 on the Political Behavior of Victims' Families and Neighbors," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (12/9/2013).

Harvard University, "Elite Cues or Social Cues? The Formation of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy," report by the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (2/14/17).

Internet essay #4 due Sep 24 (topic: ideology).

Week 6 (Sep 26-Oct 1): Social Groups/Conflict and Identity

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 5.

Erin C. Cassese et al., "How 'Hostile Sexism' Came to Shape Our Politics," *Monkey Cage* (10/2/18).

Andrew L. Whitehead et al., "Despite Porn Stars and Playboy Models, White Evangelicals Aren't Rejecting Trump. Here's Why," *Monkey Cage* (3/26/18).

David Byler, "Millennials Could Push American Politics to the Left – Or Totally Upend Them," *Washington Post* (5/22/19).

Nathaniel Rakich and Julia Wolfe, "White Voters without a College Degree Remained Staunchly Republican in 2018," *fivethirtyeight.com* (12/11/18).

Internet essay #5 due Oct 1 (topic: political learning).

Week 7 (Oct 3-8) Voting Behavior

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapters 2, 8.

Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels, "Democracy for Realists: Holding Up a Mirror to the Electorate," *Juncture* (Spring 2016).

John Sides, "Presidential Candidates Are Ideologically Extreme. And They Pretty Much Get Away with It," *Monkey Cage* (9/6/16).

Thomas Wood, "Racism Motivated Trump Voters More than Authoritarianism," *Monkey Cage* (4/17/17).

Sam Luks and Brian Schaffner, "New Polling Shows How Much Sexism Is Hurting the Democratic Women Running for President," *Monkey Cage* (7/11/19).

Lior Sheffer, "Trump Thinks a Mustache Disqualifies You from Office. So Do a Lot of Voters," *Monkey Cage* (12/27/16).

Internet essay #6 due Oct 8 (topic: social groups)

Week 8 (Oct 8-10): Midterm Review/Exam

Oct 8: finish lecture on voting behavior, exam review

Oct 10: midterm exam (in class)

Weeks 9-10 (Oct 14-18, 21-25): Polarization/Realignment

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, review Chapter 4.

Morris P. Fiorina, "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight"; also Alan I. Abramowitz (with a reply by Fiorina), "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics Anyway," *The American Interest* (March/April 2013).

Ronald Brownstein, "There Are Absolutely Two Americas. Sometimes in the Same State," *cnn.com* (7/20/18).

Alexander Theodoridis and James Martherus, "Trump Is Not the Only One Who Calls Opponents 'Animals.' Democrats and Republicans Do It to Each Other," *Monkey Cage* (5/21/18).

Lilliana Mason, "Why Are Americans So Angry This Election Season? Here's New Research That Helps Explain It," *Monkey Cage* (3/10/16).

Ross Butters and Christopher Hare, "Three-Fourths of Americans Regularly Talk Politics Only with Members of Their Own Political Tribe," *Monkey Cage* (5/1/17).

Internet essay #7 due Oct 15 (topic: voting behavior).

Note: Students may write only one essay on this topic, due Oct 31.

Special Discussion Topic: Be Careful What You Wish For?

Mark Wickham-Jones, "This 1950 Political Science Report Keeps Popping Up in the News. Here's the Story Behind It," *Monkey Cage* (7/24/18).

Lee Drutman, "Why America's Two-Party System Is on a Collision Course with Our Constitutional Democracy," *Vox* (3/26/18).

Yascha Mounk, "The Rise of McPolitics," *The New Yorker* (7/2/18).

David Shribman, "The Culprits Behind Today's Polarized Politics," *Real Clear Politics* (11/20/11).

Week 11 (Oct 28-Nov 1): Issue Attitudes, Home and Abroad

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, review Chapter 6.

Jack Citrin et al., "Trump Wants an Immigration System Overhaul. Do Americans Agree?" *Monkey Cage* (4/3/17).

Daniel Treisman, "Why the Poor Don't Vote to Soak the Rich," *Monkey Cage* (2/27/18).

Philip Bump, "As with Many Issues, Trump's Rhetoric on Climate Change is More Battering Ram than Belief," *Washington Post* (12/29/17).

Ron James et al., "No, Americans Don't Support Airstrikes that Kill Civilians, Even When They Target Terrorists," *Monkey Cage* (5/6/19).

Scott Clement, "Hard-Working Taxpayers Don't Support Big Cuts to Food Stamps, It Turns Out," *Washington Post* (5/25/17).

Internet essay #8 due Oct 31 (topic: polarization/realignment).

Week 12 (Nov 4-8): Turnout and Participation

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 3.

Pippa Norris et al., "Why Don't More Americans Vote? Maybe Because They Don't Trust U.S. Elections," *Monkey Cage* (12/26/16).

Zoltan L. Hajnal et al., "Do Voter Identification Laws Suppress Minority Voting? Yes. We Did the Research," *Monkey Cage* (2/15/17).

Joshua Tucker (channeling Victoria Shineman), "Incentivizing Participation Would Increase Voter Turnout and Political Information," *The Monkey Cage* (11/6/12).

Jenny Oser et al., "People Who Participate 'Beyond Voting' Are Different," *Monkey Cage* (12/28/14).

Internet essay #9 due Nov 7 (topic: issue attitudes).

Week 13 (Nov 11-15): Campaign Effects/Political Communication

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, review Chapter 2.

Jack Shafer, "In Praise of Negative Campaigning," *Politico Magazine* (7/15/15).

Marc Levitt, "The Heyday of Television Ads Is Over. Political Campaigns Ought to Act Like It," *Washington Post* (11/6/18).

Dylan Matthews (channeling Kalla-Broockman), "A Massive New Study Reviews the Evidence on Whether Campaigning Works. The Answer's Bleak," *Vox* (9/28/17).

John Sides, "Politicians Play the Race Card. This Is What Helps Neutralize It," *Monkey Cage* (1/8/16).

Joshua Kalla and David Brookman, "Persuading Voters Is Hard: That Doesn't Mean Campaigns Should Give Up," *Monkey Cage* (10/11/17).

Internet essay #10 due Nov 14 (topic: turnout/participation).

Week 14 (Nov 18-22): Representation and Linkage

Assigned Readings:

Theiss-Morse et al., *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Chapter 1.

Marc Hetherington and Thomas Rudolph, "Why Don't Americans Trust the Government? Because the Other Party Is in Power," *Monkey Cage* (1/30/14).

John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "A Surprising Number of Americans Dislike How Messy Democracy Is. They Like Trump," *Monkey Cage* (5/2/16).

Amy Erica Smith, "Do Americans Still Believe in Democracy?" *Monkey Cage* (4/9/16).

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, "Critics Argued with Our Analysis of U.S. Political Inequality. Here Are 5 Ways They're Wrong," *Monkey Cage* (5/23/16).

Internet essay #11 due Nov 21 (topic: campaign effects).

No class on Nov 26 or Nov 28 (Thanksgiving).

Dec 3: Final exam review, Internet essay #12 due (topic: representation and linkage).

Note: All Internet essays should represent original work by students (or, when referencing the work of others, be sure to provide proper citations). To ensure that this is the case, essays must be submitted to an online plagiarism service called turnitin.com. Here is how it works:

The first step is that you need to create a student profile:

1. go to www.turnitin.com
2. click on create user profile
3. fill in your personal email address
4. fill in your personal password
5. type of user: choose student
6. enter class ID (21703535) and password/enrollment key (trumpworld)
7. follow instructions

To log in after creating profile:

1. enter your personal email and password in the box on the upper right hand corner of the home page (www.turnitin.com)
2. click on POS 3204
3. from there you can submit your paper, just like adding an attachment to an email

Each essay has its own assignment folder. The procedure that you should follow is to (1) give a hard copy of their essay to me during class on the dates specified above, and (2) submit an electronic copy to turnitin.com at some point on the same day. Any assignment that is turned in late (without approval of the instructor) will be docked one letter grade per day. Any assignment that does **not** constitute original work by the author will be subject to penalties consistent with the UF Code of Student Conduct.

Some advice about the essays:

A student in this class once wrote me and asked for a "detailed" description of what I was looking for in the weekly essays. Although we had talked about it in class, the student was confused – and, assuming that she wasn't alone, I decided to send my answer to the class listserv. Here is an expanded version of that answer . . .

Start with what's on the syllabus: "The written assignments are based on topics identified in the course outline provided below. For each, students must find an Internet reading relevant to the topic and prepare a short (roughly 3 pages, double-spaced) essay briefly summarizing the content of that reading and relating it to themes covered in class."

That last part in italics is the crux of it. Do not spend too much time summarizing the article. (I'll read the hard copy you turn in.) Instead, give me a quick overview of whatever aspect of the article you plan to focus on (some articles only have one, others have several) -- and then discuss it with reference to (a) class lectures, (b) assigned readings, and/or (c) additional relevant readings that you may find on your own (this last one isn't a requirement, but in some cases going at least a little beyond the course material will help you to write a better essay). Remember: The way I teach this course is to use academic studies and other empirical data (from media and think-tank surveys, etc.) to help students gain a better understanding of the political environment in the United States. Your goal in these essays is to show me that you can make the connection.

Word of caution #1: Personal opinions – mine included – don't carry much weight here. Observations that are grounded in evidence and/or logic are much more important.

Word of caution #2: Any assertion, statement of fact, or interpretation that does not fall under the heading of "common knowledge" should be properly cited. This applies to the assigned readings, and to any other studies that you read about on your own or are discussed in class lectures.

Word of caution #3, repeating what I said above: A short summary of the article is ok, a long one not so much. Analyze, don't summarize.