

**Political Behavior: Political Science 428
California State University, Long Beach**

Spring 2001
SPA 211
Tuesday and Thursday
12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

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Office Hours: Thursday, 1:45-3:00 pm
and by appointment

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
- Margaret Mead*

Course Description

This course focuses on why people become active in politics and how they participate in it. First, this course will examine the psychological factors (beliefs and attitudes) which motivate individuals to participate in politics. Secondly, this course will examine the most common form of political activity — voting. In this section we will discuss why people vote and the factors which influence their choices at the polls. Third, we will examine non-voting forms of behavior such as volunteering for campaign work, participation in interest groups and mass movements, art and music as political activity, and financial contributions to campaigns, parties, and organizations. Lastly, this course will examine the actions and interactions of public officials and the press. All of these topics will be addressed with reference to their consequences on the American electoral and political systems. Classroom examples and discussion will incorporate contemporary issues of voting and participation, so students are advised to follow the news carefully. While this course will be primarily driven by an analysis of the political behavior of individuals in the United States, we will also explore topics dealing with participation in and among other nations as well.

Required Texts

Erikson, Robert S. and Kent L. Tedin. 2001. *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact*, 6th ed. New York: Longman. ISBN 0205296963. Paperback.
Flanigan, William H. and Nancy H. Zingale. 1998. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, 9th ed. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly. ISBN 1568023324. Paperback.
Orwell, George. 1946. *Animal Farm*. New American Library. ISBN 0451526341. Paperback.
Patterson, Thomas. 1994. *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage Books. ISBN 0679755101. Paperback.
Sinclair, Upton. 1906. *The Jungle*. New York: Bantam Classics. ISBN 0553212451. Paperback.

In addition, students are expected to follow politics on a daily basis in either the *New York Times* or the *Los Angeles Times*, and handouts distributed in class will be required reading as well.

Course Requirements

There are five requirements for the course:

1. Participation includes contributions to classroom discussion, completion of assignments and quizzes, as well as attendance (do not be tardy or leave class early). In order to participate well in class you must complete all assigned readings prior to coming to class. All of the readings for each week are to be completed before the first meeting that week (Tuesday). To get credit for attending class, you must show up within 10 minutes of the start of class. If you are not in class within the first 10 minutes, you will be marked absent for the day. You will also be marked absent if you leave class early. You will be permitted two unexcused absences. Beyond these first two absences, your participation grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for every time you are marked absent. For example, if you earned a participation grade of a B+ and had three unexcused absences, you will be penalized one-third of a letter grade, and your final participation would be a B. Similarly, if you had six unexcused absences and you had earned an A- for your participation grade, you would be penalized for four-thirds of a letter grade, meaning that you would end up with a C+ for your final participation grade. Any assignments for credit / no-credit that are missed (as well as missed quizzes) will also result in a one-third reduction of your final participation grade. Any assignments turned in after the first 10 minutes of class will not receive credit. Assignments may not be emailed.
2. Participants in this class are expected to keep a personal journal which addresses this course. For each journal, write a *full*, handwritten page (or a full typewritten page spaced at 1½ spacing) of your reflections (partial work will receive partial credit). Journals will be collected each Tuesday on a weekly basis beginning the second Tuesday of class. The subjects of your journal should include your emotional and intellectual reactions to things you observe outside of this course in terms of what you have learned through this course as well as your own responses to what you have learned. It is not important that you think and feel in any particular way, only that you do pay attention to what you are thinking and feeling, and that you become an active part in your own learning process. The emphasis of this class is on participatory education — you will get out of it what you put into it — rather than on a passive, consumer-student mentality.
Journal Writing Guidelines: Do not reiterate what happened in lecture or discussion. Since only the instructor will read the journals, there is no need to recap. Discuss what you have learned about yourself and others in the context of what you have learned in this course as a frame of reference. You may also give feedback on the readings and the exercises — points that you like, dislike, or feel could be improved. This is your chance to express yourself without being given any specific topic — enjoy this freedom, do not run away from it. Write whatever you are thinking and feeling, not what you think the instructor wants to hear. Be sure to keep your journal on subjects relating to the course, it is not a diary of your daily life. Examples might include speculation as to a friend's motivation for joining a political group, or trying to explain a current event in terms of what is learned in this class, or reflecting upon a point made in class or in the readings — did it seem correct in terms of what you know (or might it need further exploration)?
3. The third requirement of this course deals with political action. The best way to learn about something is to do it, and here is your chance. During this course you will be required to participate in a political action and to write a 2-3 page (typed) summary of your activities and what you learned; or you may write a 10 page paper on political action (details of the requirements for the 10 page paper will be distributed in class). In order to participate in a political action, you must first receive authorization from your instructor. Participation includes active involvement in the planning, coordination, and execution of a political action such as a protest or rally, not mere attendance. You may undertake your own political action or you may assist in a planned action. There are many local interest groups and political parties who are involved in ongoing political actions, and the instructor may provide you with some leads if you can not decide what to do (although this should be a last resort, and you should develop a pretty clear idea of what types of issues interest you). It is not necessary that

you undertake civil disobedience or break the law. However, you should be aware of what constitutes legal and illegal activity in the context of your particular action. Arrest is a real and constant possibility in most political actions, and you should consider preparations for this eventuality. Education is an expensive undertaking in terms of both time and resources. You will get out of this course and this assignment what you put into it.

4. The midterm exam will include short answer and essay questions. Make-up exams are rarely given and only when a university-authorized excuse is provided.
5. The Term Paper will constitute a typewritten 8-10 page analysis of a current issue in terms of analytical skills learned during the course. Further information on this requirement will be distributed in class.

Grading

Participation and Assignments	15%
Journals	15%
Political Action (or paper)	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Term Paper	30%

Course Outline

Week 1 (1/30, 3/1). Course Introduction

Reading: Erickson and Tedin ch. 1.

- ◆ Syllabus Distributed
- ◆ The Responsibilities of Democratic Citizenship
- ◆ Democracy and Participation
- ◆ Types of Political Behavior

Week 2 (2/6, 2/8). Democracy, Participation, and Public Opinion

Reading: Erickson and Tedin ch. 3.

Flanigan and Zingale Ch 1.

Assignment: Begin turning in weekly journals (each Tuesday)

- ◆ Public Opinion and Government
- ◆ Political Attention
- ◆ Ideology, Partisanship, and Opinion

Week 3 (2/13, 2/15). Public Opinion: Sources and Consequences

“Politics is the art of preventing people from taking part in affairs which properly concern them.” -Paul Valery

Reading: Erickson and Tedin chs. 5, 8, and 10.

In-Class Film: “America Rock” (Schoolhouse Rock)

- ◆ Political Socialization
- ◆ The Media and Public Opinion
- ◆ Democratic Values
- ◆ Opinion Leadership among Elites
- ◆ How Elected Officials Learn Public Opinion

Week 4 (2/20, 2/22). Voting: Turnout and Party Identification

“If voting could really change things, it would be illegal.” -unknown

Reading: Flanigan and Zingale chs. 2-4.

Handout: Turnout Rates in the US and other democracies

- ◆ Motivation for Voting
- ◆ Turnout in the US

- ◆ Registration as a Deterrent
- ◆ Third Party Candidates and Political Activation
- ◆ Party Identification: Stability over time
- ◆ Party Identification: Local Elections
- ◆ The Decline of American Political Parties

Week 5 (2/27, 3/1). Vote Choice

Reading: Flanigan and Zingale chs. 6 and 8.

Assignment: Topics for Term Papers and Political Action Projects due Tuesday (1 page)

- ◆ The Columbia (Sociological) Model of Voting
- ◆ The Michigan (Social-Psychological) Model of Voting
- ◆ Retrospective, Prospective and Sociotropic Voting
- ◆ The Spatial Model of Voting
- ◆ “Winning Issues” and Hotelling

Week 6 (2/6, 3/8). Candidate-Based Voting, Elections and Representation

Reading: Flanigan and Zingale ch. 5.

In-Class Film: “The Candidate”

- ◆ Emotional Model of Candidate Evaluation
- ◆ Winning Traits
- ◆ Campaigns in the TV age
- ◆ The Importance of Candidate Character
- ◆ Electoral Control of Representatives
- ◆ Voter Mandates
- ◆ Governing vs. Campaigning

Week 7 (3/13, 3/15). Midterm Exam on Tuesday

Thursday: Campaign and Organizational Finance

Reading: *Buckley v. Valeo*

Handout: Charles Lewis, “The Buying of the Presidency 2000”

Assignment: Outline for Term Paper Due Tuesday (1-2 pages)

- ◆ The Scope of Money in American Elections
- ◆ *Buckley v. Valeo*
- ◆ The Problem of Getting the Message Out
- ◆ Who Contributes?
- ◆ Hard and Soft Money

Week 8 (3/20, 3/22). Public Behavior: Interest Groups and Political Movements I

Interest Groups and Nonviolent Movements

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“He who has a why can endure any how.” -Friedrich Nietzsche

“If young people don’t turn on to politics, politics will turn on them.” -Ralph Nader

“He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help” -Abraham Lincoln

Reading: Erickson and Tedin ch. 11.

Handout: Michael Parenti, “Democracy for the Few”

Handout: Unger and Unger, “The New Right” from *The Times Were a Changin’*

Assignment: The Un-TV Experiment Due (Tuesday).

In-Class Film: “Berkeley in the 60s”

- ◆ Abolition Movement
- ◆ Women’s Movement - Suffrage, the ERA and Wage Inequality

- ◆ The Civil Rights Movement
- ◆ Consumer Protection Movement
- ◆ Amnesty International
- ◆ Vietnam and the Anti-War Movement
- ◆ Free-Speech Movement
- ◆ Young Americans for Freedom

**Week 9 (3/27, 3/29). Public Behavior: Interest Groups and Political Movements II
Confrontational Movements**

“It is not only for what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do.” -Molière

Reading: Erickson and Tedin ch. 7.

Assignment: Alternative Media Experiment Due (Tuesday).

In-Class Film: “All Power to the People”

- ◆ Black Panthers
- ◆ Brown Power Movement
- ◆ The Progressive Movement
- ◆ Labor Unions
- ◆ The Anarchist Movement
- ◆ Earth First!
- ◆ Greenpeace
- ◆ Right-wing Movements
- ◆ White Supremacist Movements
- ◆ The Ruckus Society and the Direct Action Network
- ◆ A Recent Chronology: Seattle, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles

**Week 10 (4/3, 4/5). Public Behavior: Interest Groups and Political Movements III
Violent Movements and Revolution**

Reading: Orwell, *Animal Farm*.

In-Class Film: “The Panama Deception”

- ◆ Revolution
- ◆ Separatist Movements
- ◆ Terrorism
- ◆ Abortion Clinic Bombings

(4/10, 4/12). Spring Break – No Class

Week 11 (4/17, 4/19). Public Behavior: Art and Music

Reading: Handout: Robbie Conal and Barbara Kruger

Assignment: Political Music Assignment

In-Class Music: Examples of Political Music in Folk, Blues, Pop, Rock and Rap.

- ◆ Guerilla Art
- ◆ The Political Significance of Music
- ◆ Art and Symbolism in Politics

Week 12 (4/24, 4/26). Public Behavior: Film, Documentaries and Muckraking

“You can't be a revolutionary today without a television set. Every guerrilla must know how to use the terrain of the culture that he is trying to destroy.” -Jerry Rubin

Reading: Sinclair, *The Jungle*

- ◆ Muckraking Journalism
- ◆ A History of Film and Politics
- ◆ Documentaries: Large vs. Small Production Houses

- ◆ PBS, the Discovery Channel and the History Channel
- ◆ Alternative Media

Week 13 (5/1, 5/3). The Press and Politicians

“Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.” -A. J. Liebling

Reading: Patterson chs. 1, 4, 5, and Postscript.

- ◆ Democratic Expectations of the Press
- ◆ The “Game” Frame of Election Coverage
- ◆ Press Issues vs. Candidate Issues
- ◆ Second-guessing Candidate Actions, Positions and Motivations
- ◆ The Adversarial Relationship
- ◆ Spin Doctors and Media Events

Week 14 (5/8, 5/10). The Future of Political Behavior and Elections I

Reading: Erickson and Tedin, ch. 12.

Flanigan and Zingale, ch. 7.

Patterson, ch. 6.

Assignment: Political Action Project Summary Due Thursday

- ◆ The Psychopathology of Political Ambition
- ◆ New Trends in Campaigning
- ◆ Campaign and Election Structural Reform
- ◆ Campaign Finance Reform
- ◆ Alternative Representational Systems
- ◆ Term Limits

Week 15 (5/15, 5/17). The Future of Political Behavior and Elections II

“Mothers all want their sons to grow up to be president but they don’t want them to become politicians in the process.” -John F. Kennedy

*“When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President. I’m beginning to believe it.”
-Clarence Darrow*

Reading: Handout: Putnam, “Bowling Alone”

Handout: Epstein, “Not Your Parents’ Protest”

- ◆ New Political Forces
- ◆ Generational Replacement
- ◆ Political Ambition
- ◆ Social Capital
- ◆ The Internet

Term papers due Thursday, May 24, between 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm in my office (SPA 344)