

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

POLITICAL SCIENCE 201

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

FALL QUARTER 2006

Caldwell Lab, Room 277 -- Monday/Wednesday: 11:30-1:18 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Barbara B. Lewis

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Phone: 292-0763

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday: 1:30p.m.-2:30 p.m. or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course explores the fundamentals of political behavior and public opinion. The first part of the course analyzes political behavior, e.g., voting and other types of political participation. We begin by looking at what political participation is and how people learn about politics. We continue our examination by studying several factors that influence the level and nature of political participation in the United States.

The second aspect of the course addresses public opinion and its political impact. We determine what public opinion is, how it is measured and how individual opinions are formed. We also discuss the role of the mass media and public opinion. We then explore the many ways in which public opinion influences decision-making in our representative form of government.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will have a fundamental understanding of political behavior and public opinion—along with a better appreciation of their importance in determining the quality and future of our representative form of government.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

Political Participation in the United States, 3rd ed, 2000, M. Conway, CQ Press
American Public Opinion, 7th ed, 2005, Robert Erickson and Kent Tedin,

Pearson/Longman

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation (Pop Quizzes and Class Discussion)		10%
Midterm Exam	October 23	30%
Gubernatorial Project	Beginning October 2	25%
Final Midterm	November 29, 11:30-1:18 pm	35%

GRADING SCALE:

A	94% and above
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66
E	59% and below

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend each class session and to be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day, as well as current political events. You can read about current events by accessing: www.realclearpolitics.com.

POP QUIZZES: Pop quizzes may be given periodically. They will consist of two parts: A question that covers the subject matter/current events discussed during the previous class session and a question that covers the assigned reading material or current political events for the day of the pop quiz. The level of everyone's class attendance and participation will determine the number of quizzes your instructor pops.

POLICY ON MISSED POP QUIZZES: Students missing a pop quiz will receive a

grade of zero. There will be no make-up pop quizzes and all grading/participation decisions are at my sole discretion.

EXAMS: There will be a midterm exam and a final midterm consisting of essay questions and term definitions. Questions for both will focus on class lectures, class discussion and readings.

POLICY ON MISSED EXAMS: Students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. True emergency situations where appropriate documentation is provided are the only exceptions. If you must miss an exam (such as in cases of serious illness or family/personal emergencies), contact me as soon as possible PRIOR to the scheduled test time. You must promptly contact me upon your return to set the date, time and location of the make-up exam. Make-up exams are given at my sole discretion.

GUBERNATORIAL PROJECT: The Gubernatorial Project is a very interesting assignment which will center on the 2006 Ohio Governor's race. You will be asked to submit a series of mini-papers and to do one class presentation based on your findings. A detailed explanation will be given in the October 2 class.

POLICY ON LATE PAPERS: Late papers will be reduced by one-third of a grade for each day they are late (including weekend days). There will be no exceptions to this rule unless there is an EXTREME emergency, promptly supported by appropriate documentation. This rule will be applied at my sole discretion.

POLICY ON CELLULAR PHONES, PAGERS ETC.: Out of respect for others, all cellular phones, pagers, etc. are to be TURNED OFF and PUT AWAY before entering the classroom.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All of the work you do in this course (including the assigned paper) is expected to be entirely your own. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cases of academic misconduct will be promptly reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy. Penalties can include failing this class and/or expulsion from the university.

For further information about academic integrity issues, please visit <http://www.osu.edu/offices/oa/procedures/1.0.html>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have any condition, such as a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, or will require extra time for quizzes or exams, please notify both the instructor and Wayne DeYoung in the Political Science Department (292-2880) as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

—POLITICAL PARTICIPATION—

WEEK 1

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|--------------|---|
| September 20 | Course Introduction |
| September 25 | What Is Political Participation?
Conway, Preface and Chapter 1 |

WEEK 2

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| September 27 | Why Do Some People Participate and Not Others?
Conway, Chapter 2 |
| October 2 | Political Socialization and Learning
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 5 |

WEEK 3

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| October 4 | The Psychology of Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 3 |
| | Your Political Socialization
In-class Exercise |
| October 9 | The Political Environment and Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 4 |

WEEK 4

- October 11 The Law and Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 5
- October 16 Explanations of Patterns of Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 7

WEEK 5

- October 18 Does Political Participation Make a Difference?
Conway, Chapter 8
- October 23 **MIDTERM EXAM**

—PUBLIC OPINION—

WEEK 6

- October 25 What Is Public Opinion?
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 1
- October 30 Polling: How to Accurately Measure Public Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 2

WEEK 7

- November 1 Microlevel Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 3, p. 66-83
- Macrolevel Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 4
- Public Opinion and Democratic Stability
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 6, pp. 162-169
- November 6 Group Differences in Public Opinion
Erickson and Tedin, Chapter 7

WEEK 8

November 8 The Mass Media and Public Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 8

November 13 Elections
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 9

WEEK 9

November 15 The Public and Its Elected Leaders
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 10

Public Opinion and The Performance
of Democracy
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 11

November 20 Project Reports

WEEK 10

November 22 Project Reports

November 27 Wrap up and Final Review

November 29 **FINAL MIDTERM EXAM**
(Regular Class Time)