

Political Science 574  
**Elections and Voting**  
Spring, 2002

Prof. Weisberg  
2022 Derby

Office Hours: TR 1-1:20; W 3:30-4:30

Teaching Assistant: Justin Taylor

**Course Description.** This is a course on American elections, voting behavior, and political participation. The emphasis will be on voting in U.S. presidential elections, as they are now understood through the use of survey research. Particular attention will be paid to the 2000 election. Other topics include political participation including voting turnout; the role of parties, issues, and candidates in vote decisions; congressional elections; and party realignment.

**Exams.** There will be a midterm exam (tentatively scheduled for May 7) and a final exam (at the officially posted University time: Thursday June 13 at 1:30), each worth 30% of the course grade. It will consist of a mixture of objective and short essay questions. Lectures and discussion are designed to complement the readings, so careful reading of the texts and regular class attendance are both important. Failure to take exams at the scheduled times, unless excused in advance by the instructor, will result in an E for that exam.

**Class Attendance.** Class attendance and responsible participation will count for 10% of the course grade.

**Term Paper.** The term paper will count for 30% of the course grade. The research paper is to be an original term paper of 8 to 12 pages in length (double-spaced, with 12 point font and normal 1" or 1.25" margins). The paper is due by 5 p.m. on May 30. This paper should describe and analyze voting in the 2000 election in one American state other than Ohio and Florida. Focus on understanding the November 2000 election results in the state. Students are expected to become knowledgeable about the politics of that state and to write a research paper demonstrating their expertise. Students are responsible for doing some preliminary research to make sure that there is sufficient material available as a basis for research on that state. Information about voting in that state should be obtained from reference sources and the Internet. State books can be consulted, as can be Ujifusa, *The Almanac of American Politics*. Local newspapers available on the Web can also be helpful. Look especially for past voting trends and social-demographics for the state as well as polls that provide information on party identification in the state. Be sure to cite sources that you use in preparing your paper. Students who have selected the same state can work together in doing their research, but their papers must be entirely their own work (see the Academic Honesty note below). Papers on the same state will be compared to make sure that they were written independently of one another. **Hard copies of the paper must be turned in to the course instructor or TA; no electronic copies will be accepted.**

**Paperback texts** (all paperback):

Paul Abramson, John Aldrich, & David Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*

Margaret Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, 3rd ed.

William Crotty, ed. *America's Choice 2000*, Westview Press

**Arrangements for Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

**Academic Honesty.** All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas, including material from web sites, without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct and handled according to University policy.

## TOPIC SCHEDULE

### I. Introduction

#### **April 2: Studying Voting**

The methods of studying voting will be discussed, with emphasis on how to evaluate survey evidence.

#### **April 4: Models of Voting**

Several alternative explanatory models of voting will be explained, with special emphasis on a "social-psychological model" developed in *The American Voter* and a "spatial model" proposed by Anthony Downs.

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, pp. 1-11

### II.A. Determinants of Voting: Long-Term Factors

#### **April 9: Party Identification and Political Independence**

To what extent does partisanship affect voting? Do most people think about politics in partisan terms? How knowledgeable are political independents about politics?

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, pp. 168-78

#### **April 11: Social Groups and Voting**

The socio-demographics of voting will be examined with a focus on the 2000 election.

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chap. 5

#### **April 16: Ideology**

To what extent does liberal-conservative ideology affect voting? Do most people think about politics in ideological terms? How politically sophisticated are voters?

### II.B. Determinants of Voting: Short-Term Factors

#### **April 18: Issue Voting, Economic Voting, and Retrospective Voting**

Several ways to consider issue voting will be considered, including the notions of issue publics, sociotropic voting, and retrospective voting.

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chaps. 6 & 7, and pp. 178-191

#### **April 23: The Candidate Factor**

Different ways to consider attitudes toward candidates will be presented.

#### **April 25: Reading Day** (no class)

#### **April 30: Campaigns**

Do campaigns matter? Do debates matter? How did the campaign and the debates affect the 2000 election?

- Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chap. 2
- Crotty, "The Election of 2000: Close, Chaotic, and Unforgettable," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 1
- Campbell, "The Curious and Close Presidential Campaign of 2000," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 5

### III. Election 2000

#### May 2: Election 2000 Results

The results of the 2000 presidential election will be reviewed, with a focus on the popular vote.  
Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chap. 3

### \*\*May 7: MIDTERM\*\*

#### May 9: Election 2000 in the Courts

The aftermath of the 2000 presidential election will be presented, including the Electoral College, legal issues, and public reaction to the delayed decision.

Crotty, "Elections by Judicial Fiat: The Courts Decide," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 2

### IV. Political Participation

#### May 14: Voting Turnout

Voting turnout will be considered at two levels: in terms of the normative role of voting in democratic theory and the legal restrictions on voting eligibility.

Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, chaps. 1, 5, & 7

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chap. 3

#### May 16: Political Participation

Alternative forms of political participation will be considered, along with discussion how participation varies between different types of people.

Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, chaps. 2, 3, & 4

Conway, "Political Participation in American Elections: Who Decides What?" in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 3

#### May 21: Rationality of Participation

The rationality of political participation will be diagnosed in terms of comparing the costs and benefits of different acts of participation and in terms of discussing the effects of participation.

Conway, *Political Participation in the United States*, chaps. 6 & 8

### V. Other Elections

#### May 23: Presidential Primaries and Nominations

The primary system for nominating presidential candidates will be explained and its effects in the 2000 election will be analyzed.

Crotty, "The Presidential Primaries: Triumph of the Frontrunners," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 4

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, chap. 1

#### May 28: Congressional and Other Elections

What are the general patterns underlying elections for Congress? To what extent did the 2000 elections fit these patterns?

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, pp. 193-95 and chap. 9

Jackson, "The Congressional Races: Continuing Battleground for the Parties," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 6  
 Jewell, "The State and Local Elections: Politics Beyond the Beltway," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 7

### **May 30: Congressional Voting**

What are the general models for understanding voting for Congress? How can they help us understand the 2000 and the 2002 elections?

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, pp. 193-95 and chap. 10

## **VI. Changing Patterns**

### **June 4: Historical and Institutional Factors**

How has voting changed historically? What are the institutional factors that constrain voting?

### **June 4: Party Realignment and Dealignment**

Major changes in the American party system can be viewed in terms of changes in basic party alignments or in terms of weakening of the party system.

Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, *Change and Continuity in the 2000 Elections*, pp. 251-65

### **June 6: Contemporary Politics**

Perspectives on change in contemporary American politics will be discussed.

White, "The Election in Perspective: Two Nations, Four Parties," in Crotty, *America's Choice 2000*, chap. 8