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Office Hours:
MW 2:00-3:30
TTh 3:15-4:30
Spring 2012

Political Science 202: Parties, Interest Groups and Elections

This course examines linkages between the mass citizenry and elite policy makers in America. Its goals are four: (1) to explain the operations of parties, interest groups and elections; (2) to examine the correspondence between public opinion and the activities of parties and interest groups; (3) to explore campaign finance reform by debating the recent *Citizens United v. FEC* Supreme Court ruling and (4) to analyze the 2012 election environment in reference to demography, religiosity, partisanship, issues and electoral history.

The course is organized around three group projects in which all students will participate. In April, the class will divide into Supreme Court teams to debate the *Citizens United* ruling on campaign finance. A debate between the campaigns of Obama and GOP nominee (Romney?) occurs in early May. A final project involves group PowerPoint reports on several aspects of the 2012 presidential election environment that will serve as the basis for the take home final exam. More detail on these occurs later in the syllabus.

This class is owned by its students, and ownership has its share of obligations. You will set the discussion agenda through your discharge of these obligations. Beginning on April 5, two of you will write a brief "critical analysis" of the readings for each class session, responding to the questions about the assignments in the attached questionnaire for analyzing the logic of an assignment.

Your critical analysis is due to me via email (in-text, no attachments, please) by 8:00 AM of the day of its presentation. I will present the first critical analysis on April 3, on electoral systems and the electorate, to show you how to do it. Over the term, each of you will team with another class member to write one critical analysis, worth 60 points toward your final grade.

Beginning on March 29, **one-third of the class each day will each write three discussion questions or critical observations on the day's readings.** Each one of these must be longer than a sentence but no longer than a paragraph in length. **These must be submitted to me (via in-text e-mail – no attachments) by 8:00 AM of the day of the relevant class session.** Your discussion questions and actual class participation constitute fifteen percent (45 points) of your seminar grade.

We will begin each class session with a media article or poll analysis provided by a member of the class. Each of you will contribute one or more of these over the course of the term. **Please email your article or analysis (no attachments) to me by 8:00 AM on class day.** We will have much to discuss during the eventful 2012 election season.

Our class discussions will proceed as follows. After the entire class considers the day's media article and critical analysis, it will divide into three discussion groups to sort through discussion questions selected by me from those submitted that day. One member of the discussion group will serve as reporter and post a short summary of the day's discussion (no more than one short paragraph per question) at the "Class Discussion Reports" location on our Moodle website. After reading the reports, I will post a short response as well. I will vary the membership of the discussion groups over time to make certain that everyone can discuss class topics with a large number of other class members.

The following books are required and available at the bookstore:

Matthew J. Burbank, Ronald J. Hrebner and Robert C. Benedict, Parties, Interest Groups and Political Campaigns, second edition (henceforth BHB)

Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde, Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections (henceforth AAR)

Morris P. Fiorina, Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Maris Hojnacki, David C. Kimball and Beth L. Leech, Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses and Why (henceforth BBHKL)

Nelson W. Polsby, Aaron Wildavsky, Steven E. Schier and David A. Hopkins, Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics, thirteenth edition (henceforth PWSH)

At least one copy of each of the above books is on closed reserve for this course. Because of their expense, two copies of AAR and BHB are on closed reserve.

Final grades are calculated on the following basis:

<i>Citizens United v. FEC</i> paper (due April 23, noon)	
OR 2012 Campaign debate paper (due May 14, noon)	25% (75 points)
Critical analysis of class reading	20% (60 points)
Class and group participation	15% (45 points)
2012 election group project	10% (30 points)
Take-home final (due at scheduled final exam time)	30% (90 points)

Final grades are figured from a class total of 300 points. A's range from 270-300, B's from 240-269, C's from 210-239 and D's from 180-209. NOTE that all take-home exams and papers must have full bibliographic citations (parenthetical references to author and page and a complete list of works cited), 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch side margins.

My grading standards are as follows. An "A" on essay examination questions and papers features clear, thorough and, above all, original analysis of the topic. Relatively few papers and examination essays achieve this standard. A "B" grade on essay examination questions and papers includes reasonably sound consideration of the topic, but an analysis that is less than fully clear, thorough and original. "C" grades on essay examination questions and papers contain serious thematic vagueness and/or factual inaccuracies. I am likely to

award “A”s, “B”s and “C”s as final grades in this class, with the modal category probably a “B.”

What follows is a schedule of class sessions by topic.

1. Introduction and Obama 2008 campaign video (3/27)
2. Understanding Political Parties BHB chs. 1-3 (3/29)
3. Electoral Systems and the Electorate BHB chs. 4-5; PWSH ch. 1 (4/3)
4. Parties, Groups and Campaigns BHB 7-8, conclusion (4/5)
5. Campaign Finance BHB, ch. 6; PWSH 53-73; Campaign Finance Institute, “Explaining the Super PACs”(on e-reserve) (4/10)
6. Exploring *Citizens United v. FEC* Introductory *CITIZENS UNITED readings* -- Mitchell, “Supreme Court Decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*”; Kang, “After *Citizens United*”; Floyd Abrams, “*Citizens United* and its Critics”; Dan Abrams, “The Media’s Shameful, Inexcusable Distortion”(all on e-reserve) (4/12)
7. Debating *Citizens United v. FEC* Concurring Opinions of Roberts and Scalia and Partial Dissents by Stevens and Thomas (all on e-reserve) (4/17) **DEBATE TEAM OUTLINES DUE BY 8 AM THIS MORNING TO ME VIA IN-TEXT EMAIL**
8. Understanding Presidential Elections I PWSH 51-2, chs. 4-5 (4/19)
***Citizens United v. FEC* papers due at my office – 414 Willis by noon, April 23 – hard copies only please**
9. Understanding Presidential Elections II PWSH, chs. 6-7 (4/24)
10. Voting Behavior AAR, chs, 5-7; Aldrich, et. al., “Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection” (on e-reserve)(4/26)
11. 2008 and 2010 AAR, chs. 8, 9, 11, 12 (5/1) **2012 ELECTION ANALYSIS GROUP PREFERENCES due to me via email by 3 PM TODAY**
12. Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism chs. 2,5; *Occupy Wall Street Readings* -- Sidney Tarrow, “Why Occupy Wall Street is Not the Tea Party of the Left”; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “The Fight for “Real Democracy” at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street”; Gloria Goodale, “Who is Occupy Wall Street?”; Dominic Tierney, “Occupy Wall Street’s Image Problem” (all on e-reserve) (5/3)
13. Debate of the Obama and GOP (Romney?) Campaigns Examine issue positions at the campaign websites www.barackobama.com and www.mittromney.com (May 8)

DEBATE TEAM OUTLINES DUE BY 8 AM THIS MORNING TO ME VIA IN-TEXT EMAIL (5/8)

14. Explaining the Disconnect Fiorina, preface, chs. 1-4 (5/10)

Campaign debate papers due at my office – 414 Willis by noon, May 14 – hard copies only please

15. Sorting and Reconnecting Fiorina, chs. 5-8, epilogue (5/15)
16. Introduction to Lobbying BHB, ch. 10, BBHKL, chs. 1-3, methodological appendix (5/17)
17. Lobbying and Policy Change BBHKL, chs. 5, 9-12 (5/22)
18. 2012 Presidential Election Analysis Group Reports I: Electoral History, Demography, Partisanship (5/24) **GROUP REPORT OUTLINES DUE VIA IN-TEXT EMAIL TO ME BY 8 AM THIS MORNING**
19. 2012 Presidential Election Analysis Group Reports II: Religiosity and Issues (5/29) **GROUP REPORT OUTLINES DUE VIA IN-TEXT EMAIL TO ME BY 8 AM THIS MORNING**

CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROJECT

Once you are assigned to a group, you should first examine related information about your group's position by examining the assigned *Citizens United v. FEC* opinions and related class articles. One group will defend the majority opinion and one will oppose it from dissenting perspective of Justice Stevens and liberal opponents of the decision. Once you understand your group's position, examine the web for information on the rival position, looking for weaknesses in the arguments and evidence employed in its support.

On April 17, each group will have 45 minutes to explain and defend its position and to note the weaknesses of the rival team's position. We will begin with the group defending the majority opinion. For the first 20 minutes of its time, each group will defend its position and argue against its critics. The opposing group will then ask questions of the presenting group for the remaining 20-25 minutes.

Each group may develop a handout, no longer than two sides of an 8 ½ by 11 inch sheet of paper for distribution to the class during your presentation. I MUST have these handouts at my office by 8 AM on the morning of your presentations – preferably via email. On the day of your presentation, each member of each group must HAND IN (via email) a one-page explanation of her/his role in the group activities and of the efforts of other members of the group.

As a debate team or audience member, you have the option of writing a paper in response to the debate. Your paper should present your personal opinion of the *Citizens United v.*

FEC ruling, noting the strong and weak arguments both for and against the majority opinion. In your paper, feel free to consider the topic of campaign finance more broadly as well. Be certain to state your basic thesis at the outset and then present a clear justification for that thesis. Be sure to include full citations of your sources, using parenthetical references (author, page) and a complete list of works cited at the end of the paper. Your paper should be 6-8 pages in length, including your list of references.

2012 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN DEBATE PROJECT

Once you are assigned to a campaign team, you should immerse yourself in the issue positions of your candidate and his opponent. One should start at the campaign's websites (listed above) but then extend your search for reliable information about your candidate and his opponent available elsewhere on the web. Each debate team needs to make their best arguments regarding the (1) issue positions and (2) personal traits and background regarding the candidates. So, in addition to positive arguments on behalf of you candidate, negative information and "contrasts" with your opponents deserve mention.

On May 8, each group will have 45 minutes to explain and defend its position and to note the weaknesses of the rival team's position. For the first 20 minutes of its time, each group will defend its position and argue against its critics. The opposing group will then ask questions of the presenting group for the remaining 20-25 minutes. The Obama campaign will go first for 45 minutes, followed by the GOP campaign.

Each group may develop a handout, no longer than two sides of an 8 ½ by 11 inch sheet of paper for distribution to the class during your presentation. I MUST have these handouts at my office by 8 AM on the morning of your presentations – preferably via email. On the day of your presentation, each member of each group must HAND IN (via email) a one-page explanation of her/his role in the group activities and of the efforts of other members of the group.

As a debate team or audience member, you have the option of writing a paper in response to the debate. In your paper, you should adopt the role of an election analyst, not a candidate supporter. Your paper should note the strong and weak arguments both for and against each campaign with particular reference to the impact of those arguments and on the 2012 election outcome. What topics and arguments raised in the debate will prove particularly consequential in 2012? Why? Be sure to support your conclusions with references from class readings – the analyses we have read can help you sort out the more important aspects of the debate. Be certain to state your basic thesis at the outset and then present a clear justification for that thesis. Be sure to include full citations of your sources, using parenthetical references (author, page) and a complete list of works cited at the end of the paper. Your paper should be 6-8 pages in length, including your list of references.

2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ANALYSIS PROJECT

In this project, you will organize into groups to examine an aspect of the 2012 presidential election environment. Each group will analyze one of the following aspects of the environment regarding: (1) religious affiliations and behaviors of the electorate, (2) attitudes and behaviors of major demographic groups (e.g. race/class/gender), (3) the salience of current issues and public attitudes regarding those issues, (4) opinions and motivations of partisan groups (Democrats/GOP/independents), and (5) recent electoral history and its likely impact in 2012.

Each group must answer the following questions in its presentation. (1) What aspects of your topic are particularly important and relatively unimportant in understanding the 2012 election environment? Why? (2) What are the challenges for each presidential campaign regarding your subject? (3) What is the likely configuration of 2012 presidential election outcomes regarding your subject? Why are these outcomes likely?

Each of the five groups will present a 20-25 minute PowerPoint analysis of trends and patterns in your subject area. The 2008 and 2010 presidential and national U.S. House exit poll results are on e-reserve and also can be accessed at cnn.com. You will also find much data of use in the chapters of Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde (AAR) and Polsby, Wildavsky, Schier and Hopkins (PWSH). If you wish to do your own analysis of previous election surveys, they are available at sda.berkeley.edu for crosstabulation and comparison of means tests. Explanation of the quantitative analysis you could employ from the website is found at the "Quantitative Analysis Guide" at the course's Moodle site.

Do not use too many slides and be sure to spend time fully explaining the slides you do present. You can structure your PowerPoint presentation around the sequences of questions listed above. Be sure to invite questions from the audience throughout your presentation and plan for it to last 20-30 minutes. Groups should also post their PowerPoint presentations at the course's Moodle website.

By 3 PM on TUESDAY May 1, please let me know your group preferences in rank order from one to five and let me know if you have had PowerPoint experience.

On the day of a group's presentation, each group member must hand in (via email) a one-page report on the activities of each group member in preparing the group presentation. Also, each analysis group should prepare a one-page outline (one side of an 8 ½ by 11 inch sheet of paper) of your presentation. Submit that outline to me via email by 8 AM on the morning of your presentation – THURSDAY, MAY 24 or TUESDAY MAY 29. The take-home final will include an essay question regarding your group presentations.

Some useful data sources for your 2012 election reports:

Pew Research Center -- pewresearch.org

Gallup Surveys -- gallup.com

Rasmussen Reports -- rasmussenreports.com

Public Policy Polling -- publicpolicypolling.com

Brookings Institution Governance Studies -- brookings.edu/governance.aspx

American Enterprise Institute -- aei.org

The Monkey Cage political science blog -- www.themonkeycage.org
SDA website at U-Cal Berkeley -- sda.berkeley.edu
Ruy Teixeira -- americanprogress.org/experts/TeixeiraRuy.html
Michael Barone -- aei.org/scholar/michael-barone/
Jay Cost -- weeklystandard.com/author/jay-cost
William Galston -- tnr.com/users/william-galston

Template for Analyzing the Logic of an Assignment

- 1) The most important **information** in this assignment is _____ . (Figure out the facts, experiences, data the author is using to support her/his conclusions.)
- 2) The main **inferences**/conclusions in this assignment are _____ . (Identify the key conclusions the author comes to and presents in the assignment.)
- 3) The key **concept**(s) we need to understand in this assignment is (are) _____ . By these concepts the author means _____ . (Figure out the most important ideas you would have to understand in order to understand the author's line of reasoning.)
- 4) The main **assumption**(s) underlying the author's thinking is (are) _____ . (Figure out what the author is taking for granted [that might be questioned].)
- 5) a) If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the **implications** are _____ . (What consequences are likely to follow if people take the author's line of reasoning seriously?)
b) If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the **implications** are _____ . (What consequences are likely to follow if people ignore the author's reasoning?)

Critical Analysis of Burbank, Hrebnar and Benedict, chs. 4-5 and Polsby, Wildavsky, Schier and Hopkins, ch. 1

Information

BHB: proportional representation and plurality systems (53-56), state and presidential primary rules (57-63), electoral college rules (63-67), voter turnout (73-75), nonvoters (77-79), mobilizing voters (79-82), party identification (83-86), candidate image (87-88), issues (89-93)

PWSH: nonvoting (3-8), social connectedness (8-12), ideology and voting (15-18), attentiveness of voters (22-23)

Inferences/Conclusions

BHB: American electoral system punishes minor parties (56), the unique American primary system weakens party organizations (63), the electoral college structures presidential campaign strategies (67), American electoral turnout is comparatively low (70), higher socioeconomic status – SES – encourages voting (75), party mobilization strongly affects turnout (81), party identification strongly influences vote choice (86), candidate image has a limited effect on vote choice (88), issue ownership affects vote choice (89)

PWSH: US voting registration system reduces turnout (5), social connectedness encourages turnout (8-9), party identification affects political behavior in many ways (14), party identification more important than issues and candidates in shaping vote choices (18), attentiveness of voters is a challenge for campaigns (22), voters often rationalize their choices rather than make rational choices (23)

Concepts

BHB: proportional representation (53), direct primary (57), presidential primary (61), frontloading (62), electoral college (63), American National Election Study (70), socioeconomic status (73), nonvoters (77), mobilization (79), partisan identification (83), candidate image (86), issue positions (88), exit polls (90)

PWSH: social connectedness (8), social identity (10), social habit (18), contemporary evaluation (18), voter attentiveness (22), voter rationalization (23)

Assumptions

BHB: institutional structure of elections shapes turnout (55), primary elections weaken party organizations (63), electoral college structure determines presidential campaign strategies (66), multiple participatory avenues in the US lowers election turnout (69), social connectedness encourages voting (77), voter mobilization powerfully affect turnout (80)

PWSH: voter registration laws lower American turnout (5-6), social connectedness encourages voting (9), party identification is a form of social identity (9), party identification is more important than issues and candidate image regarding vote choice (18), attentiveness of voters is low and rationalizations don't always give evidence of rational behavior (22-23)

Implications

BHB: The historical evolution of America's election rules have produced lower election turnout than is evident in most other prosperous capitalist democracies. Changing the rules regarding voter registration, ballot complexity and primary elections may improve turnout. Stronger social connectedness and partisan identification can also increase turnout.

PWSH: More social connectedness and less stringent registration laws can increase turnout. Strong partisan identification is also likely to increase turnout. A comprehensive explanation of voter turnout is elusive, which produces a great challenge for campaigns. Voter's self-professed reasons may not accurately explain the motivations behind their vote, but rather only plausible rationalizations for choices made on other grounds.