American Electoral Democracy
POLS 5320, Fall 2013

Instructor Information

E-mail: ccullison@uttyler.edu (best contact method)
Phone: 903.566.7163
Office: BUS 224
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:30 -10:30; Wednesday, 12:30-2:00; Thursday, 9:30 - 10:30; or by appointment
   (please email to schedule an appointment)

I am guaranteed to check email frequently during in-person office hours, though if I am with a student
responses to email may be delayed during this time period. For any email sent outside of office hours, you
should expect a response within 48 hours (excepting Sundays).

Email policy: per university request, I will only communicate with students through your Patriot email
accounts. The university has had several problems reaching students with vital questions or information
because they do not check their Patriot email, and they have asked faculty to require that students use their
Patriot email accounts. All responses to student email will be sent only to your Patriot email account (even if
you send the email from some other account). After September 9th (the census date), email sent from any non-
Patriot email account will not be answered.

Required Course Materials

Conventional Wisdom and American Elections
Jody C. Baumgartner & Peter L. Francia
Rowman & Littlefield
ISBN: 978-1-4422-0088-3

Rethinking American Electoral Democracy
Matthew J. Streb
Routledge

Helping America Vote
Martha Kropf & David C. Kimball
Routledge
ISBN: 978-0-415-80408-0

The People’s Choice
Jeff Greenfield
Plume

Additional items will be posted on Blackboard

Course Description & Objectives

Topics courses are designed to offer graduate students a more detailed exploration of a particular subject than
would normally be possible in a survey course. This semester, we will explore the topic of electoral democracy
in America. Namely, to what extent is our electoral system “democratic” and what might be the ramifications of making it more or less democratic?

After completion of this course, you should be able to:
- Understand the structure of elections in America
- Understand the role (both real and ideal) of voters
- Understand how the institutional structures and rules effect voters
- Discuss various proposed reforms and evaluate the positives and negatives of each

Student Expectations

It is my experience that many students do not understand what is required of them in order to achieve certain goals in a course. In order to help clarify this issue, here is some additional information about student expectations:

What do grades mean?
A) performance/work is exemplary, exceeds expectations, goes well beyond stated minimum requirements and performs the assigned task extremely well.
B) performance/work is above average, goes somewhat beyond stated minimum requirements and performs the assigned task relatively well.
C) performance/work is average, meets but does not exceed minimum expectations and the assigned task is completed in an acceptable manner.
D) performance/work is below average, does not meet minimum expectations, the assigned task is attempted but not completed in an acceptable manner.
E) performance/work is unacceptable, may be off-topic and is well below the minimum standard, may include instances of academic dishonesty.

In an graduate level course, these are the general minimum expectations:
- students will attend all class sessions
- students will work independently on course material outside of class sessions
- students will be mentally present during class sessions (pay attention, do not electronically disengage)
- students will complete the reading assignments before class
- students will participate in class discussions thoughtfully and frequently – come to class with questions and be ready and willing to respond to classmates
- students will submit assignments on time and follow the assignment instructions regarding content, format, and method of submission
- students will conduct themselves as adults (respect classmates and professor, engage in civil discourse, discuss controversial issues calmly and productively, etc.)

Blackboard

This class will heavily utilize Blackboard. Your course materials, and your grades, will be posted here. If you experience any problems logging into Blackboard, you should seek help from Campus Computing. Their office is located in BUS 101, and they can be reached by email at itsupport@patriots.uttler.edu. Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them.
Grading

Attendance and participation (10%) – Absence is not encouraged in the class, nor is unpreparedness. Your attendance and quality of participation (especially the weeks you will be leading discussion) will be monitored and you will receive a letter grade.

Summaries (10%) – Each week you do not submit a paper, you will write a summary of the readings for that week. Your summaries should be typed and no more than half a page (single-spaced) per assigned reading. You may be called upon to present particular readings, so bring a copy of your summary with you to class (you will turn it in at the end of class). Your summary should pay particular attention to the issue(s) raised and discussed by the author, how those issues are addressed, and how this connects to our larger theme for the semester.

Essays (40%) – You will be required to write four critical analysis essays throughout the semester. You may choose any four weeks (starting with September 17) to write. Essays should be around 5 pages in length, free of grammatical errors, and on topic.

Final Exam (40%) – This will be a take home final, in which you will write 5-7 pages on three questions. You will use only course materials to answer the questions.

Late & Make-Up Work

Essays should be submitted to Blackboard before the start of class on the due date. Late essays will be penalized one letter grade per day (including weekends). As your writing weeks are optional, extensions will not granted. If you cannot complete an essay before class, choose another week to write. The final exam must be submitted on time.

Academic Dishonesty

The UT Tyler community regards cheating as an extremely serious matter and deals severely with those who violate the standards of academic integrity.

Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Copying from another person’s test paper
- During a test, possession of materials not authorized by the person administering the test
- Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination or the divulging of examination contents to another when an instructor has allowed the exam to be kept by the student
- Working with others in taking tests or preparing academic assignments when not authorized by the course instructor
- Obtaining by any means another person’s work and submitting that work as one’s own. This included the downloading of academic papers or the purchase of papers written by others.
If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the classroom instructor may ask the student to meet with him or her to discuss the incident. A student may admit to allegations of academic dishonesty, waive the right to a hearing and accept penalties imposed by the instructor. The student may also deny all allegations and ask to see the Dean of Student Affairs. An accused student may accept the decision of the Dean of Student Affairs or ask for a hearing before an impartial hearing officer appointed by the university. Witnesses may be called and evidence presented. The hearing officer will consider all evidence and make a decision. The decision of the hearing officer may be appealed to the President by either the student or the Dean of Student Affairs. For a discussion of possible penalties, please see the Guide to Student Conduct and Discipline.

University Policies

Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

Census Date
The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:
- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.
Disability Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria apply to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Important Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>August 26</td>
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<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>September 2</td>
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<td>Census Date</td>
<td>September 9</td>
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<td>Drop Date</td>
<td>October 28</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>November 27-30</td>
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<td>Study Day</td>
<td>December 9</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
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</table>
| 2    | Sept. 3| *Why Do We Care?*  
Streb, Ch. 1  
Kropf & Kimball, Ch. 1  
Film: *Recount* |
| 3    | Sept. 10| *The Costs of Voting*  
Streb, Chs. 2 through 4 |
| 4    | Sept. 17| *The Rules of Voting*  
Streb, Chs. 5 and 6  
Verification in Congress and the States”  
application of voter identification policies”  
Film: *Hacking Democracy* |
| 5    | Sept. 24| *Voter Turnout*  
Baumgartner & Francia, Ch. 1  
in the United States”  
Kousser & Mullin (2007), “Does Voting by Mail Increase Participation?  
Using Matching to Analyze a Natural Experiment” |
| 6    | Oct. 1 | *Partisanship*  
Baumgartner & Francia, Chs. 2, 3, and 9  
Polarization” |
| 7    | Oct. 8 | *Voter Decision Making*  
Lau & Redlawsk |
| 8    | Oct. 15| *Congressional Elections*  
Streb, Ch. 7  
Baumgartner & Francia, Ch. 11 |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td><strong>Presidential Elections</strong></td>
<td>Streb, Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Baumgartner &amp; Francia, Chs. 5, 6, and 10</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td><strong>The Electoral College</strong></td>
<td>Streb, Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Greenfield, The People's Choice</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td><strong>Campaign Finance</strong></td>
<td>Streb, Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Baumgartner &amp; Francia, Ch. 4</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td><strong>The Media</strong></td>
<td>Streb, Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout”</td>
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<td>Baum &amp; Jamison, “The Oprah Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive</td>
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<td>Citizens Vote Consistently”</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td><strong>Electoral Reform</strong></td>
<td>Kropf &amp; Kimball, Chs. 2 through 7</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>No class, Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td><strong>Wrapping Up</strong></td>
<td>Streb, Ch. 11</td>
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