University of Texas at Austin

Fall 2010

GOV 312L ~ Issues and Policies in American Government:
Congressional Elections

Class Logistics:	Sean M. Theriault	Megan Moeller	John Graeber
Unique #: 38445	Batts 3.130	Batts 1.118	Batts 1.118
Time: MWF, 2-3	512-232-7279	512-232-1104	512-232-1104
Place: FAC 21	seant@mail.utexas.edu	earlelmgnome@gmail.com	johndgraeber@mail.utexas.edu
	OH: M (1:30-2) & W (3-5:30)	OH: T (12:30-3:30)	OH: W & F (12:30-2)

Course Description

This course takes an in-depth look at the elections to the U.S. Congress. It is offered during a congressional election season so that the lessons of political science can be evaluated as the elections themselves unfold. In addition to analyzing the 2010 congressional elections, we develop a framework to understand the critical link, more generally, between voters and candidates. The readings for the class include both contemporary journalistic accounts of the election and the analytic frameworks offered by political scientists. As dictated by the size of the class, I mostly lecture, but you'll quickly learn that my lectures require audience participation and interaction.

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Grades

I have a zero tolerance policy on cheating. All papers/homeworks must be turned in during class. I will not be responsible for papers turned in either to the Government Department secretary or under my office door. Grades will be determined according to the following formula and will include plusses (at 87, 77, and 67) and minuses (at 93, 83, 73, and 63):

- 20% Attendance and Class Participation. Throughout the class you will have random attendance quizzes. There will be no excuses for missing attendance quizzes. Late homeworks will not be accepted.
- 20% Semester Projects. Working in small teams, you will become experts in one of the competitive races for the U.S. Senate.
- 20% Midterm Exam I (September 20)
- 20% Midterm Exam II (October 29)
- 20% Midterm Exam III Exam (December 3)

Course Readings

The course readings consist of the following:

- ○ A course packet available at Speedway Copy and Printing (in Dobie Mall). All readings in the Course Packet are designated in the reading list as a hollow circle.
- • Gary Jacobson. 2004. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th Edition. Pearson Longman.
- ➢ Sean M. Theriault. 2008. *Party Polarization in Congress*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Course Outline and Reading List

August 25 – Course Introduction

August 27 – The Basics
- The Constitution of the United States, Article I
- Federalists 52, 53, 62, and 63

August 30 – Understanding Congress
- Jacobson, Chapter 1
- David R. Mayhew. 1987. "The Electoral Connection and the Congress" in *Congress: Structure and Policy*, eds. Mathew D. McCubbins and Terry Sullivan. New York: Cambridge University Press. <Originally published in 1974.>

September 1 – Representation
- Jacobson, Chapter 2

September 3 – Project Day

September 6 – The Current Context
- Gregory Giroux. April 20, 2009. "A New Democratic Democgraphic," *CQ Weekly.*
- Bob Benenson. June 29, 2010. "The Year of Voting Dangerously" *CQ Weekly*, p.1552-1569.

September 8 – The Candidates
- Jacobson, Chapter 3
- Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox. 2008. "Why Are Women Still Not Running for Public Office?" Issued by the Brookings Institute.

September 10 – Project Day

September 13 and 15 – The Campaigns
- Jacobson, Chapter 4

September 17 – Review

September 20 – Midterm Exam 1

September 22 and 24 – The Voters: Who are They?
- Jacobson, Chapter 5
- Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2010. Chapter 10 in *Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Martin P. Wattenberg. 2007. Excerpts from *Is Voting for Young People?* Pearson: New York.

September 27 – Project Day

Sept. 29, Oct. 1, and Oct. 4 – The Voters: What They Do?
- Donald R. Wolfensberger. 2000. "Chapter 16: The Future of Deliberative Democracy" in *Congress and the People: Deliberative Democracy on Trial*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Sean M. Theriault. 2005. Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Power of the People*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- R. Douglas Arnold. 1990. Chpt. 10, "Citizens' Control of Government" in *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- "Rare Combination of Forces Makes '94 Vote Historic" *1994 CQ Almanac*.

October 6 – The Role of President's in Congressional Elections
- Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2010. Chapter 8 in *Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

October 8 and 11 – Project Day

October 13 and 15 – Congressional Elections in a Historical Context
- Burnham, Walter Dean. 2003. Selection from *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* in *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*, 3rd Edition, eds., Ann G. Serow and Everett C. Ladd. Baltimore, MD: Lanahan Publishers, Inc.

October 18 and 20 – Recent Congressional Elections
- Jacobson, Chapter 6

October 22 and 25 – 2006/08 Congressional Elections
- Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2010. Chapter 9 in *Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- David R. Mayhew. 2008. "The Meaning of the 2008 Election" in *The Elections of 2008*, ed. Michael Nelson. CQ Press.

October 27 – Review

October 29 – Midterm Exam 2

November 1 – 2010 Election
- Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 2010. Chapter 9 in *Change and Continuity in the 2008 Elections* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

November 2 – Election Day!

November 3 – 2010 Election

November 5 – Catch-up Day!

November 8 – 1010 Election

November 10 – Polarization of Politics – Intro
- David Brooks. December 2001. "One Nation, Slightly Divisible." *The Atlantic Monthly*, 53-65.
- Morris P. Fiorina. 2005. Chapters 1 and 2 in *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Marc J. Hetherington. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." American Political Science Review, 95 (3): 619-631.
- Theriault, Chapters 1-3.

November 12 – Project Day

November 15 and 17 – The Polarization of Politics -- Behavioral
- Theriault, Chapters 4-6.
- Jacobson, Chapter 8

November 19 and 22 – The Polarization of Politics -- Institutional
- Jacobson, Chapters 7
- Theriault, Chapters 7-10

November 29 – The 112th Congress and the 2012 Elections

December 1 – Review

December 3 – Midterm Exam 3