

PLS 4940 - 01 Political Participation

Professor: Lee Hannah, Ph.D.

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Time: MWF 1:25 – 2:20 PM

Location: University Hall 066

Dates: January 13 – May 2, 2020

Office: 317 Millett Hall

Office Hours: W: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why do people participate in American politics and civic life? Why don't they? Why should they?

This course is designed to give students an in-depth understanding of the various dimensions of political participation in the United States. Political participation is broadly defined as the activities citizens undertake to influence government. Central to this course is the act of voting, which is the cornerstone democratic institution. But we will examine additional forms of participation including volunteerism and activism. Moreover, we will explore how individuals' lived experiences and characteristics affect the way they participate in government and the preferences they develop.

This is an advanced course in the study of political participation, broadly defined as behavior with the intent of shaping public policy. The course is also being offered during the Democratic presidential primary season. We will apply the theories that we are learning to these contests.

The course is broken into four units: 1) The Parties and Political Participation; 2) Understanding Americans' Preferences; 3) Social Movements and Activism; and 4) Identity Politics, Voting Blocs, and Mobilization. The overall goal of the course is to enable students to understand why and how citizens shape their own society through political participation, and to what extent historical, structural, and strategic forces shape one's participation.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the underlying ideological and cultural perspectives that fuel the formation of political preferences.
- Examine the structural arguments related to who does and who does not participate.
- Evaluate the role of the political parties in facilitating or hindering participation.

EXPECTATIONS

- 1) **Attendance:** Your attendance in class is always expected. See Wright State's [Add/Drop Policy](#) and [Wright State's Excused Absence Policy](#).
- 2) **Preparation and Participation:** I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read in class.
- 3) **Respectful Discussion:** We are living in the midst of a very polarizing political era. We will be discussing controversial current events in this course. There will inevitably be divergent opinions, some of them very strong, amongst the class. It is important that you be respectful of your peers and their opinions, lived experiences, and beliefs.
- 4) **Do Not Suffer in Silence:** Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know - as soon as possible - what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.
- 5) **Academic Honesty:** All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for academic integrity.

- 6) **Be Flexible:** While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you of any changes made throughout the course.

READINGS

The readings for the course are listed for each day. You should be able to click on the embedded links in the syllabus to either go to the library webpage (where you can download a PDF of the reading) or to an external website. I have also included PDFs on Pilot for articles that come from gated sources like the *Wall Street Journal* or *New York Times*.

We will also read one book during the semester.

Required Book:

Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth A., Michael W. Wagner, William H. Flanigan, and Nancy H. Zingale. (2018). *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, 14th Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506367736

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) **Primary Election Presentation and Paper** (25% of final grade) Early on, students will have an opportunity to research two specific primary elections and present their summary and findings to the class.
- 2) **Midterm Exam** (25% of final grade) The midterm exam will include a multiple choice and short essay questions.
- 3) **Final Paper** (35% of final grade) The final paper will allow students to explore a specific question related to the 2020 Democratic primary and write a final paper that integrates the course material.
- 4) **Participation and Attendance** (15% of final grade) You are expected to come to class and to actively participate in class discussion and activities. We will also have a few assignments during class that will contribute to this grade. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note taking. Students will be asked to put away technology if they are distracted by it.

INTEGRATED WRITING COURSE:

PLS 4940 is designated as an “Integrated Writing” (IW) course, designed to meet WSU guidelines for developing effective writing skills. Students will be expected to produce writing that:

- 1) Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- 2) Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- 3) Demonstrates degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- 4) Shows competency in standard American English.

Effective writing counts toward the final course grade. Students will meet IW requirements through the primary elections presentation and paper, the midterm exam, and the final paper. Students should pay careful attention to grammar, mechanics, and clarity of prose in completing the course assignments.¹

¹ <http://www.wright.edu/academic-affairs/programs/writing-across-the-curriculum/requirements>

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

Wright State University is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety and stress, substance abuse problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact the Counseling and Wellness Services at Wright State located in Student Union 053: <https://www.wright.edu/student-affairs/health-and-wellness/counseling-and-wellness>

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the Code of Student Conduct for questions about academic integrity.

DISABILITY:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. It is your responsibility to notify me during the first week of the semester if such accommodations are needed. If you have questions about this, contact the Office of Disability Services at 937-775-5680 or disability_services@wright.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following pages include information about each week of class.² Readings from the course text are denoted as "TWFZ"

Unit I: The Parties and Political ParticipationWeek 1

January 13 – Course Introduction

January 15 – Electoral Context and Strategy

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 2 "Electoral Context and Strategy"
- 2) Adler, Leslie. (2016 March 29). "How selecting U.S. presidential candidates became the people's choice." *Reuters* [\[LINK\]](#)
- 3) Silver, Nate. (2020 January 10). "Biden is the Front-Runner, But There's No Clear Favorite." *FiveThirtyEight*. [\[LINK\]](#)

January 17 – The Presidential Nomination Process

Readings:

- 1) Dickerson, J. (2016). "1952: Thou Shall Not Steal" in *Whistlestop: My favorite stories from presidential campaign history*. New York: Twelve.
- 2) Dickerson, J. (2016). "1960: The Catholic Candidate" in *Whistlestop: My favorite stories from presidential campaign history*. New York: Twelve.

² Students are responsible for knowing both university and course schedules. The academic calendar is available [here](#).

Week 2**January 20 – MLK Holiday, No class**

January 22 – The Nomination Process

Reading:

- 1) Kamarck, Elaine C. (2016). “The Good Old Days? When Parties Controlled Nominations and Primaries Were to be Avoided at All Costs” Ch. 1 in *Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know About How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C.

January 24 – Delegate Process – Democratic Rules

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 3 “Turnout and Participation in Elections”

Week 3

January 27 – Preparation for Primary Election Presentations

January 29 – Primary Election Presentations

*Students will make brief presentations about primary elections (1972-2012)

January 31 - Primary Election Presentations

Week 4

February 3 – Why Iowa?

Readings:

- 1) Redlawsk, D. P., Tolbert, C. J., & Donovan, T. (2011). “Iowa Caucus Rules” Ch. 3 in *Why Iowa?: How caucuses and sequential elections improve the presidential nominating process*. University of Chicago Press.
- 2) Ember, Sydney and Reid J. Epstein. (2019 November 13). “Why Almost Nobody Will Defend the Iowa Caucuses.” *New York Times* [\[LINK\]](#)

February 5 – Iowa Caucus Results

Reading: TBA

February 7 – Understanding Survey Data

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Appendix
- 2) Squire, Peverill. (1988). “Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(1):125-133. [\[LINK\]](#)

*** Primary election papers are due at the end of the day on Friday, February 7.**

Unit II: Understanding Americans’ Preferences

Week 5

February 10 – Democratic Beliefs and American Democracy

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 1

February 12 – Voter Knowledge

Reading:

- 1) Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. (1996). “Introduction: Political Knowledge, Political Power, and the Democratic Citizen.” Ch.1 in *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

*New Hampshire Primary Results

February 14: Party Identification

Readings:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 4 – “Partisanship and Party Change,” pp. 85-106
- 2) Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. (2008). “Whose Parties?” Ch. 2 in *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Week 6

February 17 – Conservatism

Reading:

- 1) Marietta, Morgan. (2012). Introduction and Chapters 1, 4, and 5 in *A Citizen’s Guide to American Ideology: Conservatism and Liberalism in Contemporary Politics*. New York: Routledge.

February 19 - Liberalism

Reading:

- 1) Marietta, Morgan. (2012). Chapters 8 and 9 in *A Citizen’s Guide to American Ideology: Conservatism and Liberalism in Contemporary Politics*. New York: Routledge.

February 21 – Group Characteristics and Partisanship

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 5 – “Group Characteristics and Social Networks”

Week 7

February 24 – Public Opinion and Ideology

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 6 – “Public Opinion and Ideology,” pp. 162-186.

*Nevada Caucus Results

February 26 – Public Opinion and Ideology

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 6 – “Public Opinion and Ideology,” pp. 186-199.

February 28 – Catch-Up

March 2 – March 6 – Spring BreakWeek 8

March 9 – Party Change Over Time

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 4 – Partisanship and Party Change, pp. 85-106

March 11 – Catch-Up and Review

March 13 – Midterm Exam

Unit III: Social Movements and Activism

Week 9

March 16 – Political Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

Readings:

- 1) Junn, Jane. 1999. "Participation in Liberal Democracy: The Political Assimilation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the United States", *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(9): 1417-1438.
- 2) Barreto, M. A., Frasure-Yokley, Lorrie, Vargas, Edward D., and Wong, Janelle. (2018). Best practices in collecting online data with Asian, Black, Latino, and White respondents: Evidence from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-election Survey. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6(1): 171-180.

March 18 – Participation and Conflict

Reading:

- 1) Schattschneider, E.E. (1960). "The Contagiousness of Conflict." Ch. 1 in *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy*. New York: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

* Ohio Primary Results

March 20 – Social Movements: Resource Mobilization

Reading:

- 1) McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. (1977). "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82(6):1212-1241. [[LINK](#)]

Week 10

March 23 – Social Movements: Political Opportunity Structures

Reading:

- 1) Kitschelt, Herbert P. 1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 16(1):57-85. [[LINK](#)]

March 25 – Impact of Social Movements: General

Reading:

- 1) Amenta, Edwin, Neal Caren, Elizabeth Chiarello, and Yang Su. 2010. "The Political Consequences of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:287-30. [[LINK](#)]

March 27 – Impact of Social Movements: What Causes Success

- 1) McCammon, Holly J., Karen E. Campbell, Ellen M. Granberg and Christine Mowery. 2001. "How Movements Win: Gendered Opportunity Structures and U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866 to 1919." *American Sociological Review* 66(1):49-70 [[LINK](#)]

Week 11

March 30 – Social Movements in the Digital Age

Reading:

- 1) Deana A. Rohlinger and Leslie A. Bunnage. 2018. "Collective Identity in the Digital Age: Thin and Thick Identities in MoveOn.Org and the Tea Party Movement." *Mobilization* 23(2):135-157.

April 1 – Individual Participation in Social Movements

Reading:

- 1) McAdam, Doug. 1989. "The Biographical Consequences of Activism." *American Sociological Review* 54(5):744-760. [[LINK](#)]

April 3 – Individual Participation in Protests

Reading:

- 1) Schussman, Alan and Sarah A. Soule. 2005. "Process and Protest: Accounting for Individual Protest Participation." *Social Forces* 84(2):1083-1106. [\[LINK\]](#)

Week 12

April 6 – Individual Participation in Politics

Reading:

- 1) Ojeda, Christopher. (2018). "The Two Income-Participation Gaps." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(4): 813-829. [\[LINK\]](#)

Unit IV: Identity Politics, Voting Blocs, and Mobilization

April 8 – Identity Politics in Elections

Reading:

- 1) Bacon, Jr., Perry. (2019 April 2). "Why Identity Politics Could Be Good for Democrats in 2020." *FiveThirtyEight*. [\[LINK\]](#)
- 2) Herndon, Astead and Lauren Leatherby. (2019 December 2). "How Black Voters Could Help Biden Win the Democratic Nomination." *New York Times*. [\[LINK\]](#)

April 10 – Identity and Participation

Reading:

- 1) Kuo, Alexander, Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. "Social exclusion and political identity: The case of Asian American partisanship." *The Journal of Politics* 79.1 (2017): 17-32. [\[LINK\]](#)

Week 13

April 13 – Identity and Participation

Reading:

- 1) Wong, Janelle. (2000). "The Effects of Age and Political Exposure on the Development of Party Identification Among Asian American and Latino Immigrants in the United States." *Political Behavior* 22(4): 341-371. [\[LINK\]](#)

April 15 – Identity and Participation

Reading:

- 1) Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 95(3):589-602. [\[LINK\]](#)

April 15 – Identity and Participation

Reading:

- 1) Walsh, Katherine C. (2012). "Putting inequality in its place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective." *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 517-532. [\[LINK\]](#)
- 2) French, David. (2019 December 22). "Christianity Today Exposed the Reality of Evangelical Division." *The French Press*. [\[LINK\]](#)

April 17 – No class³

* Final papers are due at the end of the day on Friday, April 17.

³ I will be presenting a paper at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Chicago. I recommend that you check out the Symposium of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities at the student union.

Week 14

April 20 – Vote Choice and Electoral Decisions

Reading:

- 1) TWFZ Ch. 8

April 22 – Vote Targeting and Mobilization

Reading:

- 1) Feltus, William J., Kenneth M. Goldstein, and Matthew Dallek. (2018). “Political Historian and Data Scientist: Charting a Path to Victory through Information and Analysis.” Ch. 3 in *Inside Campaigns: Elections Through the Eyes of Political Professionals*, 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/CQ Press.

April 24 – Course Wrap-Up