

**POS 5698**  
**Applied Political Behavior**  
**Fall 2007, 5:30 – 8:00 Room 115**  
**Masters of Applied American Politics and Policy Program**

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Office hours: Wed. 3:00 – 5:00  
and by appointment

**Overview**

The purpose of this class is to introduce you to current research in political science that shapes our understanding of how the mass public responds to political information and political campaigns. We will cover four topic areas: political participation, vote choice, campaign advertising, and social networks. In each area, we will read and discuss a core book and, in some cases, additional academic articles. Through class discussion, we will assess the main arguments made by each of the authors and examine the degree to which their evidence is supportive. Finally, we will discuss how the lessons learned from these studies might be applied in real life situations.

**Required Readings**

Plan to read approximately 75 to 100 pages of material per week. The assigned academic journal articles will be posted on the Blackboard class website. You will need to purchase the four required books listed below. These are available at most online bookstores as well as the campus bookstore. I recommend waiting to purchase *Applebee's America* until the end of September so that you can get the paperback version.

**Books (listed in order of assignment):**

1. Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. *Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout*. The Brookings Institute Press: Washington D.C.
2. Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing During Election Campaigns*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Brader, Ted. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds. How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
4. Sosnik, Douglas B. Matthew J. Dowd & Ron Fournier. *Applebee's America. How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community*. Simon and Schuster: New York. (Note, the less expensive paperback version of this book will be released after September 4<sup>th</sup>)

## **Grade Components**

Weekly reading quizzes	60%
Participation in weekly discussions	10%
Final Paper	30%

### **Quizzes (60% of final grade)**

A short quiz will be given each week to check your understanding of the reading material. The quiz will have two parts. The first part includes 10 multiple choice questions about the content of the reading. For the second part, you will be asked to provide a short reaction to the reading by listing points of discussion that you intend to pursue during class. Reactions should not exceed two paragraphs and can be listed in bullet points. Appropriate subjects include discussion of the broader themes of the book, questions or comments about the validity of the research, comparison to other class readings, or discussion of how the information in the readings might apply to real-world political situations.

There will be 13 quizzes during the semester and your final grade will be based on an average of the top 10 quiz grades. If you are absent from class, you will receive a 0 for the quiz. Make-up quizzes will be given only in situations of documented family emergency or health problems.

### **Participation in discussion (10% of final grade)**

This is a graduate seminar rather than a lecture class, so the primary value comes from the knowledge gained through discussing and debating research that we read together.

My job is to guide the discussion and prompt you to think deeply about the material. I will help clarify aspects of the readings that you find confusing (particularly any statistical findings) during the discussion. As discussion leader, I will call on students during class to discuss various aspects of the readings.

Your job is to be prepared to discuss the material in depth each week. You will be given a participation score each week on a three point scale (0, 1 and 2). Your semester score will be your total participation points for the semester, divided by 12, multiplied by 100. Theoretically, you could score as many as 28 raw points (14 X 2), but the maximum percent you may score from participation is 125%.

(0) A grade of 0 will be assigned if the student *does not demonstrate mastery* of readings. This might happen if:

- a) the student was absent from class;
- b) the student did not participate in class discussion, or
- c) the student did not contribute to the classroom discussion in a meaningful way, for example, a student participates without demonstrating that he/she has gained knowledge from the assigned readings.

(1) A grade of 1 will be assigned if student shows *normal mastery* of the readings. This grade is likely if:

- a) the student offers cogently argued points based on the readings for the week;
- b) the student demonstrates knowledge of the reading when called upon during discussion;
- b) the student offers questions / observations drawn from the readings that stimulate discussion among the group.

(2) A grade of 2 will be assigned if student shows *exceptional mastery* of readings. This grade is rarely given, but it is likely if:

- a) the student demonstrates normal mastery of the material AND offers novel and insightful connections between the week's readings and the readings from other weeks;
- b) the student conducts additional research on themes related to the week's topic and offers new insights on the readings based on that research.

A note about courtesy in discussion:

Class discussions of political issues and political theories can often stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. I ask all of you to respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you do not agree with them. In simple terms, that means not interrupting other students while they are speaking and not verbally attacking them for their beliefs. While I believe that it is essential to connect theory to current events, I will cut short debates of current events that do not enhance the understanding of course concepts.

**Final paper (30% of final grade):**

Select and report on a book that interests you on the topic of political participation, vote choice, campaigns and advertising, or social networks and politics. The book you choose may be academic or applied. However, the book you choose must be contrasted with the book and other materials we read in class during the semester. The paper should be between 10 and 15 double spaced pages in length (12 point font, 1 inch margins). It must summarize the book you chose, the major insights from the book, an assessment of the quality of evidence provided and a comparison to one or more books read in class during the semester. Finally, provide your assessment of whether the book you read would be of use to future classes of students in this program and why. You must submit your book title and a one paragraph summary of the book topic for approval by October 31. Please submit this via email to [cmast@fsu.edu](mailto:cmast@fsu.edu) with the POS5698 FINAL TOPIC in all caps in the subject line.

### **Communication with Class**

I use the email address listed with the University as my main point of contact for you. Check to make sure that your email address is current. When I make changes to the class schedule, I will post them on the Blackboard and I will email the class using the bulk email function on Blackboard.

My “official” office hours are from Wednesday from 3:00 – 5:00 but I will be happy to arrange another time to meet with you if these hours are not convenient. Email is usually the best way to reach me. I recommend putting the following in the header: POS5698 (all caps, no spaces). I receive a large volume of email so adding this to the header will help me to spot your email.

### **Courtesy in the Classroom**

Please, no cell phones, reading newspapers, etc. during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about work, kids or other family members, keep it on “vibrate.” Please be on time for class and stay until the end. Entering and leaving is distracting to me and to other students. If you must enter late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade.

### **Students with Disabilities (Americans with Disabilities Act)**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
  - (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.
- This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
(850) 644-7164  
sdr@admin.fsu.edu  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

## **Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

### **Tentative Reading Schedule**

Please note that due dates for assigned readings may be adjusted as needed during the semester. Announcements of any change will be posted on Blackboard.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Assigned Readings</b>
Week 1 8/29	<b>Introduction, no assigned readings</b>
Week 2 9/5	<b>Topic: Social Science Research &amp; Experimental Methods</b>  Smith, Rogers M. Smith. 2002. "Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More about Politics?" <i>PS: Political Science &amp; Politics</i> 35:199-201.  <b>Topic: Political Participation</b>  Jan E. Leighley "Attitudes, Opportunities and Incentives: A Field Essay on Political Participation" <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> , Vol. 48, No. 1. (Mar., 1995), pp. 181-209.
Week 3 9/12	<b>Topic: Political Participation</b>  <i>Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout</i> , Chapters 1 – 6
Week 4 9/19	<b>Topic: Political Participation</b>  <i>Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout</i> , Chapters 7 – 8  David Niven "The Limits of Mobilization: Turnout Evidence from State House Primaries" <i>Political Behavior</i> , Vol. 23, No. 4. (Dec., 2001), pp. 335-350.
Week 5 9/26	<b>Topic: Vote Choice</b>  <i>How Voters Decide</i> : Chapters 1 – 3
Week 6 10/3	<b>Topic: Vote Choice</b>  <i>How Voters Decide</i> : Chapters 4 -7
Week 7 10/10	<b>Topic: Vote Choice</b>  <i>How Voters Decide</i> : Chapters 8 – 10
Week 8 10/17	<b>Topic: Vote Choice</b>  <i>How Voters Decide</i> : Chapters 11 – 12

Week 9 10/24	<p><b>Topic: Campaigns and Campaign Advertising</b></p> <p>Goldstein, Kenneth and Travis Ridout. “Measuring the Effects of Televised Advertising in the United States” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 2004. 7:205–26</p> <p><i>Campaigning for Hearts and Minds</i>, Chapters 1-3</p>
Week 10 10/31	<p><b>Topic: Campaigns and Campaign Advertising</b></p> <p><i>Campaigning for Hearts and Minds</i>, Chapters 4-8</p>
Week 11 11/7	<p><b>Topic: Campaigns and Campaign Advertising</b></p> <p>John G. Geer; James H. Geer “Remembering Attack ADS: An Experimental Investigation of Radio” <i>Political Behavior</i>, Vol. 25, No. 1. (Mar., 2003), pp. 69-95.</p> <p>Richard R. Lau; Lee Sigelman; Caroline Heldman; Paul Babbitt “The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-Analytic Assessment” <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999), pp. 851-875.</p>
Week 12 11/14	<p><b>Topic: Social Networks and Politics</b></p> <p>Paul Allen Beck; Russell J. Dalton; Steven Greene; Robert Huckfeldt “The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Choices” <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, Vol. 96, No. 1. (Mar., 2002), pp. 57-73.</p> <p>Scott D. McClurg “Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation” <i>Political Research Quarterly</i>, Vol. 56, No. 4. (Dec., 2003), pp. 449-464.</p>
Week 13 11/21	<p><b>Topic: Social Networks and Politics</b></p> <p><i>Applebee’s America</i>, Part 1 - Chapters 1-3</p>
Week 14 11/28	<p><b>Topic: Topic: Social Networks and Politics</b></p> <p><i>Applebee’s America</i>, Part 2 - Chapters 4 – 8</p>
Week 15 12/6	<p><b>Final Class – Final paper due</b></p> <p>Come prepared to discuss the books you used for your final project</p>