The literature on elections is voluminous and complicating matters, much of it is inconclusive or so contentious that the serious readers can only leave bewildered. It is impossible to master this fluid literature in a lifetime, let alone a single semester. What follows is a sampling of topics, some of it on the “scholarly” side (though not statistically esoteric) while other essays have a more practical slant. My overall objective is to highlight key issues underlying this sprawling topic, raise certain long-standing controversies, and convey morsels of knowledge typically unknown to those routinely following political battles. The readings and lectures reflect less a “how to do it” than an understanding of how the “game” of politics is organized and played.

Classroom participation is **strongly** encouraged and expected though there will be no official credit given for liveliness. The grade will be based on an extensive take-home examine, consisting of several essays that require practical (and sophisticated) application of materials explicated in the lectures and readings.

Individual readings are available as a course pack. The following books should be purchased:

- Martin P. Wattenberg, *Where Have All the Voters Gone*, (Harvard Univ. Press)
- Michael McDonald and John Samples, editors *The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics* (Cato/Brookings Institution Press)
- Jocelyn Evans, *Voters and Voting*, (Sage)
- James A. Thurber and Nelson, *Campaigns and Elections American Style* (Westview)
- Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. (Brookings Institution Press)

Finally, I am readily available outside of office hours by appointment and happy to meet over coffee etc. to discuss course material or larger issues pertaining to elections and campaigns.

**January 18** Introduction. The course philosophy, my expectations, the reading assignments and getting to know each other.

**January 24** The Meaning of Elections


**January 31** The Early Suffrage and Lingering Debates

**February 7** Electoral Structure: An Overview

**February 14** Electoral Structure: Representation
Rush, *Voting Rights and Redistricting in the United States* (Greenwood), articles by Rush and Peacock

**February 21** Electoral Competition
McDonald and Samples, ed, *The Marketplace of Democracy* Chapters 1, 2, 8-11.

**February 28** Turnout
Wattenberg, *Where Have All the Voters Gone,* (Harvard Univ. Press) entire book

**March 7** Election Fraud and related issues

**Spring Break**

**March 21** Mobilization Strategies


**March 28** The Initiative and Referendum

**April 4** Voting Behavior
Evans, *Voters and Voting,* Chapters 1-6, 9.

**April 11** Take Home Exam distributed and discussed

**April 18** Campaigning/Media

  Thurber and Nelson, *Campaigns and Elections American Style* (Westview), articles by Bryant, Steinhorn, Petrocik, Radshaw, Dulio/O’Brien, Fowler and Ezra/Nelson

  Nelson, *The Election of 2004* (CQ Press), article by Kerbel

**April 25** Money
Nelson, *The Election of 2004* (CQ Press), article by Currinder

  Thubr and Nelson, *Campaigns and Elections American Style,* article by Nelson

**May 1** Take-home exam due (before 5:00PM)