

Course Description

This course studies the American electoral process. We discuss turnout, candidates, political parties, interest groups, campaign advertising, mass media, term limits, and referenda and recall elections as well as certain types of elections—congressional and presidential. We will pay particular attention to the 2004 presidential and congressional elections and the 2005 mayoral race in New York. In the class we will emphasize the importance of American electoral institutions in shaping the behavior of voters, candidates, parties, etc., and the outcomes of elections. A notable feature of the American electoral process is the diversity of election rules and administration across the fifty states. We will explore that diversity and how it affects elections at all levels of government from local police commissioner to president.

The course takes an analytical approach to the subject of elections. That is, we will use formal (mathematical and/or game theoretic) models and quantitative data to understand elections as well as more traditional qualitative case studies. Because much of the material is mathematical, you will have mathematical homework assignments as well as mathematical problems on the exams. The mathematics required is no greater than that taught in the typical high school algebra class and high school statistics and the examples of the exercises and problems will be discussed in class. However, if you dislike math intensely or would rather study elections without it, then this course is not for you.

The Web, Email, and Office Hours

I have set up a blackboard web page for the course, which you can access through NYU Home. On blackboard you will find the course syllabus, calendar, reading materials, and homework assignments. There will also be sample quizzes which you can use for studying for the in class exams.

My office is located at room 748, 726 Broadway. You can reach my office two ways: (1) enter on Broadway, take the elevator to the 6th floor, go to the left and up the stairs to the Politics Department or (2) enter at 418 Lafayette and take the elevator to the 7th floor. I will generally be available for office hours from 3 to 5 pm on Fridays. If you have a class conflict with those times, we can discuss other alternatives. I have an extremely busy schedule during the day so unfortunately I cannot schedule other times unless a student has a class conflict. I also have online chat times on blackboard for times that students might prefer more (afternoons on Tuesdays and Mondays before in-class exams) but I am unable to be in the office for face-to-face interaction. (please see the course schedule below for specific times). You can also email me at rbm5@nyu.edu. Normally I answer email within 24 hours of receipt on weekdays.

Texts

The main text for the course is Morton, Rebecca, forthcoming, *Analyzing Elections*, W.W. Norton Press. The text is currently in production and thus we will be forced to use (temporarily) page proofs and pdf versions of the chapters. The pdf versions of the chapters are available via blackboard. I anticipate that the published version of the text will be available later in the semester. We will not cover Chapter 15, which is covered in my other class, Minority Representation in American Politics, V53.0395.

We will also use supplementary material from the *Almanac of American Politics*, 2006, Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen. Previously when I have ordered this book for classes, the bookstore price has been much higher than was available via online sellers. Therefore, I recommend that students purchase the almanac via Amazon.com where the paperback version is approximately \$44. Periodically you will need to use the Almanac for homework assignments etc. and will need the information contained within to complete these assignments.

Finally, in the references to the text and throughout the text are a number of supplemental readings that interested students are encouraged to consult and discuss in class. See the reference list on blackboard.

Homework Assignments

As noted above, you will have homework assignments, which will sometimes be some or all of the study questions and problems at the end of each chapter of the text. You will have 13 homework assignments in total (chapter 1 has no assignments and we will not cover chapter 14). You will submit all homework via blackboard and receive grades on the assignments as you turn them in via blackboard. I am flexible about homework assignments—they can be completed any time during the semester and you can re-do them if you wish to improve your grade. You can also work with fellow students on the assignments. However, I recommend you complete the homework assignments as we cover the material as understanding the assignments will help you on the in-class exams.

Exams

There are three exams for the class—two in-class exams and one take-home final exam. The first in class exam is on Tuesday, October 18th and covers Chapters 1-7 in the text and the second in class exam is Tuesday, December 13th and covers Chapters 8-14 in the text. The final exam is a take home exam submitted via blackboard and due at the latest by Thursday, December 22nd (the date scheduled for the course final exam). After that date, the course web page will be disabled, and your final exam will be graded. The final exam will be comprehensive (that is, cover all the material discussed in the course).

Class Attendance and Participation

You will be expected to attend each class and participate in class discussions and class organized activities. You may be asked to present material from readings or to work exercises in class and should be prepared to do so when material has been assigned in advance.

Grades

Final course grades will be computed as follows:

Homework Assignments	32.5% (each is worth 2.5% of your grade)
Class Participation	7.5%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Final Exam	20%

Schedule of Classes, Exams, and On-Line Chats Via Blackboard

Date	Subject of Class Discussion	On-Line Chat Hours
Tuesday, Sept. 6 th	Introduction to Elections and Turnout, Chapters 1 & 2	
Thursday, Sept. 8 th	Understanding Turnout, Chapter 2	
Tuesday, Sept. 13 th	Turnout Cont. & Trends in Mobilization, Chapters 2 & 3	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 15 th	Trends in Mobilization Cont., Chapter 3	
Tuesday, Sept. 20 th	Candidates & Parties, Chapter 4	4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 22 nd	Candidates & Parties Cont., Chapter 4	
Tuesday, Sept. 27 th	Red versus Blue, Chapter 5	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 29 th	Valence Issues, Chapter 5	
Tuesday, Oct. 4 th	Campaign Finance & Interest Groups, Chapter 6	4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 6 th	Campaign Finance & Interest Groups Cont., Chapter 6	
Tuesday, Oct. 11 th	Campaign Advertising, Chapter 7	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 13 th	Campaign Advertising Cont. Chapter 7	
Monday, Oct. 17 th		4 to 6 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 18 th	In Class Exam	
Thursday, Oct. 20 th	Mass Media, Chapter 8	
Tuesday, Oct. 25 th	Mass Media Cont., Chapter 8	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 27th	Controlling Elected Officials, Chapter 9	
Tuesday, Nov. 1st	Controlling Elected Officials Cont., Chapter 9	4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 3rd	Measuring Public Opinion, Chapter 10	
Tuesday, Nov. 8th	Measuring Public Opinion Cont., Chapter 10	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 10th	Congressional Elections, Chapter 11	
Tuesday, Nov. 15th	Congressional Elections Cont., Chapter 11	4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 17th	Presidential Primaries, Chapter 12	
Tuesday, Nov. 22nd	Presidential Primaries Cont., Chapter 12	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 29th	Presidential Elections, Chapter 13	4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 1st	Presidential Elections Cont., Chapter 13	
Tuesday, Dec. 6th	Minor Parties & Independent Candidates, Chapter 14	2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 8th	Minor Parties & Independent Candidates Cont., Chapter 14	
Monday, Dec. 12 th		4 to 6 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 13th	In Class Exam	
Tuesday, Dec. 20 th		4 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 22nd	Final Exam Due on Blackboard	