

Government 374

Spring Quarter, 2014

T/Th 9:30-10:50 a.m. (01) Millington 25

T/Th 11:00-12:20 p.m. (02) Morton 39

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http://jsettle.blogs.wm.edu/teaching/govt374_s14

Blackboard Course Website

Facebook Group Page

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30, or by appointment

Political Behavior

Political behavior is the study of the way people think, feel, and act with regard to politics. This course is designed to touch on the major areas of research in political behavior, including public opinion, ideology, partisanship, political knowledge, participation, campaigns, the media, and polarization. Although many fruitful comparisons could be made in a cross-national context, we will focus on the American political system and will be primarily concerned with national elections.

The study of political behavior presents many intriguing puzzles. Millions of people overcome the rational calculation to “free ride” by voting in presidential elections every four years, even though they know that their vote will not affect the outcome of the election. Approximately 60% of Americans identify with one of the two major political parties, but a substantial proportion of people are unable to recognize the name of their congressional representative or know which party holds a majority in Congress. Democratic theory is built on the principle that citizens can make informed and rational choices, yet emotion influences our political opinions and actions. In this course, we will discuss these and other topics in the context of broader questions about political behavior, including:

What drives public opinion?

How sophisticated is the public’s thinking about politics?

Can people make reasoned political decisions?

Why do we vote?

Do political campaigns and the media influence the electorate’s vote choices?

The academic study of political behavior is a very different pursuit than the sport of following electoral politics. While we will focus on the empirical study of politics, we will certainly consider how our theories of political behavior inform what we read about the 2014 congressional primaries and what pundits predict about the 2014 midterm elections.

Teaching Philosophy

The subject matter of a course serves as a tool to help you develop skills to become a better thinker and communicator. The goals for this course are for you to:

Ask good questions. Learning necessitates curiosity.

Assess and synthesize information. Use the course material to arrive at informed opinions.

Engage in analytical reasoning. Respectfully discuss and deliberate ideas.

Communicate effectively. Continue to improve the skills necessary to write or present a clearly argued and well-developed discourse.

Course Goals

As an upper-division elective, this course is designed to teach you a set of fundamental concepts about topics related to political behavior. It should give you the cognitive infrastructure and vocabulary to analyze the behavior of elites and masses in the American political context and empower you to apply that understanding to the world outside the classroom environment. To serve its function as a course in a liberal arts curriculum, this course is designed to facilitate critical thinking and communication skills. Long after you've forgotten what a perceptual screen is, for example, I hope that what will endure is what you learn in this course about how to think analytically, how to read effectively, and how to write clearly.

The secondary goal of this course is to provide you an opportunity to further develop your understanding of social science research design and empirical data analysis. The GOVT 301 prerequisite for this course is in place to ensure that you have a grasp of the foundational tools political scientists use to ask and answer research questions. There will be opportunities throughout the course for you to expand your knowledge of, and level of comfort with, the analysis of data to support theoretically grounded arguments.

My Expectations

I aim to make class worth your time, and I ask for the same in return. I expect that you will read the course material before the beginning of class and come prepared to participate in the discussion. I have posted a variety of handouts on Blackboard that I hope will help you get the most out of the course. Attendance every day and active class participation are essential components of this class. However, I recognize that GOVT 374 is only one of your classes in a full course load, and that many of you have important work and family obligations outside of school. If you take your education seriously and communicate with me (with plenty of advance notice) about obstacles or challenges that may affect your performance in the course, I am happy to work with you to find solutions to help you succeed.

Course Requirements

Part of my teaching philosophy is that students should have choice and flexibility in the course assignments in order to take ownership over their learning. Thus, in addition to flexibility and choice on which assignments to complete, you will have options on the weight assigned to the various elements of the course. You will complete a Grade Contract due on **Tuesday, February 4th**, which will be a binding commitment of the assignments you plan to do, the weight of those assignments, and the due dates of those assignments. Please be mindful of the due dates you select—it will be up to you to keep track of your deadlines.

Writing Expectations

My standards for writing are high and I expect students to produce concise and precise prose. Because of this, I do my best to make my expectations clear at the outset of the course and offer you low stakes opportunities to get feedback on your writing early in the semester. I encourage you to take advantage of the fact that I like to help students improve their writing; office hours are a great time to meet with me to discuss your papers before or after due dates. I also recommend that you consult at least one of the following writing guides if you are consistently receiving negative feedback about the quality of your writing.

Strunk Jr., William I. and E.B. White. 1999. *The Elements of Style*, 4th Edition. Longman.

Zinsser, William. 1998. *On Writing Well*. New York: Harper.

Grading Policies

Quality

I reserve A's for excellent work. B's are for solid, above-average work while C's are for work of average quality. D's indicate work that is below average, and F's indicate work that is substantially below expectations.

100-93	A	89-87	B+	79-77	C+	
92-90	A-	86-83	B	76-73	C	
		82-80	B-	72-70	C-	etc.

Attendance

Class attendance is required, though participation points will not be awarded simply for showing up. You have three unexcused absences; each unexcused absence after the third will result in a two-point deduction in your participation grade. Habitual tardiness to class bothers me and extreme cases can affect your participation grade; if you anticipate that you will be late with some frequency (for example, if you have a class on the other side of campus with a long-winded professor immediately preceding our class), please make me aware of the situation and plan to sit near the door.

Late Policies—Exams

In fairness to everyone, students who arrive late for an exam may not work overtime. The only valid reasons for missing and rescheduling an exam are due to a university-approved reasons (a documented illness, religious observance, death in the family or similarly grave family emergency, or a W&M-sponsored travel commitment that you have discussed with me before the assignment is due), or, during final exams only (as W&M allows), you have several exams in a row. If you are sick enough to miss a test, you are sick enough to go to the doctor. You must 1) email me before the exam to let me know about your illness; 2) provide documentation for your illness when you return to class; and 3) make every effort to take the test in the most expeditious manner possible. I prefer to give students the benefit of the doubt, but if I perceive that you are taking advantage of the situation, you will be subject to a penalty.

If you miss an exam for another reason, you can take a makeup exam for which the maximum grade you can earn is a C (75%).

Late Policies—Written Assignments

I believe it is a lose-lose situation if you scramble to complete a paper for a deadline and don't turn in your highest quality work: you've missed out on an opportunity to become a better thinker and writer, and I have to grade a sub-par paper. Therefore, I have created a grade penalty system for extensions and late work that I hope incentivizes you to prioritize turning in your best work, even with a slight penalty, as opposed to adhering to a deadline and turning in sloppy work.

One time during the semester, for any writing assignment worth at least 10% of your overall grade, you can fill out a Grade Contract Addendum to request an extension of up to one week in length. Up to two weeks before the due date, you will receive only a 1% deduction on the assignment for making the request. An additional 1% deduction is added each day you delay your request within the two-week window. Therefore, if you ask for a change on the day the assignment is due, the maximum grade you can receive is an 85%.

Because I give you this option in advance, I do not grant extensions without penalty on assignments except in the case of the university-approved reasons outlined above. (The earlier you let me know about a situation that may affect your ability to turn in your paper on time, the better.) Computer malfunctions will not be considered a legitimate excuse for the late submission of assignments, so plan accordingly.

I will collect assignments at the beginning of class, and assignments turned in after class are subject to a 10% penalty. After that first day, assignments will be penalized an additional half-letter grade (5%) for each day (or fraction there of) they are late until the maximum grade possible is a 60. Weekend days count. So, if you turn in an assignment after class but before midnight on the day the assignment is due, the maximum grade possible is a 90. An assignment turned in the day after the due date will receive a maximum score of 85; two days late will receive a maximum of 80; three days late, 75, etc. If you are submitting your paper late, you must email it to me for time-stamping purposes and submit a hard copy ASAP.

I will not accept assignments after the Friday of the last week of regularly scheduled classes.

Action	Days +/- Due Date	Penalty	Max Grade
Assignment switch or extension requested (Grade Contract Addendum submitted electronically to Professor Settle)	-14 or more	1%	99
	-10	5%	95
	-5	10%	90
	-2	13%	87
	-1	14%	86
	Due Date	15%	85
Assignment submitted (Assignment submitted electronically to Professor Settle for time-stamping; hard copy submitted ASAP)	Due Date, after class	10%	90
	+1	15%	85
	+2	20%	80
	+3	25%	75
	+4	30%	70
	+5	35%	65
	+6 or more	40%	60

Extra Credit

Extra credit will rarely, if ever, be available. Consequently, it is imperative that you do your best on each and every assignment.

Grade Appeals

I do not communicate about grades over email. If you are not in class the day an assignment is passed back, it is your responsibility to come to my office hours or make an appointment to pick it up. If you are dissatisfied with your grade on an assignment, you can choose between two options. If you want to talk about your work and discuss ways you can improve on *future* assignments, I am happy to meet with you in office hours or by appointment. You cannot appeal your grade after we have this conversation. Therefore, if you are positive that you want to appeal your grade, you need to write a one-page double-spaced explanation of why you think your work merits a higher grade. After reading your appeal, I will re-grade your assignment. Your grade can go up, stay the same, or go down. We will *then* schedule a meeting to talk about your work.

Plagiarism

I assume that students take the Honor Code and plagiarism as seriously as I do and that academic misconduct will not become an issue in this class. For any questions about policies regarding cheating, plagiarism, or other types of academic dishonesty, please see the William and Mary Honor Council's web site and the discussion of the Honor Code and plagiarism in the Student Handbook. I will initiate an Honor Council proceeding for any student whom I judge to have plagiarized any part of their work or to have cheated in any way, and at a bare minimum, I will recommend that the student receive an F for the course.

Misc. Policies

Turn off your cell phones before coming to class. If you are expecting an important call, tell me before class, keep your phone on vibrate, and leave quietly when you receive the call.

I prefer that you do not use your laptop in class. We will discuss this in more detail on the first day of class, but if you feel that you must use your laptop, please be especially conscious of the signals you are sending to me and to your peers with your body language and eye contact.

Anyone requiring accommodations due to a disability should contact the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Course Materials

I recommend that you purchase the following books, although there will be copies of the book available on reserve in the library. While they are on sale in the campus bookstore, I am confident sleuthing on Amazon, half.com, or abebooks.com will result in used copies at lower cost. I encourage you to get the current editions of the book as substantial changes have been made from earlier editions.

Niemi, Weisberg and Kimball, Eds. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 5th Edition. (ISBN 978-0-87289-467-9)

Green, Palmquist and Schickler. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (ISBN 978-0-30010-156-0)

Arceneaux, Kevin and Martin Johnson. *Changing Minds or Changing Channels* (ISBN 978-0-22604-730-0)

Issenberg, Sasha. *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*. (ISBN 978-030795-480-0)

Polarization Book (assigned from one of the below books)

Abramowitz, Alan. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy* (ISBN 978-030016-829-7)

Bishop, Bill. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart* (ISBN 978-0547237725)

Fiorina, Morris. *Culture War: The Myth of a Polarized America* (ISBN 978-0205-77988-8)

Gelman, Andrew. *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do* (ISBN 978-0-691-14393-4)

Hetherington, Marc and Jonathan D. Weiler. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (ISBN 978-0521711241)

McCarty, Nolan, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (ISBN 978-0262633611)

In addition to these texts, additional original research articles and readings will be available via the course website on Blackboard.

I also encourage you to regularly read the news from a reliable source, such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*. There are dozens of other good sources of information. The website below has links to many of these sources:

<http://www.onlinecolleges.com/top-10/a-political-science-majors-resources.html>

Readings and Calendar

Books

- Controversies in Voting Behavior*, 5th Edition, edited by Richard Niemi, Herbert Weisberg and David Kimball (NWK)
- Partisan Hearts and Minds*, by Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler (GPS)
- Changing Minds or Changing Channels*, by Kevin Arceneaux and Martin Johnson (CMCC)
- The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*, by Sasha Issenberg (VL)

Articles and Excerpts (available on Blackboard)

- Alford, Funk and Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 153-167
- Brady, Verba and Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271-294 (Optional)
- Campbell et al. 1960. *The American Voter*, Chapter 9 and 10 excerpts.
- Conover and Feldman. 1981. "The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications." *American Journal of Political Science* 25(4): 617-645
- Editorial readings about NSF funding
- Gerber et al. 2011. "Personality and the Strength and Direction of Partisan Identification." *Political Behavior*
- Jost and Amodio. 2012. "Political Ideology as Motivated Social Cognition: Behavioral and Neuroscientific Evidence." *Motivation and Emotion* 36:55-64
- Kuklinski and Quirk. 2000. "Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion." in *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice and the Bounds of Rationality*, eds. Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin
- Lazer et al. "Computational Social Science" *Science* 323(5915): 721-723 (September 4th)
- Marcus and MacKuen. 1993. "Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinning so Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 672-685
- Newport, Saad and Moore. 1997. "How Are Polls Conducted?" Excerpted from *Where America Stands*, by Michael Golay
- Niemi and Weisberg. 1993. "How Meaningful is Party Identification?" in *Classics in Voting Behavior*, 210-234
- Oxley et al. 2008. "Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits." *Science* 321: 1667-1670
- Trochim and Donnelly *The Research Methods Knowledge Base* Chapter 2-3 excerpts
- Popkin. 1993. "Information Shortcuts and the Reasoning Voter." in *Information, Participation, and Choice: An Economic Theory of Democracy in Perspective*, ed. by Grofman.
- Sana, Faria, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda. 2012. "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." *Computers & Education* (62): 24-31.
- Taber and Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 755-769
- Zaller and Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 579-616

Campaign Simulation and Polarization Readings

See assignment handouts.

Course Calendar

*Blue font indicates a due date for a subset of students

*Red font and ALL CAPS indicates a due date for all students

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>
<u>I. Foundations</u>		
Jan 16	Intro Day <i>Class logistics</i> <i>What is political behavior?</i> <i>Why do we study political behavior?</i>	Sana, Weston and Cepeda 2012
Jan 21	The measurement and study of political behavior <i>How do we measure political behavior?</i> <i>What are the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to studying political behavior?</i>	NWK 4-18 Newport, Saad and Moore 1997 Lazer et al. 2009 <i>Victory Lab</i> Chp. 1 Optional Review: Trochim and Donnelly Chapter 2-3 excerpts
<u>II. Political Orientations, Attitudes and Opinions</u>		
Jan 23	Public Opinion <i>How do people form opinions about the political world?</i> <i>Do people have stable and coherent opinions?</i> <i>In what ways is public opinion malleable to survey (“response”) effects? What are the implications of this?</i>	Zaller and Feldman 1992: read p. 579-586 and 606-612 skim p. 587-605
Jan 28	Ideology <i>What is political ideology?</i> <i>How does political ideology develop?</i> <i>Do people have coherent political ideologies?</i> <i>Does that matter?</i>	Campbell et al. 1960 Chp. 9 and 10 (pages 188-194, 218- 227, 249-250, required; 227- 248 optional) Conover and Feldman 1981, p. 617-625 Jost and Amodio 2012
Jan 30	Party Identification (PID): Origins and Patterns CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER DUE <i>What is the intellectual history of the concept of partisan identification (PID)?</i> <i>How do we measure PID? How does that affect our interpretation of the concept?</i> <i>What role does PID serve for citizens?</i>	Niemi and Weisberg p. 210- 234 GPS p. 109-114

Feb 4	<p>PID as a Social Identity <i>Is PID a form of social identity?</i> <i>What evidence exists for the social identity explanation compared to more instrumental conceptualizations?</i></p>	GPS Chps. 1, 2, 8
Feb 6	<p>Innate Explanations for PID and Ideology <i>Is political behavior rooted in our biology?</i> <i>What are the implications of a biological basis for political behavior?</i></p>	<p>Read 2 of these 3: Gerber et al. 2011 Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005 Oxley et al. 2008</p>
Feb 11	<p>The Role of Information and the Consequences of Informational Differences GPS Review Due <i>What kind of information do people have about politics?</i> <i>What kind of information do people need to make good political decisions?</i></p>	<p>NWK 75-89 Popkin 1993</p>
Feb 13	<p>Heuristics <i>What heuristics do people use when making political decisions?</i> <i>Do heuristics compensate for people's lack of political knowledge?</i></p>	<p>Kuklinski and Quirk 2000 NWK p. 111-136</p>
Feb 18	<p>Affect and Cognitive Bias Class Debate: Debate Group Paper Due <i>How do people process the information they do receive?</i> <i>Does emotion help or hinder good decision-making?</i></p>	<p>Marcus and MacKuen 1993 Taber and Lodge 2006</p>
Feb 20	<p>Participation and Voting: Individual Factors and Institutional Factors <i>Which individual factors influence voter turnout?</i> <i>How does the institutional context affect voter turnout?</i> <i>What trends in voter turnout exist?</i></p>	<p>NWK p. 23-35 Blais p. 17-21, 43-44, Chp. 2 Optional: Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995; Blais 22-42</p>
Feb 25	<p>The Calculus of Voting <i>What is the calculus of voting?</i> <i>How do voter perceive the costs of voting and the impact of their vote on the election outcome?</i> <i>Why do people vote?</i> <i>Is rational choice a good framework to evaluate individuals' decision to vote?</i></p>	<p>Blais Chapters 3 and 5</p>
Feb 27	<p>Midterm</p>	
March 4/6	<p>Spring Break – no class</p>	

III. Voting, Campaigns and Elections

Mar 11	Campaign Simulation Day 1 (Candidates and Districts) Term Paper Proposal Due	VL Chapters 2-4
Mar 13	Campaign Simulation Day 2 (Candidate Positioning and Budget Allocation)	VL Chapters 5-6
Mar 18	Campaign Simulation Day 3 (Advertising)	VL Chapters 7-8
Mar 20	Campaign Simulation Day 4 (GOTV)	VL Chapters 3, 9-10
Mar 25	Campaign Simulation Day 5 (Media)	CMCC, pages 1-55
Mar 27	Partisan Media: Guest speaker, Kevin Arceneaux CMCC Book Review Due <i>What evidence do we have that the media influences the way people think and act politically?</i> <i>What are the consequences of media bias, if it exists?</i> <i>Is the American media playing the role it should in a democracy?</i>	CMCC, pages 56-69, 91-124
April 1	Vote Determinants and Election Forecasting Term Paper Draft And Workshop <i>What role does the economy play in vote choice?</i> <i>Does issue voting matter?</i> <i>How do political scientists predict election outcomes?</i>	NWK p. 167-181

IV. Polarization

April 3	Polarization Campaign Simulation Group Report Due <i>What is polarization?</i> <i>How do we know if we've seen it?</i>	NWK p. 221-37 and p. 266-296 NWK p. 242-265 (optional) NWK p. 297-318 (optional)
April 8	TBA	Polarization Book
April 10	TBA	Polarization Book
April 15	Polarization on Trial	Polarization Book
April 17	Polarization on Trial Polarization Book Review Due	Polarization Book

V. Remaining Questions

April 22 **What don't we know?**

Polarization Trial Memo Due

April 24 **Justifying Political Behavior Research**

Should social scientific research be subject to political evaluation?

How can we justify political behavior research?

Check out the APSA Advocacy page at:

<http://community.apsanet.org/Advocacy/Issues/Coburn>

Read one of these:

Coburn Amendment

Flake opening statement

Stevens editorial

Read one of these:

Cohen editorial

Nature editorial

April 25th **Term Paper Due**

Exam **FINAL EXAM**

Section 1: Tuesday, May 6th 9-12 p.m.

Section 2: Thursday, May 1st 2-5 p.m.