Course Structure

This course is conducted in seminar form. The informed participation of students in class discussion is important. The themes for each week of classes are provided by the readings listed in the syllabus. In addition, two weeks of the semester are reserved for discussion of student papers and of current election issues.

Students are expected to do research on black voting in three or more American elections. The voting behavior should be analyzed in terms of traditional behavioral characteristics and issues of continuing national significance. The issues should have been important in a recent (post 2000) national election, and they should be reasonably likely to be important in the next election. Each student should submit a preliminary proposal on his/her topic of research. This preliminary work is not graded but the topics must have the written approval of the professor.

The student should submit a short informal paper analyzing aspects of current electoral behavior. The analysis should include (a) substantial historical background on black electoral participation and an aspect of voting behavior of interest to the student, (b) a review of the relevant literature and (c) an examination of current data on the issue from empirical and essay sources. The short paper is due on October 24th at 5:10PM. An examination, take-home or in class, will be given on the last day of class.

Grading is based on (1) the paper, (2) class discussion, (3) the examination and (4) a special presentation of the paper or discussion of current electoral behavior to be determined in consultation between the professor and student.

Frequently Used Texts

Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule*.

Samuel Eldersveld and Hanes Walton, *Political Parties in American Society*.(may be out of print)

Andra Gillespie, ed.*Whose Black Politics?*

READINGS
(Weeks 1 & 2) OBJECTIVES: Understand the impact of demographic and socioeconomic factors on attitudinal variations and on voter participation.

I. Overview of American Electoral Politics

A. The Structure of the Electorate


2. Robert Smith, We Have No Leaders, Chap. 1 or "Politics Is Not Enough," in Gomes and Williams, From Exclusion ...

3. Michael Dawson, Behind the Mule, Chap. 1, 2 and 3.


B. Recent Elections

1. Thomas Patterson, The Vanishing Voter, Chap. 1.


3. M. Dawson, Behind the Mule, Chap. 4.


(Week 3) OBJECTIVES: Understand how to apply and interpret geographical models of population distribution to political districting characteristics.

C. Picturing the Electorate: GIS Modeling:

This one class special session will introduce students to the use of Census election data and geographical information systems in modeling electoral districts for research on campaigns and voting behavior.

[Readings on current election issues to be announced]

OBJECTIVES: Understand the impact of party identification and partisanship on turnout and the relationship of ideology to party behavior.

D. Overview of Political Parties
1. Samuel Eldersveld and Hanes Walton, Political Parties..., Chap 1 and 2.

2. Ron Walters, Black Presidential Pol., Chap. 3.

3. T. Patterson, The Vanishing Voter, Chap. 3


Week 4) OBJECTIVES: Become familiar with the major historical changes in black electoral participation and the influences of the legal context on electoral behavior.

II. Reconstruction, Enfranchisement and Disenfranchisement: EFFECTS OF DISENFRANCHISEMENT on Political Participation and Party Politics

1. John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, Chap. 17 and 18, or chapters on the Civil War and Reconstruction depending on the edition.

2. Lerone Bennett, Black Power U.S.A., Chap. 5.


Paper proposals must be approved by Week 4.

(Week 5) OBJECTIVES: Understand the broad social and political factors associated with voting rights progress as well as the major the Supreme Court cases.

III. The Process of Acquiring Voting Rights


2. Chandler Davis, Minority Vote Dilution, Chap. 1 and 2.


4. Frank Parker, Black Votes Count, Chap. 1 & 2.

(Week 6) OBJECTIVES: Become familiar with political party primary procedures and history as well as related patterns of participation.

IV. National Elections and the Structure of Presidential Politics

A. PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS
1. William Crotty and John Jackson, Presidential Primaries and Nominations, Chap. 1 and 2.

2. Robert Blank, Political Parties..., Chap. 3.


(Week 7) OBJECTIVES: Become familiar with black civil rights associations, interest-groups and Congressional Black Caucus political practices.

B. NATIONAL STRUCTURES IN BLACK ELECTORAL POLITICS


2. Katherine Tate, Black Faces..., Chap. 2.

3. Robert Smith, We Have No Leaders, Chap. 2.


(Weeks 8) OBJECTIVES: Become familiar with standard statistical analysis of voting behavior applied to black politics.

V. Voting Behavior and the Structure of Participation in National Party Politics

1. M. Dawson, Behind the Mule, Chap. 5, pp.96-129.


4. K. Tate. From Protest to Politics, Chap. 3.
5. A. Gillespie, “Redistricting” Whose Black... Chap. 2.

(Week 9) OBJECTIVES: Understand major the ideological variations and special characteristics of black politics.

VI. Political Ideology and Attitudes

1. Andrew Hacker, Two Nations, Chap. 1 and 2.
2. M. Dawson, Behind the Mule, Chap. 6.
4. K. Tate, From Protest to Politics, Chaps. 4 and 5.

VII. Local Participation and Informal Organizations

(Week 10) OBJECTIVES: Become with familiar with current and historical black politics in several cities.

A. SELECTED STATE AND URBAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

4. G. Persons, Dilemmas of Black Politics, Chap. 3.
5. Manning Marable, Black Leadership, "Harold Washington."

(Week 11) OBJECTIVES: Understand the influences of civil rights groups on electoral politics, voting behavior and attitudes.

B. BLACK INTEREST GROUPS AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

1. Dianne Pinderhughes, The Role of African American Political Organizations..., in Gomes and Williams, From Exclusion..., Chap. 2.
2. Ruth Strickland and Marcia Whicker, "Comparing the Wilder and Gantt Campaigns," *Political Science Quarterly* 25, 2 (June '92).


(Week 11)

VIII. Civil Rights Policy and Electoral Politics


(Week 12)

IX. Perspectives on the 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections, Issues and Participation. [Readings to be announced]
1. The black electorate's impact and its changing composition: an examination of the distribution of the black electorate among the largest states, in terms of socioeconomic status, partisanship and historical voting patterns, and its influence on presidential election outcomes. Compare two or more presidential elections.

2. Race consciousness and voter mobilization in two presidential elections: Race consciousness may be operationalized around opinion data identified in national surveys or by focusing on racially significant issues in elections.

3. The impact of interest groups or civic associations on voter support for candidates in three or more racially divisive local elections or two presidential elections.

4. The impact of redistricting on black congressional campaigning in two or more affected districts since 1990, What was the impact of the changed racial compositions on the campaign's structure, support and voting outcome?

5. An examination of race consciousness and voter mobilization in the context of cross-racial voting during congressional or city elections where the elections are reasonably competitive: Suitable examples include numerous congressional districts in California, New York, Ohio and other states with balanced racial/ethnic electoral distributions. City council elections in D.C. or numerous mayoral elections in other cities like Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia and New York could be included.