

PS 135: Analyzing Legislative Elections

Winter 2006-07

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30pm – 4:00pm
or by appointment

The substantive purpose of this course is to understand legislative elections. We will study, for example, what role does money play in elections and why do incumbents do better at the polls. We will also explore results of legislative elections, such as divided government. A more important goal of the course is to develop critical reasoning and analytic skills in studying political phenomena.

The course is organized in a hybrid fashion somewhere between a seminar and lecture, meaning that when necessary to fill in gaps in the reading I will lecture. The remainder of the time we will discuss the day's reading. It is therefore important that students do the reading and participate in class discussion. In order to ensure that all students participate, as necessary I will selectively call on students.

Course Requirements and Grading Policies

The course has two major written requirements: a midterm and final examinations. The midterm will constitute 30% of your grade, and the final will constitute 40% of your class grade. If you wish to contest the grading on either of the exams you must do so by giving me a typed double space statement as to why you were incorrectly marked. Further note that this appeal will open your entire exam for regrading, up or down. The remaining 30% of your grade will be determined by class participation. Since class participation is so important, excessive absences — more than 3 unexcused — is grounds to fail the course.

Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at the Bookstore. In addition some articles from major political science journals will be used. These are all available online through JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org> or I will make copies available to you in class or on the course website <http://jkatz.caltech.edu/ps135>.

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordinate in the World's Electoral Systems*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cox Gary W. and Jonathan N. Katz. 2002. *Elbridge Gerry's Salamander: The Electoral Consequences of the Reapportionment Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2004. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th edition. New York: Longman.

Morton, Rebecca. 2006. *Elections*. New York: Norton.

Course Schedule

1. Introduction

- (a) Jacobson (2004), chapters 1 and 2.
- (b) Morton (2006), chapter 1.

2. Electoral Rules and Strategies

- (a) Cox (1997), entire book.

3. Voters

- (a) Jacobson (2004), chapter 5.
- (b) Morton (2006), chapters 2, 3, and 10

4. Evaluating Electoral Systems

- (a) Gelman, Andrew; Jonathan N. Katz; and Joseph Bafumi. 2004 “Standard Voting Power Indexes Don’t Work: An Empirical Analysis.” *British Journal of Political Science*.
- (b) Felsenthal, Dan; Zeev Maoz; Amnon Rapoport. 1993. “An Empirical Evaluation of Six Voting Procedures: Do They Really Make Any Difference?” *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(1):1–27.
- (c) Felsenthal, Dan S. and Moshé Machover. 2004. “A Priori Voting Power: What Is It All About?” *Political Studies Review* 2: 1–23

5. Political Parties

- (a) Jacobson (2004), chapter 6.
- (b) Snyder, James M. Jr. and Michael Ting. 2002. “An Informational Rationale of Political Parties.” *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1): 90–110.
- (c) Neto, Octavio Amorim and Gary W. Cox. 1997. “Electoral Intuitions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties.” *American Journal of Political Science* . 149–174.

6. Incumbency Advantage

- (a) Jacobson (2004), chapter 3.
- (b) Fiorina, Morris P. 1977. “The Case of the Vanishing Marginals: The Bureaucracy Did It.” *American Political Science Review* 7(1):177-181.
- (c) King, Gary and Gelman, Andrew. 1991. “Systematic Consequences of Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35:110-138.
- (d) Cox, Gary W. and Katz, Jonathan N. 1996. “Why Did the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections Grow?.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 40(2):478-497.

7. Campaigns and Positions

- (a) Jacobson (2004), chapter 4

- (b) Ansolabehere, Stephen ; Iyengar, Shanto; Simon, Adam; and Valentino Nicholas. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829–838.
- (c) Ansolabehere, Stephen; James M. Snyder, Jr.; and Charles Stewart III. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 45(1): 136–159.
- (d) Gelman, Andrew and Jonathan N. Katz. TBA

8. Political Polarization

- (a) Morton (2006), chapter 4 and 5.
- (b) Jacobson (2004), chapter 7.

9. Redistricting

- (a) Cox and Katz (2002), entire book.
- (b) Morton (2006), chapter 11

10. Campaign Finance

- (a) Morton (2006), chapters 6 and 7.
- (b) Jacobson (2004), chapters 3 (previously assigned) and 5.

11. Representation

- (a) Morton (2006), chapters 9. 15
- (b) Jacobson (2006), chapter 7