

PS 135: Analyzing Legislative Elections

Fall 2018-19
Monday & Wednesday, 10:30am to 12:00pm
Baxter 127

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Office Hours: 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

This course can be taken for grades only. The course has three major written requirements: a midterm exam, a final exam, and a short research paper. Since this is a hybrid style class, your participation is also a major factor in your grade and, therefore, excessive unexcused absences – more than 3 — is grounds to fail the course. Each of the four components (i.e., the two exams, paper, and class participation) are equally weighted (25% each) in computing your final grade.

The **research paper** is due on the last day of class on **Wednesday, December 5th by 5:00pm**, the **midterm exam** is due **Tuesday, November 6th by 5:00pm**, and the **final exam** is due on **Friday, December 14th by 5:00pm**. All required materials should be emailed to me at jkatz@caltech.edu by their respective due dates. There are no exceptions to these deadlines, and written work that is not turned in by these dates and times will not be graded nor receive any credit.

The research paper should be between five and seven pages and can be on any topic related to the themes in the course. However, you must meet with me by **Tuesday, November 6th** to approve your paper topic.

Texts

The following texts are available for purchase through the Caltech online bookstore and on reserve in the library. In addition some articles from major political science journals will be used. These are all available online through JSTOR (www.jstor.org) or Caltech library eJournals collection.

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. and Jamie L. Carson. 2015. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 9th edition. New York: Rowman & Lifflefield.

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

Course Schedule

1. Introduction

- (a) Jacobson and Carson (2015), chapters 1 and 2.
- (b) Morton (2006), chapter 1.

2. Voters

- (a) Jacobson and Carson (2015), chapter 5.
- (b) Morton (2006), chapters 2, 3, and 10.

3. Electoral Rules and Strategies

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

4. Polling and Forecasting elections

- (a) Jackman, Simon. 2005. "Pooling the Polls Over and Election Campaign." *Australian Journal of Political Science*. 40(4): 499–517.
- (b) Leigh, Andrew and Wolfers, Justin. 2006. "Competing Approaches to Forecasting Elections: Economic Models, Opinion Polling and Prediction Markets/" *Economic Record*. 82(258): 325-340.
- (c) Lewis-Beck, Michael S. and Stegmaier, Mary. 2000. "Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 3:183–219.

5. Political Parties

- (a) Jacobson and Carson (2015), 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. Campaigns and Positions

- (a) Jacobson and Carson (2015), 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. 2001. “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 45(1): 136–159.

7. Incumbency Advantage

- (a) Jacobson and Carson (2015), chapter 3.
- (b) King, Gary and Gelman, Andrew. 1991. “Systematic Consequences of Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35:110-138.
- (c) Ariga, Kenichi. 2015. “Incumbency Disadvantage under Electoral Rules with Intraparty Competition: Evidence from Japan.” *Journal of Politics*. 77(3): 874–887.

8. 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

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 and Carson (2015), chapters 3 (previously assigned) and 5.

11. Political Polarization

- (a) Morton (2006), chapter 4 and 5.
- (b) Jacobson and Carson (2015), chapter 7.

12. Representation

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