Overview

This seminar examines various theme in political participation. We will focus mainly on participation in the electoral and congressional arenas, e.g. voting, campaigns, lobbying, etc. For example, we will examine such themes as, do campaigns matter, does negative advertising increase or decrease voter turnout, what determines vote choice, does money win elections, does money influence congress, etc. Students are responsible for reading and critically evaluating all of the required articles before class. All the readings will be available on blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Critique Essays: A single space, one page critique of the week’s readings. Your essays are due every Tuesday before class. Please email your essay as an attachment. No late essays will be accepted. The top 7 grades on your critique essays will count toward your final grade. How the critique essays will be graded will be discussed in class. Put your name, date, and title of the paper in the Header. Use 12 font, Times Roman, with Margins: 1” Top and Bottom, 1.25” Left and Right, and 0” Gutter (30%).

Debate: Every week, two groups of three (or four) individuals will be assigned to debate the week’s readings. For example, in the do political campaigns matter week, one group will be assigned to defend the argument that political campaigns matter, and the other group that campaigns do not. How the debates will be graded will be discussed in class. IMPORTANT: GROUPS MUST REFER TO THE LITERATURE TO BACK UP THEIR ARGUMENTS AND NOT USE ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE (10%).

One team will debate in favor of the stated topic (Pro) and the other against the stated topic (Con). During the opening, the team makes its initial remarks. The Rebuttal is an opportunity for the team to rebut the remarks made during the other team’s opening. The Cross-Examine is an opportunity to ask any of the opposing team’s members a question which they must answer. Closing is the final wrap-up and summation. The format of the debate will be:

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1Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/.

2You will receive an email response from me indicating that I have received your essay. If you do not receive an email response within a few hours than you should assume that I did not receive the essay.

3The format of the debate loosely follows the format from the Yale School of Management Public Student Interest Group.)
Time line:

- Debaters are introduced
- 5 min: Pro Opening
- 5 min: Con Opening
- 5 min: Pro Rebuttal
- 5 min: Con Rebuttal
- 15 min: Cross Examine of Con Group only
- 15 min: Con Cross Examine of Pro Group only
- 5 min: Con Closing
- 5 min: Pro Closing

*Exam I:* This will be an in-class exam covering the first half of the semester. The exam will consist of 20-25 questions. (20%).

*Group Project and Presentation:* Each group will be asked to forecast who the Democratic and Republican nominee for President will be and who will be the eventual winner. A more detailed overview of the project and presentation will be discussed in class. (15%).

*Exam II:* This will be an exam covering the second part of the semester. The exam will also consist of 20-25 questions (20%).

*Class Participation* (5%)

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**Rough Course Schedule**

**Tue, Jan 15** Brief Introduction to Syllabus

**Thu, Jan 17** Overview of Readings  [Volunteers for Debate]

**Tue, Jan 23** Do Campaigns Matter?  [Critique Essays Due / Debate]

**Thu, Jan 25** Lecture: Do Campaigns Matter?  [Volunteers for Debate]

**Tue, Jan 30** Do Negative Campaigns Increase or Decrease Turnout?  [Critique Essays Due / Debate / Assign Groups]

**Thu, Feb 1** Lecture: Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Demobilize Voters?  [Volunteers for Debate]

**Tue, Feb 6** How Stable is Partisanship?  [Critique Essays / Debate]

**Thu, Feb 8** Lecture: How Stable is Partisanship?  [Volunteers for Debate]
Tue, Feb 13 Are Voters Retrospective or Prospective? [Critique Essays / Debate]

Thu, Feb 15 Lecture: Are Voters Retrospective or Prospective?

Tue, Feb 20 How Much Does the Voter Know, and Does it Matter? [Critique Essays Due / Debate]

Thu, Feb 22 Lecture: How Much Does the Voter Know, and Does it Matter?

Tue, Feb 27 Group Presentations [Group Projects Due]

Thu, March 1 Group Presentations

Tue, March 6 Exam I Review

Thu, March 8 Exam I [Volunteers for Debate]

Tue, March 13 / Thu March 15 SPRING BREAK

Tue, March 20 Red State, Blue State: Reality or Myth? [Critique Essay / Debate]

Thu, March 22 Lecture: Red State, Blue State: Reality or Myth? [Volunteers for Debate]

Tue, March 27 Does Money Influence Congress? [Critique Essay / Debate]

Thu, March 29 Lecture: Does Money Influence Congress? [Volunteers for Debate]

Tue, April 3 Do Incumbent Campaign Expenditures Matter? [Critique Essay / Debate]

Thu, April 5 Lecture: Do Campaign Expenditures Matter? [Volunteers for Debate]

Tue, April 10 Are Voters Rational? [Critique Essay / Debate]

Thu, April 12 Lecture: Are Voters Rational [Volunteers for Debate]

Tue, April 17 Who Participate, Who Doesn’t and Why? [Critique Essay / Debate]

Thu, April 19 Lecture: Who Participate, Who Doesn’t and Why?

Tue April 24 Exam II Review

Thu April 26 Exam II