

Course Description

This course studies the American electoral process. We discuss turnout, candidates, political parties, interest groups, campaign advertising, mass media, term limits, and referenda and recall elections as well as certain types of elections—congressional and presidential. We will pay particular attention to the 2004 presidential and congressional elections and the 2006 Congressional elections. In the class we will emphasize the importance of American electoral institutions in shaping the behavior of voters, candidates, parties, etc., and the outcomes of elections. A notable feature of the American electoral process is the diversity of election rules and administration across the fifty states. We will explore that diversity and how it affects elections at all levels of government from local police commissioner to president.

The course takes an analytical approach to the subject of elections. That is, we will use formal (mathematical and/or game theoretic) models and quantitative data to understand elections as well as more traditional qualitative case studies. Because much of the material is mathematical, you will have mathematical homework assignments as well as mathematical problems on the exams. The mathematics required is no greater than that taught in the typical high school algebra class and high school statistics and the examples of the exercises and problems will be discussed in class. However, if you dislike math intensely or would rather study elections without it, then this course is not for you.

The Web, Email, and Office Hours

I have set up a blackboard web page for the course, which you can access through NYU Home. On blackboard you will find the course syllabus, calendar, reading materials, and homework assignments. There will also be sample quizzes, which you can use for studying for the in class exams. Finally, there is also material from the class in Fall 2005. which you may find helpful (exams and study questions).

My office is located at room 748, 726 Broadway. You can reach my office two ways: (1) enter on Broadway, take the elevator to the 6th floor, go to the left and up the stairs to the Politics Department or (2) enter at 418 Lafayette and take the elevator to the 7th floor. I will generally be available for office hours from 11 to 12:00 on Tuesdays and some Thursdays. If you have a class conflict with those times, we can discuss other alternatives. You can also email me at rbm5@nyu.edu. Normally I answer email within 24 hours of receipt on weekdays. You should not expect replies to email on the weekends or after 5 pm until the next weekday after 9 am. Thus, if you have a question that needs answering before the next class, you should email that question before 5 pm.

Texts

The main text for the course is Morton, Rebecca, *Analyzing Elections*, W.W. Norton Press. We will not cover Chapter 15. We will follow the text in order of the chapters. We will also use supplementary material from the *Almanac of American Politics*, 2006, Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen and *Change and Continuity in the 2004 Elections* by Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde. All three books are available at the bookstore. There are also links on the course web page to these books at Amazon.com.

Homework Assignments

As noted above, you will have homework assignments, which will sometimes be some or all of the study questions and problems at the end of each chapter of the text. You will have 13 homework assignments in total (chapter 1 has no assignments and we will not cover chapter 15). You will submit all homework via blackboard and receive grades on the assignments as you turn them in via blackboard. I am flexible about homework assignments—they can be completed any time during the semester and you can re-do them if you wish to improve your grade. You can also work with fellow students on the assignments. However, I recommend you complete the homework assignments as we cover the material as understanding the assignments will help you on the in-class exams. If you wait until the last of the class to complete the homework, you will probably find that you do not have time to do so and that you will receive a much lower grade than your classmates who complete the homework as we cover the material in the class.

Exams

There are three exams for the class—two in-class exams and one take-home final exam. The first in class exam is scheduled for Thursday, October 19, 2006 and will cover the material we have covered at that point and the second in class exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12, 2006 and will cover the remaining material. The final exam is a take home exam submitted via blackboard and due at the latest by midnight on Thursday, December 21, 2006 (the date scheduled for the course final exam). After that date, the course web page will be disabled, and your final exam will be graded. The final exam will be comprehensive (that is, cover all the material discussed in the course). Exams from the previous semester as well as study questions are already available on blackboard for you to study.

Class Attendance and Participation

You will be expected to attend each class and participate in class discussions and class organized activities. You may be asked to present material from readings or to work exercises in class and should be prepared to do so when material has been assigned in advance. Attendance will be taken in class every day.

Grades

Final course grades will be computed as follows:

Homework Assignments	32.5% (each is worth 2.5% of your grade)
Class Participation & Attendance	7.5%
Exam I	20.0%
Exam II	20.0%
Final Exam	20.0%