

Political Science 300 Research Workshop on Political Participation

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Moodle: <https://learn.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=2673>

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General Information

Where/When We meet in 212 David Kinley Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am to 12:20 pm.

We will use a Moodle system for assignments and some communication. Please enroll immediately (if you need it, the course enrollment key is ps300f13).

Office Hours My office hours are Tues 3:00–4:30pm in 432 David Kinley Hall. Please make an appointment if you want to come to office hours. I'm also happy to meet outside of office hours. Of course, feel free to drop by my office during office hours (or other times). Of course, I can only guarantee that I'll be there if you make an appointment.

Overview

I think of a college seminar as a kind of guided self-study group. The students arrive because they are interested in a topic broadly. My job is to help focus the reading and discussion: I have read more of the literature than you have, and I have given some extra thought to the question about how participants in a self-study group might get the most from their participation in such a group.

Goals and Expectations

In order for you and your colleagues to get the most out of this class, I have designed the following requirements:

Attendance Regular attendance is required. I will consider an absence excused if you have an appropriate note from a dean, doctor, or lawyer. See http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part5_1-501.html for the official University policy on absences. You may have two unexcused absences this term. Other absences will count as zeros in your in-class involvement grade.

Daily Work By 9am the morning before each class, each person will have submitted a discussion question on the class Moodle. The point of this assignment is to (1) ensure that the quality of our in class discussions is high, (2) provide some impetus for you to make time to do the reading, (3) let me know what you are thinking about the material and (4) give chances for shy folks to get credit for quality class participation — by writing thoughtful discussion questions. I will grade them as unsatisfactory(C-73), satisfactory(B-83), excellent(A-93) taking into account *engagement with the material, understanding of the material, and writing skills*. An excellent question shows deep reading *and* creative thinking: it does not have to be long. An unsatisfactory question shows little engagement with the reading, little comprehension of it, and/or poor writing. Poor writing alone is enough for a low grade.

You will not be able to turn in these questions late, since I will use the time between the deadline and class time to read your questions.

In calculating the grade based on the reading questions, I'll drop your lowest three scores. This means that you can either skip the assignment three times with no penalty or you can turn in ill-considered or poorly-written questions three times with no penalty.

Papers This course is primarily organized around writing an interesting and perhaps important piece of policy and/or social science relevant original research. And part of the process of writing papers involves writing drafts. So, we will have a session to read each others work in draft form before the final versions of the papers are turned in.

Commentary Commenting on colleagues' work is an exercise in sensitivity and honesty and critical thinking. Just as we'll hone our reading skills, critical thinking skills, and imaginations in other parts of the class, we'll work on how to provide constructive criticism to others during our draft workshops. These workshops will also help those who are circulating drafts fine-tune and deepen their own analyses as the class as a whole reflects along with the paper writers on the topics of interest. I will require that you turn in written commentary (maximum 1 page) for each draft we read (except on your own drafts). I will grade this commentary as C, B or A (a meager effort, satisfactory, excellent) according to your *engagement with the writer, understanding of the material, writing skills, synthetic and analytic thinking, and helpfulness and honesty*.

Draft comments may not be turned in late because your colleagues will need them to improve their papers.

Involvement Quality class participation does not mean "talking a lot." It includes turning in assignments on time; attending classes; arriving on time; thinking and caring about the material and expressing your thoughts respectfully and succinctly in class.

The best in-class participation that I have seen has come from people who have read carefully and then listen closely to their classmates and respond thoughtfully (if possibly critically or supportively). This class is not a place to make speeches. Nor is it a place to sit in silence. You get credit for daring to guess or giving unexpected answers. Although I will call for volunteers to answer the questions I pose, I will probably call on you if you consistently don't raise your hand or if you keep avoiding my gaze. If you attend class but never speak, you will get a C (73), if you engage in minimal discussion or discussion that does not appear to pertain to the reading or the flow of the class discussion, you will get a B (83). Energetic and thoughtful discussion on topic receives an A (93).

Forum discussions and summaries

In order to help you all synthesize and process the in-class discussions, we will have a Forum on the Moodle where you can continue the discussions after class. Each person will take a turn at summarizing the discussion that is occurring during the class. The day that you choose to be the summarizer, your in-class participation grade will be 100% (or A+) even if you do not say anything at all. No one is required to participate in the forum. However, participation in the forum can help improve your in-class participation grades. For example, if you attend class but do not speak you will receive a C for inclass discussion. If you later post a thoughtful comment on the Forum, I could increase your in-class discussion grade to an A: my current proposed formula is $\max((1/4) \cdot \text{in-class grade} + (3/4) \cdot \text{forum grade}, \text{in-class grade})$. Twice in the term you may post in the discussion forum if you missed class. The same formula will apply, such that a superb forum comment would yield $(1/4)0 + (3/4)100 = 75$ (a C).

Grades I'll calculate your grade for the course this way: 50% for the paper, 20% discussion question quality, 20% in-class involvement quality (including attendance and possibly boosted by Forum writing), 10% draft commentary quality.

I do not curve. If all of you perform excellently, then I will say so to the computer system of the University. That said, I am a hard grader with very high standards: I have never given all As, or even mostly As. I hope I can assign all A's this term.

All written work in this class will assume familiarity with the principles of good writing in Becker (1986). If you do not know why one should avoid the passive voice, ask me in class or in office hours and I will post relevant chapters from Becker on the topic.

Conduct I expect you to observe the University of Illinois Campus Code of Conduct when writing your papers (and in general) (http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-402.html). So, for example, do not use the words of others without proper attribution.

List of Assigned Readings

Some of these readings will be assigned only in part — i.e. only chapters or sections. Other readings will be available for free online. Most articles will be provided by me. See the Schedule of classes for this information before buying a given reading.

- Ansolabehere, S. and Snyder, J. M. (2003). Why is there so little money in u.s. politics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press.
- Bowler, S. and Donovan, T. (2002). Democracy, institutions and attitudes about citizen influence on government. *British Journal of Political Science*, 32(2):371–390.
- Broockman, D. E. and Green, D. P. (2013). Do online advertisements increase political candidates' name recognition or favorability? evidence from randomized field experiments. *Political Behavior*, pages 1–27.
- Burns, N., Schlozman, K. L., and Verba, S. (2001). *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Harvard University Press.
- DellaVigna, S. and Kaplan, E. (2007). The fox news effect: Media bias and voting. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3):1187–1234.
- Gerber, A. and Green, D. (2012). *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton.
- Gerber, A. S. (2004). Does campaign spending work? field experiments provide evidence and suggest new theory. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(5):541–574.
- Gerber, A. S., Gimpel, J. G., Green, D. P., and Shaw, D. R. (2011). How large and long-lasting are the persuasive effects of televised campaign ads? results from a randomized field experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 105(01):135–150.
- Jacobson, G. C. (2006). Campaign spending effects in us senate elections: evidence from the national annenberg election survey. *Electoral Studies*, 25(2):195–226.
- Kahne, J. and Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 39(02):289–296.
- Kaplan, D. (2012). *Statistical Modeling A Fresh Approach*. Daniel Kaplan, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN, second edition.
- Leighley, J. E. and Vedlitz, A. (1999). Race, ethnicity, and political participation: Competing models and contrasting explanations. *Journal of Politics*, 61(4):1092–1114.
- Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., and Brady, H. E. (2012). *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., and Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H., and Nie, N. H. (1993). Race, ethnicity and political resources: Participation in the united states. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(04):453–497.

Computing and Writing

The discussion questions on the Moodle will mostly just be typed directly into the Moodle text editor.

We will write comments on drafts using a forum on the Moodle.

If you turn in a paper in electronic form it must be in pdf format otherwise you'll need to turn them in as hard-copy.¹ I will not count papers in other forms as turned in. If you turn in a Microsoft Word/OpenOffice Writer/Apple Pages document, I will not count it as having been turned in.

¹ Actually, I'll accept documents in postscript or html as well.

Schedule

Note: This schedule is preliminary and subject to change. If you miss a class make sure you contact me or one of your colleagues to find out about changes in the lesson plans or assignments.

PART I QUESTIONS ABOUT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Tuesday, August 27—Course Overview, Motivation, Expectations

Task Begin to brainstorm about topics and perhaps designs.

Thursday, August 29—No Class.

Tuesday, September 3—A Few Examples.

Discuss

- <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/apsrfeb08gerberetal.pdf>
- http://www.danielmarkbutler.com/uploads/1/7/6/8/17688231/ajps_discrimination.pdf

Extra

- http://web.mit.edu/posner/www/papers/political_salience.pdf

Thursday, September 5—SES 1: Economic class

Discuss Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., and Brady, H. E. (2012). *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press [Chapter 5]

Tuesday, September 10—SES 2: Race/Ethnicity

Discuss Leighley, J. E. and Vedlitz, A. (1999). Race, ethnicity, and political participation: Competing models and contrasting explanations. *Journal of Politics*, 61(4):1092–1114

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H., and Nie, N. H. (1993). Race, ethnicity and political resources: Participation in the united states. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(04):453–497

Extra Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., and Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge [Chapter 6–8]

Thursday, September 12—SES 3: Gender

Discuss Burns, N., Schlozman, K. L., and Verba, S. (2001). *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Harvard University Press [Chapter 1 and 3]

Tuesday, September 17—SES 4: Age and the Lifecycle

Discuss Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., and Brady, H. E. (2012). *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press [Chapter 7 and 8]

Task: Meet in groups to discuss your topics.

Thursday, September 19—Efficacy:

Discuss: Kahne, J. and Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 39(02):289–296

Bowler, S. and Donovan, T. (2002). Democracy, institutions and attitudes about citizen influence on government. *British Journal of Political Science*, 32(2):371–390

Friday, September 20—Topic Statements Due

Due: Topic statements. One (or two) sentences describing the conceptual or theoretical or abstract relationship of interest. One (or two) sentences describing the motivation for investigating this relationship. One (or two) sentences describing the kinds of concrete observations that you hope or anticipate using to reflect on the conceptual or theoretical relationship.

Tuesday, September 24—Money:

Discuss: Gerber, A. S. (2004). Does campaign spending work? field experiments provide evidence and suggest new theory. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(5):541–574

Ansolabehere, S. and Snyder, J. M. (2003). Why is there so little money in u.s. politics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*

Extra: Jacobson, G. C. (2006). Campaign spending effects in us senate elections: evidence from the national annenberg election survey. *Electoral Studies*, 25(2):195–226

Thursday, September 26—Media:

Discuss: Gerber, A. S., Gimpel, J. G., Green, D. P., and Shaw, D. R. (2011). How large and long-lasting are the persuasive effects of televised campaign ads? results from a randomized field experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 105(01):135–150

DellaVigna, S. and Kaplan, E. (2007). The fox news effect: Media bias and voting. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3):1187–1234

Extra Broockman, D. E. and Green, D. P. (2013). Do online advertisements increase political candidates' name recognition or favorability? evidence from randomized field experiments. *Political Behavior*, pages 1–27

PART II DATA AND ANALYSIS**Tuesday, October 1—Data Sources and Designs: Experiments**

Gerber, A. and Green, D. (2012). *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton[Chapter 1]

Thursday, October 3—No Class, Group Meetings

Task: Meet in groups to find data and/or design data collection.

Tuesday, October 8—Data Sources and Designs: Causal Inference and Experiments

Gerber, A. and Green, D. (2012). *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton[Chapter 2]

Thursday, October 10—Data and Designs: Clear comparisons and Observational Studies

Kaplan, D. (2012). *Statistical Modeling A Fresh Approach*. Daniel Kaplan, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN, second edition[Chapter 10]

Extra: For more background on linear models as ways to summarize comparisons of means.

Kaplan, D. (2012). *Statistical Modeling A Fresh Approach*. Daniel Kaplan, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN, second edition[Chapters 6 and 7]

Friday, October 11—Data Source Description Due

Due One (or two) sentences explaining which data source you will use to address your question. One (or two) sentences explaining which variables you will use. If you plan to collect your own data (i.e. run your own experiment or survey online or on campus), arrange a meeting with me before this date.

Tuesday, October 15—Analysis Plan Discussions, I

Present: Each group will present a draft of their analysis plan to the group for discussion. The presentation should take no more than 10 minutes but should involve a few slides or handouts to help the audience understand the question, the nature of the research design and data source, and plan for analysis.

Thursday, October 17—Analysis Plan Discussions, II

Present: Each group will present a draft of their analysis plan to the group for discussion. The presentation should take no more than 10 minutes but should involve a few slides or handouts to help the audience understand the question, the nature of the research design and data source, and plan for analysis.

Friday, October 18—Analysis Plan Due

Due Describe the comparisons that you will use to answer your question. Describe in detail how you plan to create those comparisons. Finally, describe what you expect to find (and why). That is, the final piece of this plan will be to describe what is at stake in this analysis. If you find relationship A, what will you have learned? If, instead, you find relationship B, what will you have learned?

Tuesday, October 22—No Class, Group Work

Task: Meet in groups to assemble, collect, clean, and explore data.

Thursday, October 24—No Class, Group Work

Task: Meet in groups to assemble, collect, clean, and explore data.

Tuesday, October 29—No Class, Group Work

Task: Meet in groups to assemble, collect, clean, and explore data.

Thursday, October 31—Analysis Tutorial, I

Practice: Making comparisons from data. Each group should have at least one person bringing a laptop.

Tuesday, November 5—Analysis Tutorial, II

Practice: Making comparisons from data. Each group should have at least one person bringing a laptop.

PART III WRITING AND EDITING

Thursday, November 7—Writing a research paper, I

Discuss: The structure of a research paper, engaging with the scholarly literature, general writing practice.

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press [Chap 2 and 4]

Tuesday, November 12—Writing a research paper, II

Discuss: The structure of a research paper, engaging with the scholarly literature, general writing practice.

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press [Chap 8]

Thursday, November 14—Topics Chosen by the Class

These two weeks may be used for last minute help with data collection, data analysis, or writing.

Tuesday, November 19—Topics Chosen by the Class

Thursday, November 21—No Class, Writing in Groups

Task: Meet in groups to finish drafts of the papers.

Friday, November 22—Paper Drafts Due

Drafts of the papers due. We will discuss them in workshops after the Fall Break.

Tuesday, November 26—No Class, Fall Break

Thursday, November 28—No Class, Fall Break

Tuesday, December 3—Paper Workshop

Thursday, December 5—Paper Workshop

Tuesday, December 10—Paper Workshop and Wrap-up

Discuss Revised drafts of paper. Also provide advice about future iterations of this class. Open discussion of other topics arising.

Monday, December 16—Final Papers Due

Please upload your final version of paper to the Moodle for me to grade. PDF, plain text, or html only please unless you have advance permission to use another format.