

Political Science 4034-1 – Political Participation
Spring Semester/2017; Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:50 in 218 Coates
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Office Hours: 9:00-10:20 T/Th and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to investigate the nature of political participation in America, or perhaps I should say, the changing nature of participation in America. A big part of the book, *The Good Citizen*, by Russell Dalton is that a generational change in the nature of citizenship has occurred. In general we will be concentrating on mass participation (voting, volunteering, activism, etc.) rather than elite participation such as running for office or giving money. We will begin by considering the role of participation in democratic theory, then examine civic and political engagement and why people participate. We will then look at consequences of participation with an emphasis on inequalities, followed by a look at where young people stand. In the second half of the course we will look at mobilization, the social nature of political participation and the role that deliberation plays in democratic theory and practice. We will also look at barriers to participation, new technologies and participation, and finally, take a brief look at social movements and protests.

I would like to follow the format of an extended research seminar. This means that we will meet to discuss the readings, not just to listen to me lecture, although that will be your punishment if you have nothing to say. You need not have more than a basic understanding of American government to do this. You also, of course, need to attend class and be willing to consider questions seriously within the context of the systematic study of political participation. Our readings and lectures will primarily focus on participation and civic engagement at the national level in the United States. Consequently, we will be keeping tabs on current events as they pertain to the topics we are considering. It is therefore in your interest to pay attention to these events through regular perusal of your favorite news sites. Be aware that many websites masquerade as legitimate news outlets, so be careful where you get your information.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for this course are four examinations, one paper assignment, and class participation composed of quizzes and discussion. The dates for exams and papers are listed on moodle, in the class schedule and reading assignments section.

Exams: Four multiple choice exams will be given. The final is not comprehensive. These exams will make up 60% of your grade (15% each).

Paper: One 2500 word paper will be due toward the end of the semester. It will be worth 30% of your grade. I will discuss the paper topic on the first day of class.

Participation: I won't be taking attendance per se, but you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Participation will be composed of two parts (each accounting for 5% of your grade). The first part will be obtained through in class short quizzes. On random Thursdays I will take attendance by administering a short quiz (a question or two) over the readings for that week. There will be SIX of these quizzes, and you need to make at least FOUR of them to receive full credit for participation (5%). Making 3 of the quizzes will earn you 2.5 points for participation, and anything less than 3 will earn you 0 points. You can also obtain bonus points by getting correct answers to the quiz questions. For each correct quiz you can earn a quarter bonus point to be added to your final grade, so if you get all 6 correct you can earn 1.5 additional points to your course average. There will be no makeups on these quizzes

since I've already given you two free misses. The second part (5%) will be composed of your actual contributions to class discussion. These will be self-reported by you. Any question or contribution you make to class discussion should be noted by turning in a sheet of paper listing these contributions at the end of each class period. Participation makes up 10% of your grade overall.

In summary, your grade breakdown is as follows:

Four Exams: 60%
Paper: 30%
Participation: 10%

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Standards of academic conduct are described in the University's Code of Student Conduct. By registering for this course you acknowledge your awareness of the Code, and your intention to follow the requirements of the Code. In short, don't cheat and don't plagiarize. Please see me if you have any questions about any aspect of the Code and how it relates to the specifics of this course.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you experience difficulties of any sort that impact your ability to fulfill the requirements of this course, please do not hesitate to talk to me. Additionally, LSU provides a wide range of services to help you succeed in your academic pursuits.

Disability Services (8-5919, 115 Johnson Hall, <http://disability.lsu.edu/>): Aids and services for students with disabilities.

Center for Academic Success (8-2872, B-31 Coates Hall, <http://cas.lsu.edu/>): Guidance and tutoring.

Career Center (8-2162, 158 and 258 LSU Student Union, <http://students.lsu.edu/careercenter/>): Career counseling.

LSU Cares (8-8607, 146 Thomas Boyd Hall, <http://studentlife.lsu.edu/lsu-cares/>): Physical health, disability, or depression.

TEXTBOOKS

The Good Citizen, by Russell Dalton