This course is a brief introduction to voter participation in elections and the manner in which U.S. elections are conducted. Special attention will be paid to election administration. The course will meet half the semester, one night a week. Students will be expected to read a moderate amount of material for each session.

OFFICE HOURS: T 1:00-2:00; F 11:00-12:00 & most times 8am-5pm (except Thursday).

GRADING

Class participation 60%
Demonstrating that you’ve read the week’s material. Raising questions about the week’s topic. Expressing opinions and debating where appropriate.

Report (assigned in class) 40%
Written report (no more than three double-spaced pages). Oral presentation in class.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings can be retrieved via the syllabus on Blackboard. (The material for one or two reports may be handed out in class.)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 11 Public information levels
Lack of, and variable, information levels
How people make decisions with limited knowledge
News sources and knowledge now vs. in the past

READ


Jan. 18 Voter turnout
Turnout rates, current and past
Measuring turnout
Turnout abroad
Felony restrictions

READ


SKIM
The Sentencing Project, [www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org), especially click on Voting Rights, then Publications, then (under Key Publications) Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States.

REPORT

REPORT

Jan. 25 Efforts to increase turnout
Early voting; no-excuse absentee voting; vote centers
Mail voting
Election day registration
Motivation/interest

READ


REPORT

REPORT

REPORT

Feb. 1 Internet voting
Possible? When?
Electronic voting broadly
Types of electronic voting systems
Paper trails

READ


REPORT

Feb. 8 Political participation (beyond voting)
Youthful lack of
No decline, just style change

READ


REPORT

REPORT

Feb. 15  Process of voting; election administration
History
Ballot types
Hyper-decentralization
Registration requirements; college students; ID requirements
Election judges’ surveys (from November)

READ


REPORT

REPORT

Feb. 22  Districting and gerrymandering
Theory
Practice

READ

REPORT