This is a graduate level course on American political behavior. There are numerous topics in political behavior including individual and mass participation, belief systems, public opinion, civic engagement, party identification, political psychology, tolerance, political socialization, and voting and elections (to name a few). There is a vast amount of research on these topics, and we will attempt to examine the conclusions and means by which scholars have evaluated questions on the nature of political behavior.

**Required Texts:**


**Grades:** Your grade will be based on a combination of your participation, discussion leadership, written work, and the examination. All written work will be reduced by 10% for each day late.

- Critical Reviews (6 x 7%) 42%
- Participation 15%
- Leadership of class discussions 15%
- Final Examination 28%
**Critical Reviews:** Each student will write critical reviews of the readings for six of the weeks. In these reviews, summaries should be kept to a minimum; instead, the purpose is for you to critically evaluate the theoretical and methodological findings of the readings for the week (you should review all the required readings in a given week). Papers should be approximately 4 pages (text) in length and should be well-organized, proof-read, and scholarly in nature. Proper citation is required. These are worth 7% of your grade each, for a total of 42% of your grade. Major political science journals often have examples of these toward the end of each edition (see *Journal of Politics*).

**Participation**
You are expected to not only attend the class meetings but participate in the class discussions. Therefore, it is critical (and required) that you complete the readings as assigned. Your participation grade will be based on your verbal discussions of the materials each week. This will account for 15% of your final grade. (This is separate from the leadership grade below.)

**Leadership of class discussions**
At the first class meeting, one or more students will be chosen to lead the class discussion for each week (I will do the first reading—week 2). Each student will lead or co-lead the discussion several times over the course of the semester. This will account for a total of 15% of your grade. The student or students should prepare study questions based on the material (you may want to make a list of these and hand them out at the beginning of class). It might be a good idea to coordinate with the other students leading that week; supplemental readings are listed below and may be examined to provide additional scholarship on each subject.

**Final Examination**
The final exam will be given on Friday, May 2, 2008 from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM (time subject to change). The exam is designed to mimic an American government comprehensive exam and will test your theoretical and analytical understanding of the material for the course. The exam and will be worth 28% of your grade.

**Topic 1—The Mass Public and Belief Systems**
**Required Readings:**


Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


**Topic 2—Political Knowledge**

Required Readings:


Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


Topic 3—Information and Cognition

Required Readings:


Althaus, Scott. 2001. *Controversies*, Ch. 7

Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


Topic 4—Mobilization and Participation

Required Readings:


Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


Topic 5—The Nature of Public Opinion

Required Readings:

Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


**Topic 6—Public Opinion and Politics**

**Required Readings:**


**Topic 7—Political Tolerance:**

**Required Readings:**


**Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:**


**Topic 8—Civic Engagement**

**Required Readings:**

Putnam, Robert P. 2001. “Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America.” *Controversies, Ch. 3*


**Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:**


**Topic 9—Social Movements**

**Required Readings:**


**Topic 10—Party Identification**

**Required Readings:**

Niemi and Weisberg. *Controversies*, Ch. 17

Miller, Warren E. *Controversies*, Ch. 18

Green, Donald P., Bradley L. Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Controversies*, Ch. 19

**Topic 11—Voting and Elections**

**Required Readings:**


Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:


**Topic 12—Voting Debates**


Nadeau and Lewis-Beck *Controversies* Ch. 11


**Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:**


**Topic 13—Macro Politics**

**Required Readings:**


Green, Palmquist, and Schickler. 2001. *Controversies Ch. 19*


**Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:**


Jeff Manza, Fay Lomax Cook and Benjamin Page (Eds.), 2002. *Navigating Public Opinion*.

**Topic 14: The Media and Negative Advertising in Campaigns**

**Required Readings:**


**Supplemental, Additional works, and classics:**


