POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
Political Science 904 (Seminar 1). Fall 2012. T 1:20-3:15, North Hall 422 Ogg Room

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Mailbox: In the lounge across the hall from 110 North Hall. (Enter the door closest to the Lincoln statue. The lounge will be on your right. Once you enter that room, faculty mailboxes are to the left.)

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:
The purpose of this course is to expose you to leading research in the field of political participation that is exciting and showcases the best and most innovative methods in use today. The works chosen for this literature build on classic literature and yet address contemporary questions of importance to policy makers and residents of the United States (and beyond). The concentration of this course is on political participation and civic engagement in the American context. It also focuses on participation beyond elections, as that topic is covered in other courses taught in the political science department. We will primarily read books published by political scientists and articles published in political science journals. However, the students enrolled in this course represent a variety of fields, and I very much encourage interdisciplinarity in our discussions and in your writing and thinking about the topic. I consider this seminar to be a collective adventure, and I am very much looking forward to it.

REQUIREMENTS:
You will each write a set of one-page reaction papers, a term paper proposal, and a term paper.

Term paper and proposal: The term paper is due Thursday, December 13. This will be either a thorough research design (which explains and justifies a research question via a thorough literature review, and details the methods you wish to pursue to investigate it), or a report of original research that takes the form of a journal article. Your choice to pursue either a research paper or a research design should be driven by your familiarity with the literature in the area in which you wish to pursue research. You will each be responsible for a thorough understanding of the literature on the topic of your choosing and for formulating a question that is important. That is, your papers should ask a question that addresses a gap in existing literature and whose answer would contribute to
scholarship and the broader public. If you can formulate such a question and collect data within the first month or so of class, I strongly encourage you to write a research paper. Otherwise, invest your time in writing a research design paper. The papers should be a concise and focused 17 to 20 pages. A 2-3 page proposal is due September 25th.

**Reaction papers:** If you choose to write a research paper, you are responsible for 4 one-page reaction papers. If you choose to write a research design, you are responsible for 6 reaction papers. You may choose which weeks you write these papers, though I encourage you to spread them throughout the course of the term. On the weeks that you write a paper, it is due via email to the class email list (polisci904-1-f12@lists.wisc.edu) by noon on the Monday before class. These papers should be reflections and/or critiques on a selection of that week’s readings. By critique, I mean an analysis of the claims, evidence, or methods, which can include praise as well as criticism. The best papers take the following form: They have a brief introduction that identifies a key argument or claim mentioned or implied in the week’s readings. The body of the paper then gives a careful and thorough analysis of the evidence the week’s readings have on this particular point. This analysis involves ransacking the week’s readings for as much evidence to assess the question that interests you. This is followed by your reading of this evidence in light of other research or current events with which you are familiar. In other words, the papers focus on *one point*, probe the week’s readings for all the details and evidence they have to offer on this point, and include your own original insight. Citing specific pages is encouraged. These papers will be graded. Even if you are auditing the class, I strongly encourage you to write six of these papers.

**We will take turns leading the seminar discussions.** For roughly the first half of class, one of you will lead the discussion. After a very brief break, I will lead discussion. (We can switch this order on a given day if the discussion leader prefers.) You will sign up for a class to lead on the second day of class.

**Grading:**

I will only give an incomplete for this course under rare circumstances. Your grade will depend on your performance on the short papers (25%), your participation in class discussions including the day you lead discussion (quality of participation weighted by volume of participation, to count as another 25%), and the term paper (50%). I will grade on an A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+ etc. basis, even though final grades are assigned on an A, AB, B, BC, C basis.

**Course materials:**

The following books are required for the course. They are all available at University Book Store. They are also available in the reserve room at College Library. Most of the articles and book chapters are available through the UW Library system (use the “Find-It” button on the UW Library home page to locate the pdf files. Here’s the web link for the Find-It tool: [http://sfx.wisconsin.edu/wisc/cgi/core/citation-linker.cgi?rft.genre=journal](http://sfx.wisconsin.edu/wisc/cgi/core/citation-linker.cgi?rft.genre=journal). Entering the journal title, year and start page usually gets
you to the pdf right away). I will make the remaining readings available to you (these are designated with an asterisk).


**CALENDAR**

9/4
1. Introduction

9/11
2. Classic models of participation


******Sign up to lead one session of class today.******

9/18
3. Power


9/25
4. Inequality


DUE: Short (2-3 pages) term paper proposal. Include question you are addressing, a brief overview of previous research relevant to your question, and an explanation of why the question is important for the advance of scholarship.

10/2
5. Political Efficacy


10/9
6. Barriers to Participation


10/16
7. Policy Feedback


10/23
8. Political Socialization


10/30
9. Social Interaction


11/6
10. New Technology and Participation

11/13
11. Heterogeneity and Civic Engagement


11/20

12. Place


11/27

13. The Tea Party


12/4

14. Public Participation


12/11
15. *The Civic Engagement of Higher Education Institutions*


**Due: Brief research presentations.** (Length to be determined by number of participants in the seminar).

**Thursday, December 13th:** TERM PAPERS DUE via email by 5pm.