Required Texts:

In addition, assigned journal articles and book chapters (listed below) can be accessed via either (1) the Smathers Library e-journal link (www.uflib.ufl.edu, or off-campus using your gatorlink account at www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufproxy.html) or (2) electronic reserve at the library.

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to several major themes relating to public opinion, voting behavior, and political participation – primarily, though not exclusively, in the United States. How much do ordinary citizens know about politics and government? How complete is their understanding of important issues, and to what extent do their preferences on those issues guide their voting choices? Why don’t more Americans participate in politics, either at the polls or in other ways? Do low participation rates mean that the United States (or any other country) is less “democratic” than its citizens would like to believe? Why have people around the world become increasingly mistrustful of their governmental leaders and institutions? These are only a few of the questions that we will examine over the next few months.

Grades in this course will be based on the following:

- Midterm exam 20 percent (Tuesday, October 11, in class)
- Attendance and participation 20 percent
- Periodic written assignments 30 percent
- Final exam 30 percent (Wednesday, December 14, 7:30 a.m.)

The nature and content of midterm and final exams will be discussed in class. No make-ups will be given except in the case of a fully documented medical or other emergency; anyone who fails to take either exam without such documentation will receive a score of zero. The attendance/participation component of your grade will be determined using three criteria: (a) daily attendance sign-in (I will provide the sheet of paper, but you are responsible for ensuring that your name is on it); (b) an informed (showing familiarity with assigned readings) contribution to class discussions; and (c) an occasional pop quiz covering those readings (questions will be simple and answers obvious for anyone who has done the work).
The written assignments are based on thirteen topics that correspond to the course outline provided below. In each instance, students are required to find an internet reading relevant to the topic and to write a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced) essay briefly summarizing the content that reading and relating it to themes covered in class. For the thirteen topics listed, you should choose six on which to write essays (all of which will be graded for content and grammar and returned with comments). Don't lose track of where you stand because there will be no opportunities for extra credit at the end.

Minus grades will (if appropriate) be assigned in this course. Information about grades and grading policies at UF can be found at: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

Students are bound by the University of Florida's Student Code of Conduct. Anyone who commits an act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on exams or committing plagiarism on the written essays, will suffer appropriate sanctions and be referred to university authorities for further action.

Any student with a handicap or special need should notify me (and coordinate with Student Services at 202 Peabody Hall) as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. Every effort will be made to accommodate your situation within the guidelines set forth by the university.

A class listserv has been established so that I can send you occasional announcements and keep you informed about any changes that might occur in the schedule. You are automatically on the list by virtue of being enrolled in this course. You must, however, be sure either to check the email in your gatorlink account on a regular basis, or to forward all gatorlink messages to an account that you use more frequently.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1 (Aug 22-26): Introduction**
Assigned Reading:
- Flanigan-Zingale, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Norrander-Wilcox, Introduction.

**Week 2 (Aug 29-Sep 2): Measuring Public Opinion**
Assigned Reading:
- Flanigan-Zingale, Appendix (pp. 241-252).
- David W. Moore, *The Opinion Makers: An Insider Exposes the Truth behind the Polls* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), Chapters 1, 4 (pp. 1-17, 58-80).

**Week 3 (Sep 5-9): Voter Competence**
Assigned Reading:
Internet essay #1 due Sep 6 (topic: polling)

Week 4 (Sep 12-16): Partisanship
Assigned Reading:
Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 3.
Internet essay #2 due Sep 13 (topic: voter knowledge/competence)

Week 5 (Sep 19-23): Social Groups
Assigned Reading:
Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 5.
Norrander-Wilcox, Chapters 1-2.
Internet essay #3 due Sep 20 (topic: nature of partisanship)

Week 6 (Sep 26-30): Ideology
Assigned Reading:
Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 6.
Norrander-Wilcox, Chapter 8.
Internet essay #4 due Sep 27 (topic: group divisions in politics)

Week 7 (Oct 3-7): Voting Behavior
Assigned Reading:
Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 8.
Norrander-Wilcox, Chapter 11.
Drew Westen, The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), Chapters 1, 2 (pp. 3-44).
Internet essay #5 due Oct 4 (topic: ideology in public opinion)

Week 8 (Oct 10-14): Midterm Exam/Review
Internet essay #6 due Oct 11 (topic: voting behavior)

Weeks 9-10 (Oct 17-21, 24-28): Polarization/Realignment
Assigned Reading:
Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 4.
Theiss-Morse et al., 2011 Midterm Election Supplement (all).
Norrander-Wilcox, Chapter 9.

Internet essay #7 due Oct 25 (topic: polarization/realignment)

Week 11 (Oct 31-Nov 4): Issue Attitudes
Assigned Readings:
   Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 6 (review from week 6).
   Norrander-Wilcox, Chapters 3, 6, 7.

Internet essay #8 due Nov 1 (topic: election of 2010)

Week 12 (Nov 7-11): Civil Liberties, Terrorism, and War
Assigned Readings:
   Norrander-Wilcox, Chapters 4, 5, 12.

Internet essay #9 due Nov 8 (topic: public opinion on domestic issues)

Week 13 (Nov 14-18): Turnout and Participation
Assigned Readings:
   Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 2.

Internet essay #10 due Nov 15 (topic: public opinion on international/defense issues)

Week 14 (Nov 21-25/Thanksgiving): Citizen Mistrust
Assigned Readings:
   Norrander-Wilcox, Chapter 10.

Internet essay #11 due Nov 22 (topic: turnout/participation)
Week 15 (Nov 28- Dec 2): Political Communication

Assigned Readings:
  Flanigan-Zingale, Chapter 7.

Internet essay #12 due Nov 29 (topic: citizen mistrust of government)

Week 16 (Dec 5-9): Review

No assigned readings.

Internet essay #13 due Dec 6 (topic: campaigns/political persuasion)

Note: It is expected that all internet essays will represent original work by students (or, when the work of others is referenced, include proper citations). To ensure that this is the case, essays must be submitted to an online plagiarism service called turnitin.com. Here is how it works:

The first step is that you need to create a student profile:
1. go to www.turnitin.com
2. click on create user profile
3. fill in your personal email address
4. fill in your personal password
5. type of user: choose student
6. enter class ID (4200278) and password (vote)
7. follow instructions

To log in after creating profile:
1. enter your personal email and password in the box on the upper right hand corner of the home page www.turnitin.com
2. click on POS 3204
3. from there you can submit your paper, just like adding an attachment to an email

Each essay has its own assignment folder. The procedure that you should follow is to (1) give a hard copy of their essay to me during class on the dates specified above, and (2) submit an electronic copy to turnitin.com at some point on the same day. Any assignment that is turned in late (without approval of the instructor) will be docked one letter grade per day. Any assignment that does not constitute original work by the author will be subject to penalties consistent with the UF Code of Student Conduct.