Required Texts:

In addition, assigned journal articles and book chapters (listed below) can be accessed via either (1) the Smathers Library e-journal link (on-campus at www.uflib.ufl.edu; off-campus with your gatorlink account at www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufproxy.html); or (2) UF e-Learning Support Services at https://lss.at.ufl.edu/.

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 citizens become increasingly mistrustful of their governmental leaders and institutions? These are just 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 (Thursday, Oct 12, in class)
- Attendance and participation: 20 percent
- Periodic written assignments: 30 percent
- Final exam: 30 percent (Monday, Dec 11, 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) informed (showing familiarity with assigned readings) contributions 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 topics identified by the course outline provided below. In each instance, students will find an Internet reading relevant to the topic and prepare a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced) essay briefly summarizing the content of that reading and relating it to themes covered in class. For the twelve 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. Note: Internet articles that appear on the syllabus or are discussed in class should not be selected for these assignments.

TWO NOTES: First, a hard copy of both your essay and the Internet article on which it is based should be handed in during class on the day the essay is due. Second, the main purpose of these assignments is for you to
see how ideas discussed in class play out in the real world – so do not base your essay on an academic source (journal article or book chapter) without first getting approval of the instructor. Material written by academics, or about academic research, for a lay audience is acceptable.

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**

Note: Readings highlighted in blue have been/will be posted on e-learning (Canvas).

**Aug 22: Introduction**

**Week 1 (Aug 24): Measuring Public Opinion**
Assigned Readings:

**Week 2 (Aug 28-Sep 1): Voter Competence**
Assigned Readings:
Brian Schaffner and Samantha Luks, "This Is What Trump Voters Said When Asked to Compare His Inauguration Crowd with Obama's," Monkey Cage (1/25/17).
Internet essay #1 due Aug 31 (topic: polling).

**Week 3 (Sep 4-8): Partisanship**
Assigned Readings:
John Sides, "Democrats Are Gay, Republicans Are Rich: Our Stereotypes of Political Parties Are Amazingly


Matt Grossman and David A. Hopkins, "Republicans and Democrats Can't Even Agree about How They Disagree," *Monkey Cage* (9/7/16).


Intenet essay #2 due Sep 7 (topic: voter knowledge/competence).

**Week 4 (Sep 11-15): Ideology**

**Assigned Readings:**


Internet essay #3 due Sep 14 (topic: partisanship).

**Week 5 (Sep 18-22): Political Learning: Where Do Our Opinions Come From?**

**Assigned Readings:**


Internet essay #4 due Sep 21 (topic: ideology).

**Week 6 (Sep 25-29): Social Groups/Group Conflict**

**Assigned Readings:**

Sabato et al., *Trumped: The 2016 Election That Broke All the Rules*, Chapters 2, 8, 9, 13.


Michael Tesler, "The Education Gap among Whites This Year Wasn't about Education. It Was about Race," *Monkey Cage* (11/16/16).


Internet essay #5 due Sep 28 (topic: political learning).
Week 7 (Oct 2-6) Voting Behavior
Assigned Readings:
Sabato et al., *Trumped: The 2016 Election That Broke All the Rules*, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7 (review Chapter 13).
Internet essay #6 due Oct 5 (topic: social groups)

Week 8 (Oct 9-13): Midterm Review/Exam
Exam: Oct 12 in class.
Internet essay #7 due Oct 12 (topic: voting behavior).

Weeks 9-10 (Oct 16-20, 23-27): Polarization/Realignment
Assigned Readings:
Pew Research Center, "A Wider Ideological Gap between More and Less Educated Adults: Political Polarization Update" (4/26/16), all.
Matt Levendusky and Neil Malhotra, "The Media Make Us Think We're More Polarized Than We Really Are," *Monkey Cage* (2/5/14).
Ross Butters and Christopher Hare, "Three-Quarters of Americans Regularly Talk Politics Only with Members of Their Own Political Tribe," *Monkey Cage* (5/1/17).
No Internet essays due (note that students may write only one essay on this topic, due Nov 2).

Week 11 (Oct 30-Nov 3): Issue Attitudes, Home and Abroad
Assigned Readings:
Shibley Telhami, "Americans Dislike the Islamic State More than Putin or Assad. Here's How This Shapes Policy Preferences," *Monkey Cage* (11/1/16).
Internet essay #8 due Nov 2 (topic: polarization/realignment).
Week 12 (Nov 6-10): Turnout and Participation
Assigned Readings:

Internet essay #9 due Nov 9 (topic: issue attitudes).

Week 13 (Nov 13-17): Campaign Effects/Political Communication
Assigned Readings:
John Sides (channeling Eitan Hersh), "The Real Story about How Data-Driven Campaigns Target Voters," *Monkey Cage* (7/9/15).

Internet essay #10 due Nov 21 (topic: turnout/participation).
No class on Nov 21 or Nov 23 (Thanksgiving).

Week 14 (Nov 27-Dec 1): Representation and Linkage
Assigned Readings:
John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "A Surprising Number of Americans Dislike How Messy Democracy Is. They Like Trump." *Monkey Cage* (5/2/16).

Internet essay #11 due Nov 30 (topic: campaign effects).

Dec 5: Final exam review, Internet essay #12 due (topic: representation and linkage).
Note: All Internet essays should represent original work by students (or, when the work of others is referenced, provide 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 (15898978) and password (trumpworld)
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.

Some advice about the essays:
A student in this class once wrote me and asked for a “detailed” description of what I was looking for in the weekly essays. Although we had talked about it in class, the student was confused – and, assuming that she wasn’t alone, I decided to send my answer to the class listserv. Here is an expanded version of that answer . . .

Start with what’s on the syllabus: “The written assignments are based on topics identified by the course outline provided below. In each instance, students will find an Internet reading relevant to the topic (note: this should not be a published academic study, though it can be an article about academic research that is written for a lay audience) and prepare a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced) essay briefly summarizing the content of that reading and relating it to themes covered in class.”

That last part in italics is the crux of it. Do not spend too much time summarizing the article. (I'll read the hard copy you turn in.) Instead, give me a quick overview of whatever aspect of the article you plan to focus on (some articles only have one, others have several) -- and then discuss it with reference to (a) class lectures, (b) assigned readings, and/or (c) additional relevant readings that you may find on your own (this last one isn’t a requirement, but in some cases going at least a little beyond the course material will help you to write a better essay). Remember: The way I teach this course is to use academic studies and other empirical data (from media and think-tank surveys, etc.) to help students gain a better understanding of the political environment in the United States. Your goal in these essays is to show me that you can make the connection.
Word of caution #1: Personal opinions – mine included – don’t carry much weight here. Observations that are grounded in evidence and/or logic are much more important.

Word of caution #2: Any assertion or statement of fact that is not your own, and is not a matter of what might be called “common knowledge” (including course readings and lectures) should be cited.

Word of caution #3, repeating what I said above: A short summary of the article is ok, a long one not so much. Analyze, don’t summarize.