

# political participation

PSCI 5901.003/7901.003  
Fall 2007  
T 12:30-3:00 P.M.  
116 Ketchum  
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Hours: W 1-3 P.M.  
and by appointment

Why do people choose to participate or not participate in politics? Normatively, good citizenship suggests a requirement for people to be attentive and participatory in politics. However, patterns of political participation often fall short of normative ideals – with unequal participation by socioeconomic status, low voter turnout, and declining social capital. In this course, we will consider who participates in politics and why, considering both individual level and institutional explanations for political action. We will begin by considering patterns of public involvement in politics and the consequences of political participation. Next, we will investigate a range of explanations for why some are more likely to participate in politics than others. We will then explore the causes and consequences of social capital. Finally, we will consider citizen participation in social movements, including how collective action problems can be overcome, the psychology of social identity in participation, and why people protest and challenge their government.

## reading assignments

Most of the course readings include book chapters and journal articles, available on e-reserves or online journals. Three books have also been assigned and are available at the University Bookstore.

- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

## requirements

### participation *(worth 20% of your final grade)*

It is essential that you not only attend class, but also actively engage in class discussions. For two of the weeks, you will also be responsible for leading class discussion.

### ten short papers *(each worth 4% of your final grade)*

Throughout the course, you will be responsible for ten short papers in response to a week's readings. These response papers should be single-spaced and one to two pages in length, and turned in before we discuss that week's set of readings. Papers should not summarize the readings, but instead add some novel insights to the points raised in the readings. For instance, you might critique the theory or methods of the

research, discussing the implications of these limitations for the authors' findings. You might extend points raised in the readings, suggesting questions we might ask if we pushed these arguments further. You might also synthesize readings on a topic with other theories covered in this class or other courses. Or you could discuss points of conflict between the readings, and discuss how to resolve these disagreements.

### **research paper** *(worth 40% of your final grade)*

The final project for this class will be to develop a research paper that tests an interesting question about political participation. This paper will resemble the format of the kinds of academic papers read in class – including development of a research question, a review of relevant literature, theory, tests of these explanations, and interpretation of what you find. The paper should be 15-25 pages in length. Additional guidelines will be detailed in a separate handout.

## **special accommodations**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You can contact the Disability Services office for more information at [www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

## **some important comments on academic integrity**

- Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me or refer to the University Honor Code at [www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode). Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Honor Court for additional non-academic sanctions.
- All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

# class schedule – political participation - Fall 2007

## 1. Introduction to political participation

### About the class.

Tuesday, August 28

## 2. Describing how and when people participate

### Levels of participation, trends in turnout and participation over time.

Tuesday, September 4

- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Introduction, Chapters 1-3.
- Franklin, Mark N. 2004. *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.
- McDonald, Michael P., and Samuel Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter." *American Political Science Review* 95(4):963-974.

## 3. Consequences of participation

### Why participation matters: outcomes, representation, inequalities in participation.

Tuesday, September 11

- Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 91(1):1-14.
- Citrin, Jack, Eric Schickler, and John Sides. 2003. "What if Everyone Voted? Simulating the Impact of Increased Turnout in Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1):75-90.
- Griffin, John D., and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are Voters Better Represented?" *Journal of Politics* 67(4):1206-1227.
- Verba, Sidney. 2003. "Would the Dream of Political Equality Turn Out to Be a Nightmare?" *Perspectives on Politics* 1(4):663-680.
- Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3):543-565.

## 4. Why people vote

### The rationality of voting and participating

Tuesday, September 18

- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 4.
- Riker, William, and Peter Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62(1):25-42.
- Meehl, Paul. 1977. "The Selfish Voter Paradox and the Thrown-Away Vote Argument." *American Political Science Review* 71(1):11-31.

- Bendor, Jonathan, Daniel Diermeier, and Michael Ting. 2003. "A Behavioral Model of Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 97(2):261-280.
- Green, Donald P., and Jonathan A. Cowden. 1992. "Who Protests: Self-Interest and White Opposition to Busing." *Journal of Politics* 54(2):471-496.

## 5. Socioeconomic status and political participation

### Socioeconomic biases in participation, the resource model of participation.

Tuesday, September 25

- Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. 1992. "Socioeconomic Bias in Turnout, 1964-1988: The Voters Remain the Same." *American Political Science Review* 86(3):725-736.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 6-12.

## 6. Age and participation

### Age effects and turnout, Political socialization and participation.

Tuesday, October 2

- Fowler, James H. 2006. "Altruism and Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 68(3): 674-683.
- Beck, Paul Allen, and M. Kent Jennings. 1982. "Pathways to Participation." *The American Political Science Review* 76(1):94-108.
- Campbell, David E. 2006. *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5.
- Plutzer, Eric. 2002. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood." *American Political Science Review* 96:41-56.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 15.
- Franklin, Mark N. 2004. *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.

## 7. The consequences of institutional design

### Cross-national differences in participation, Individual differences versus institutions in explaining turnout.

Tuesday, October 9

- Powell, G. Bingham, Jr. 1986. "American Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 80(1):17-44.
- Jackman, Robert W. 1987. "Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 81:405-423.
- Soss, Joe. 1999. "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action." *American Political Science Review* 93(2):363-380.
- Franklin, Mark N. 2004. *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4-5.

## 8. State rules and neighborhood contexts

### Registration laws, electoral reform, social networks.

Tuesday, October 16

- Cho, Wendy K. Tam, James Gimpel, and Joshua Dyck. 2006. "Residential Concentration, Political Socialization, and Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 68(1):156-67.
- McClurg, Scott D. 2003. "Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly*. 56(4):449-464.
- Brown, Robert D., Robert A. Jackson, and Gerald C. Wright. 1999. "Registration, Turnout, and State Party Systems." *Political Research Quarterly* 52(3):463-480.
- Mitchell, Glenn E., and Christopher Wlezien. 1995. "The Impact of Legal Constraints on Voter Registration, Turnout, and the Composition of the American Electorate." *Political Behavior* 17:179-202.
- Berinsky, Adam J. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States." *American Politics Research* 33: 471-491.

## 9. Recruitment & race

### Who is recruited to participate? How representative are activists? What explains minority participation?

Tuesday, October 23

- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 13-14, 16-17.
- Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84(2):377-393.
- Leighley, Jan E. 2001. *Strength in Numbers? The Political Mobilization of Racial and Ethnic Minorities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 2-4.

## 10. Political mobilization

### Mobilization by campaigns, parties, and groups

Tuesday, October 30

- Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. Chapter 6.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1992. "Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvas." *American Political Science Review* 86(1):70-86.
- Jackson, Robert A. 2002. "Gubernatorial and Senatorial Campaign Mobilization of Voters." *Political Research Quarterly* 55(4):825-44.
- Gray, Mark, and Miki Caul. 2000. "Declining Voter Turnout in Advanced Industrial Democracies, 1950 to 1997: The Effects of Declining Group Mobilization." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(9): 1091-1122.
- Goldstein, Kenneth M., and Travis N. Ridout. 2002. "The Politics of Participation: Mobilization and Turnout over Time." *Political Behavior* 24(1):3-29.

## 11. Social capital

### The consequences of community participation and interpersonal trust.

Tuesday, November 6

- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

## 12. Even more social capital

### Replies to Putnam. Representativeness. Diversity.

Tuesday, November 13

- Norris, Pippa. 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 8.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1999. "Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic Engagement." In Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 11.
- Norris, Pippa. 1996. "Does Television Erode Social Capital? A Reply to Putnam." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29(3):474-480.
- Hero, Rodney E. 2003. "Social Capital and Racial Inequality in America." *Perspectives in Politics* 1(1):113-122.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2007. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century - The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30 (2):137-174.

### Class does not meet – Fall Break

Tuesday, November 20

## 13. Collective action

### How collective action problems can be overcome in social activism.

Tuesday, November 27

- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## 14. Social movements

### Social identity. Social movements. How groups encourage participation.

Tuesday, December 4

- Skocpol, Theda. 1999. "How Americans Became Civic." In Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 2.
- Simon, Bernd, Michael Loewy, Stefan Stuermer, Ulrike Weber, Peter Freytag, Corinna Habig, Claudia Kampmeier, and Peter Spahlinger. 1998. "Collective Identification and Social Movement Participation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74:646-658.

- Miller, Arthur H., Patricia Gurian, Gerald Gurian, and Oksana Malanchuk. 1981. "Group Consciousness and Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 25:494-511.
- Wright, Stephen C., Donald M. Taylor, and Fathali M. Moghaddam. 1990. "Responding to Membership in a Disadvantaged Group: From Acceptance to Collective Protest." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58(6):994-1003.
- Finkel, Steven E., and Karl-Dieter Opp. 1991. "Party Identification and Participation in Collective Political Action." *Journal of Politics* 53:339-71.

## 15. Protest participation

### Why people protest government. Social capital building exercise.

Tuesday, December 11

- Norris, Pippa, Stefaan Walgrave, and Peter Van Aelst. 2005. "Who Demonstrates? Antistate Rebels, Conventional Participants, or Everyone?" *Comparative Politics* 37(2):189-205.
- Benson, Michelle, and Thomas R. Rochon. 2004. "Interpersonal Trust and the Magnitude of Protest: A Micro and Macro-Level Approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 37:435-457.
- Gibson, James L. 1997. "Mass Opposition to the Soviet Putsch of August 1991: Collective Action, Rational Choice, and Democratic Values in the Former Soviet Union." *American Political Science Review* 91(3):671-684.
- Booth, John A., and Mitchell A. Seligson. 2005. "Political Legitimacy and Participation in Costa Rica: Evidence of Arena Shopping." *Political Research Quarterly* 58(4):537-550.