

**Political Science 118-02**  
**Political Participation and Mass Behavior in the U.S.**  
**Spring 2012**

Professor Natalie Masuoka  
**Office:** 309 Packard  
**Office Hours:** Mon 3-4, Wed 12-1 and by appt  
**Email:** [natalie.masuoka@tufts.edu](mailto:natalie.masuoka@tufts.edu)

**Class meeting times:** MW 4:30-5:45 (K+ block)  
**Class location:** Barnum 104  
**Class Website:** Enter through Trunk

**Teaching Assistant:** Farah Bushashia  
**Email:** [farah.bushashia@bc.edu](mailto:farah.bushashia@bc.edu)

***COURSE OVERVIEW***

Who participates in politics and why? Some of us are political junkies: we watch CNN religiously, discuss policy issues with our friends and own one too many campaign buttons. Others would rather jump off a cliff than be forced to watch the presidential debates on television. Although all Americans are provided some opportunity to participate in politics, not everyone chooses to partake. What are the factors that explain why some of us are participatory and others are not? In this course, we will identify and discuss the different forms of political participation as well as the theories that attempt to explain the motivation behind these behaviors. We will also consider the implications of political participation on the health and vitality of democracy by addressing the question: does participation really matter?

Although political scientists have been debating these questions for decades, major new developments in internet technology have changed what we know about social interaction. If it hasn't already, the internet will also influence how people engage in politics. Before the internet, personal communication was key to political success: political campaigning was about face-to-face contact and interaction. Today, we can post a comment to a blogger living 3,000 miles away or donate to a campaign without ever having to leave the comforts of our own home. Indeed, Obama's success was largely credited to his grassroots campaign—via the internet. An underlining theme in this course will be to consider how the internet will change our theories about individual political behavior.

This course satisfies the methodology requirement for the political science major.

***COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS***

1. The study of political behavior largely consists of two important dimensions which we will learn about in this course: the theoretical underpinnings that attempt to explain political participation and the assessment of empirical evidence used to support a given theory. To that end, this course will include both a seminar/discussion component and a research component. My hope is that, by the end of the semester, you will become both knowledge consumers *and* producers.
2. Each week we will discuss one theory or debate considering political participation in the United States. While there is information that I would like you to know, deliberation and discussion are important dimensions to learning. One important component to this course will be structured debates that we will hold eight times over the semester. The format of these debates is described below. To ensure that our debates are worthwhile, I expect everyone to come to the class prepared to discuss. For respect to your peers, I also ask that *all laptops and electronics be powered off on debate days*.

3. You will also be responsible for developing and testing your own hypothesis about political participation. This semester-long project will include both a qualitative and quantitative component. To help walk you through this project, we will review topics on political science research methods. I do not assume prior research experience before taking this class and will review all skills needed to complete these papers. Please note in the schedule that we will be holding some classes in the computer lab during the semester.
4. I recognize that both the debate and research components for this course place significant emphasis on social science research skills. While I try to cover basic skills in class, I encourage you to stop by my office hours to further discuss your papers and debate topics.

### ***REQUIRED READINGS***

We will use the following textbooks for this course:

Creswell, John. 2009. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sunstein, Cass. 2007. Republic.com 2.0. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry Brady. 1995. Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

In addition to these above textbooks, we will read academic journal articles which I have provided on Trunk as well as book excerpts which will be provided in an electronic course reader. The electronic reader will be purchased from University Readers. Directions for purchasing the reader are provided on the Trunk website.

All assigned readings must be completed by the day they are assigned on the schedule of readings.

### ***COURSE EVALUATION***

#### **Class Debate**

Over the course of the semester, we will hold 8 class debates regarding some of the ongoing academic concerns related to political participation and democracy. Each debate will be between two opposing sides to the issue. Each side will be officially represented by three students (thus, six students in total will present during each debate). There will be two assignments related to debate days: 1) team oral presentations of the assigned position on the issue. I expect that each team of three will meet, discuss and strategize how to present their position before the day of their assigned debate. 2) A hard copy submission of the team's bibliography of sources used in the debate. I expect each team to integrate the assigned readings for that debate. In addition, each team member must also submit at least two new academic sources which will be referenced in the debate. You will be graded on both your ability to provide a strong position and individual effort exercised during the debate.

After presenters have explained their positions, we will open up class discussion and Q&A with the presenters. On days you will not be a formal presenter for the debates (i.e. part of the audience), I expect full participation during the second Q&A portion of the debate. To ensure participation, I will take attendance on debate days and this will be calculated into your final debate score.

Signups for debates will begin on the first day class and function on a first come, first served basis. All students must sign up for their debate no later than Friday, Jan 27 (those that do not volunteer by that time will be assigned to a team). In total, class debate participation will represent 25% of your final grade.

### **Research Project**

Over the semester you will help contribute to our knowledge in the political behavior subfield by formulating and testing a hypothesis on political behavior.

*Part I: Exploratory Data:* In this first paper, you will gather preliminary evidence to help formulate a hypothesis. To do this you will interview a minimum of 5 individuals about their political involvement and the reasons why they have chosen to participate. You will then assess how existing theories are able to explain your interviewees' behavior and if there are any weaknesses in these theories. This first paper will represent 25% of your final grade.

*Part II: Quantitative Data Analysis:* In this second paper, you will use simple statistical techniques to test a hypothesis using data from the American National Election Study. I do not expect you to arrive to this course with extensive statistical skills. I will review all of the necessary skills needed to complete this assignment and will hold two computer lab sessions to learn the computer software program. This second paper will represent 25% of your final grade.

### **Final Exam**

This will be a take-home essay exam and will be worth 25% of your final grade.

### ***GRADING***

I will not offer incompletes for this course. Late projects will be marked down the equivalent of a half of a letter grade for each 24 hour period in which they are late. I will honor exceptions to this policy only in cases of unanticipated personal or family emergencies with written documentation. Absences from class will only be excused upon approval by the instructor.

Your final course grade is broken down as follows:

Class Debate	25%
Paper #1: Interview project	25%
Paper #2: Quantitative analysis	25%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>25%</u>
<i>Final Grade Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Academic Integrity:** I trust that each student will strictly adhere to the Tufts Academic Integrity Standard. I remind the class that cheating in any form is prohibited and will result in an automatic fail for the course.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

**NOTES:**

Please read in the order listed in the syllabus

VSB= Verba Schlozman and Brady

“TK” denotes those readings provided on Trunk. “CR” those found in course reader.

<b>Week 1: Thinking about Political Participation</b>	
Mon (1/23) Lecture	<b>Introduction and Welcome</b>
Wed (1/25) Lecture	<b>Forms of Participation</b> VSB chs 2-4
<b>Week 2: The Baseline Model: Socioeconomic Status (SES)</b>	
Mon (1/30) Lecture	<b>How to Analyze Political Behavior, Part I</b> Creswell, chs 1-2, 9
Wed (2/1) Lecture	<b>The “Baseline” Model</b> VSB: chs 7 and 10 TK: Nie, Powell, and Prewitt, “Social Structure and Pol Particip”
<b>Week 3: Critiques of the SES Model</b>	
Mon (2/6) Lecture	<b>Is Education the Magic Bullet?</b> VSB ch 11 CR: Nie, Junn and Steik-Barry, “Edu and Dem Citizenship” chs 1, 6 and 11
Wed (2/8) Lecture	<b>Structural Constraints: Case Study on Gender</b> TK: Verba, Burns and Schlozman, “Knowing and Caring about Politics” TK: Burns, “Finding Gender” (article on pgs 137-141) TK: Fox and Lawless, “Entering the Arena?”
<b>Week 4: Political Socialization</b>	
Mon (2/13) Lecture	<b>Political Socialization</b> TK: Niemi and Sobieszek, “Political Socialization” TK: Cho, “Naturalization, Socialization, Participation” TK: Wong and Tseng, “Political Socialisation in Immigrant Families”
Wed (2/15) Debate	<b>Debate #1: How do we learn our politics: Nurture vs Nature?</b> <b>Side #1: Nurture—socialization matters</b> <b>Side #2: Nature—we are predisposed to certain behaviors and preferences</b>  TK: Charney, “Genes and Ideologies” TK: Alford Funk and Hibbing, “Beyond Liberals and Conservatives to Political Genotypes and Phenotypes” CR: Hetherington, “Authoritarianism and Polarization” Ch 2

<b>Week 5: Political Engagement</b> <b>**Note we meet on Thursday this week**</b>	
Mon 2/20	<u>**President's Day – No Classes**</u>
Wed (2/22) Lecture	<b>Political Engagement</b> VSB chs 12 and 14 TK: Brader, “Striking a Responsive Chord”
<u>Thurs (2/23)</u> Debate	<u>Note: Switch to Monday's Schedule</u> <b>Debate #2: Media Effects: Do Negative Ads Dampen Participation?</b> <b>Side #1: Ads demobilize the electorate</b> <b>Side #2 Ads have no effect or possibly mobilize the electorate</b>  TK: Ansolabehere et al. “Does Attack Advertising Demobilize?” TK: Brooks and Geer, “Beyond Negativity” TK: Lau and Pomper, “Effectiveness of Negative Campaigning in US Senate Elections”
<b>Week 6: Get Out the Vote!: Political Mobilization</b>	
Mon (2/27) Lecture	<b>Political Mobilization</b> VSB: Ch 13 TK: Leighley, “Group Membership and the Mobilization of Pol Participation” TK: Fowler, “The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations”
Wed (2/29) Debate	<b>Debate #3: What is the Role of Political Parties?</b> <b>Side #1: Parties are declining and so is the role of partisanship</b> <b>Side #2: Parties and Party ID continue to play significant roles in politics</b>  TK: Wattenberg, “Decline of Political Partisanship in the US” TK: Wattenberg, “From Parties to Candidates” TK: Hetherington, “Resurgent Mass Partisanship”  <u>Qualitative paper #1 due at beginning of class</u>
<b>Week 7: Social Movements</b>	
Mon (3/5) Lecture	<b>Social Movements</b> TK: McAdam, “Recruitment to High Risk Activism” TK: Meyer and Boutcher, “Signals and Spillover” TK: McAdam and Su, “The War at Home”
Wed (3/7) Lecture	<b>How to Analyze Political Behavior, Part II</b> Creswell, chs 5-8
<b>Week 8 (Mar 12 and 14): Quantitative Research Design</b> <b>**Meet in Computer Lab (Eaton 208)</b>	

<b>Week 9 (Mar 19 and 21): Spring Break – No Classes</b>	
<b>Week 10: Participation and Rational Choice</b>	
Mon (3/26) Lecture	<b>Rational Choice in Politics</b> CR: Chong, “Rational Lives” ch 1 CR: Olson, “The Logic of Collective Action,” ch 2 TK: Chong, Citrin and Conley, “When Self-interest Matters”
Wed (3/28) Debate	<b>Debate #4: How Rational is it to Participate?</b> <b>Side #1: It is rational to participate</b> <b>Side #2: It is irrational to participate</b>  CR: Blais, “To Vote or Not to Vote,” Intro and Conclusion TK: Monroe and Maher, “Psychology and Rational Actor Theory”
<b>Week 11: Political Apathy</b>	
Mon (4/2) Lecture	<b>Social Capital Hypothesis</b> TK: Putnam, “Tuning in, Tuning out” CR: Wuthnow, “Bridging the Privileged and Marginalized” CR: Skocpol, “From Membership to Advocacy”
Wed (4/4) Debate	<b>Debate #5: Are Americans Becoming Less Participatory?</b> <b>Side #1: Participation is in decline</b> <b>Side #2 Participation remains healthy</b>  CR: Wattenberg, “Where have all the voters gone?” Intro and ch1 TK: Dalton, “Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation” TK: McDonald and Popkin, “Myth of the Vanishing Voter”
<b>Week 12 (Apr 9 and 11): Race and Participation</b>	
Mon (4/9) Lecture	VSB, Ch 6 TK: Tate, “Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Pres Elections” TK: Chong and Kim, “Experiences and Effects of Economic Status”
Wed (4/11) Debate	<b>Debate #6: What is Required to Create More Equal Outcomes?</b> <b>Side #1: Government must help to ensure equality</b> <b>Side #2: Government intervention exacerbates the problem</b>  CR: Lublin, “Paradox of Representation” Intro, chs 1-2 TK: Gay, “Legislating Without Constraints” TK: Thernstrom, “Redistricting, Race and the Voting Rights Act” (pgs 6-10 only) TK: Thernstrom and Thernstrom, “Racial Gerrymandering is Unnecessary”
<b>Week 13: Participatory Equality</b>	
Mon (4/16)	<b><i>Patriots Day – No Classes</i></b>

Wed (4/18) Debate	<p><b>Debate #7: Does More Participation Create Better a Democracy?</b>  <b>Side #1: Increased participation leads to better democratic outcomes;</b>  <b>Side #2: Effective democracy is possible without full participation of citizens</b></p> <p>VSB: ch 17  TK: Junn, "Participation in Liberal Democracy"  CR: Luskin, "The Heavenly Public"  TK: Mill, "Considerations on Rep Government" ch 3</p>
<b>Week 14: New Information Wave: Participation Online</b>	
Mon (4/23) Lecture	<p><b>Participation via the Internet</b>  Sunstein, ch 1, 2 and 6</p> <p><u><i>Quantitative Paper #2 due at beginning of class</i></u></p>
Wed (4/25) Debate	<p><b>Debate #8 Will the Internet Revolutionize Political Behavior?</b>  <b>Side #1: Internet is changing how we engage in politics</b>  <b>Side #2: Internet has not created new changes and possibly is dampening democracy</b></p> <p>Sunstein chs 3-5</p>
<b>Week 15: Closing Remarks</b>	
Mon (4/30) Lecture	TBA
<b>Final Exam Due Wed May 9 at 2pm</b>	