

Minorities and the 2012 Elections
Political Science 129B / Chicano/Latino Studies 159

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11-1 and by appointment

Course Web Site: <https://eee.uci.edu/12f/67280>

Course Overview

This course analyzes the strategies used by minority communities to influence outcomes in the 2012 elections as well as efforts by candidates, campaigns, and political parties to mobilize and demobilize minority voters. We will use 2012 as a case study to analyze the broader influence of racial/ethnic minorities on U.S. electoral politics and to evaluate how the structure of contemporary U.S. elections benefits cohesive electorates and disadvantages more marginalized populations.

The class will be organized around three broad themes. First we will analyze how electoral systems and structures create opportunities and barriers to minority participation. Second, we will evaluate the influence of minority voters and non-voters in recent elections. Finally, we will assess how candidates understand the minority electorates and how they shape their campaign structures and messages around race and ethnicity.

Course Readings

Readings are taken from four sources. I will ask you to read three books. In addition, I will post additional readings as well as documents, journalistic articles and polling data to the class web site. Please note that I can't necessarily anticipate the news articles and polling data now, so they are not listed on this syllabus. You will need to keep an eye on the web site for additional readings that I'm assigning. These are most likely to appear in the couple of weeks just before and just after the election. I expect that you will read these posted articles as thoroughly as the assigned readings.

The books are:

Mayer, William, and Jonathan Bernstein, eds. 2012. *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2012*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Bowler, Shaun, and Gary M. Segura. 2012. *The Future is Ours: Minority Politics, Political Behavior, and the Multiracial Era of American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Abrajano, Marisa, and R. Michael Alvarez. 2010. *New Faces New Voices: The Hispanic Electorate in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

These books are available from local bookstores and are on reserve at the library. I have requested that the library put the books on reserve in Langson Library.

Course Requirements and Grading

I will evaluate your performance in the class in four ways. These include: 1) an analytical essay on course readings; 2) a midterm exam; 3) reviews of two documentaries on the management and operation of campaigns; and 4) an eight to ten-page research paper on group outreach in the 2012 elections.

All assignments should be submitted to Drop Box at EEE.

1) Analytical Essay: The attached analytical essay asks you to evaluate arguments made in course readings and themes raised in class discussions. You will be able to answer this question based on the course readings and I will not expect you to do additional research. Your essay should be four to six pages in length and appropriately cite your references.

This essay will be due by the beginning of class on November 6. It will contribute 25 percent to your final grade.

2) Midterm exam: The midterm exam is on November 20. The exam will likely include short answer and essay questions that will ask you to analyze and synthesize class readings, discussions, and lectures. The final form of the exam will be shaped by class input prior to the exam. I will welcome your input on how to design an exam that best tests your knowledge of the material.

The midterm will account for 25 percent of your final grade.

3) Research Paper on Campaign and Candidate Group Outreach in the 2012 Election. This exercise is described in greater detail in the attached assignment.

There are two deadlines associated with the research paper: A brief statement of the focus of your research paper will need to be submitted by October 16. This may be submitted by email to me. The research paper will be due on December 6. The research paper will make up 35 percent of your final grade.

4) Campaign Documentary Reviews: Each student will need to view two of the documentaries below (one from the state/local race group and one from the presidential race group) and write a two-page analysis addressing the following questions:

- a) For the documentary on a state or local race: "How does the candidate being profiled identify core constituencies and how does s/he reach out to them? How effective do you think this outreach is in this race?"
- b) For the documentary on a presidential race: "Based on the example of the election profiled in the documentary that you viewed, what role did campaign

professionals play in shaping the candidates' messages and outreach? How effective do you think this outreach is in this race?"

These documentary analyses will count for 15 percent of your final grade (7.5 percent each). The first one is due on October 9 and the second one is due on October 23.

The documentaries are all available at the Library Media Center, which has moved to the Ayala Science Library. The documentaries that you can view for this exercise are:

Documentaries of States and Local Races

A Perfect Candidate (1996) [E840.8.N67 P47 1996] – This documentary profiles the campaign of Oliver North (who came to national fame in the Iran-Contra scandal) for the U.S. Senate in Virginia in 1994. The documentarians were granted access to view the back-room machinations hatched by the candidates, their handlers, and the press.

Taking on the Kennedys (1996) [JK2281.T25 1996] – This documentary examines the 1994 Congressional election campaigns of Patrick Kennedy (son of then-Senator Edward Kennedy) and Kevin Vigilante in Rhode Island. It pays particular attention to the media images and advertisements in the campaigns and their role in shaping popular images of the candidates.

This Town is Not for Sale! (1999) [JS1450.53 A87 1999] – A profile of Debbie Jaramillo's successful campaign for mayor in Santa Fe, NM (in 1994). Of the documentaries available for review, this is the one that most explicitly analyzes the role of a Latino electorate.

See How they Run (2003) [F869.S357 S44 2003] – San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown's reelection was seemingly secure until he faced a challenge from a write-in candidate, an openly gay city supervisor and stand up comedian. This video analyzes how insurgent campaigns can change the terms of debate in a municipal race. Race and group identity are important subthemes.

Last Man Standing (2004) [JK4816 .L37 2004] – A profile of a Texas legislative race in which national and state-level issues are filtered through the local campaign strategies of legislative candidates in a competitive race.

Street Fight (2005) [JK3595 .S7 2005] – A profile of Cory Booker (the current mayor of Newark, NJ) in his first, unsuccessful, run for the office in 2002. Booker is a Stanford and Yale Law School grad and a Rhodes Scholar, but he's up against a street-smart incumbent, the up-from-the-ghetto Sharpe James, a man so popular he's both mayor and state senator. In style, Booker's a precursor to a more successful post-racial candidate: Barack Obama.

Documentaries of Presidential Races

The War Room (1993) [JK526 1992 .W37 1994] – A behind-the-scenes look at the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign. This documentary is in many ways the model for each of the others below. Simultaneously, the "war room" that is profiled is the model that all

subsequent presidential campaigns have followed in terms of how to structure their ability to respond to criticism and to attack their opponents.

Primary [1961] [JK275.W5 P756 1961] – This profiles presidential campaigning in a very different era, specifically the 1960 Wisconsin Democratic Presidential Primary when Sen. John F. Kennedy upset Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey.

Journeys With George (2002) [JK526 1996 J68 2003] – NBC producer Alexandra Pelosi (former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's daughter) follows presidential hopeful George W. Bush on the campaign trail. This documentary is the most explicit analysis of the role of the press in the campaign process.

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

September 27 – Course Introduction and Overview: Why focus our energies on the study of minority electorates?

Week One (October 2 & 4) – The Structure of Elections in the United States and the Influence of the Structures on Minority Participation

READINGS:

- 1) Mayer and Bernstein, chapters 2-7 (pp. 23-202).
- 2) U.S. Constitution (posted to class website), particularly Article 1, sections 2-5, Article 2, section 1, Article 4, section 4, and the 12th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 26th Amendments.

Week Two (October 9 & 11) – Demography and Political Destiny in Minority Communities?

READINGS:

- 1) Bowler and Segura, chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-115)
- 2) Abrajano and Alvarez, Introduction and chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-73)
- 3) Mayer and Bernstein, Appendix A-9 (pp. 221-224)

Campaign Documentary Review #1 (on a state/local race) due in Drop Box October 9 by the beginning of class.

Week Three (October 16 & 18) – Minorities and U.S. Elections & The 2012 Campaign So Far

READINGS:

- 1) Bowler and Segura, chapters 6-9 (pp. 115-210)
- 2) Abrajano and Alvarez, chapters 3-4 (pp. 74-124)
- 3) Ansolabehere, Stephen, and R. Michael Alvarez. 2009. "Is There Racial Discrimination at the Polls? Voters' Experiences in the 2008 Election." Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project. VTP Working Paper #73.

http://www.vote.caltech.edu/sites/default/files/WP_73_docx.pdf [Posted to class website].

Brief statement of the focus of your research paper due by October 16 (should be sent as an email to Professor DeSipio).

Week Four (October 23 & 25) – Mobilizing and Demobilizing (Minority) Votes

READINGS [All Posted to the Class Website]:

- 1) Alvarez, R. Michael, Stephen Ansolabehere, and Catherine N. Wilson. 2002. *Election Day Voter Registration in the United States: How One-Step Voting Can Change the Composition of the American Electorate*. Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, VTP Working Paper #5. [June]. (pp. 1-36). http://www.vote.caltech.edu/sites/default/files/vtp_wp5.pdf.
- 2) Barreto, Matt. 2007. "Sí Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters" *American Political Science Review* 101 [3] [August]: 425-441.
- 3) de la Garza, Rodolfo, and Louis DeSipio. 2006. "Reshaping the Tub: The Limits of the VRA for Latino Electoral Politics." In David L. Epstein; Richard H. Pildes; Rodolfo O. de la Garza; and Sharyn O'Halloran, eds. *The Future of the Voting Rights Act*, pp. 139-162. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.
- 4) Ramírez, Ricardo. 2007. "Segmented Mobilization: Latino Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote Efforts in the 2000 General Election." *American Politics Research* 35 [2] [March]: 155-175. [posted to class web site].
- 5) Weiser, Wendy, and Vishal Agraharkar. 2012. *Ballot Security and Voter Suppression: What It Is and What the Law Says*. New York: Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School. (pp. 1-22). http://brennan.3cdn.net/49ec3e9f92cd004786_iqm6baoz3.pdf.

Campaign Documentary Review #2 (on a presidential race) due in Drop Box October 23 by the beginning of class.

Week Five (October 30 & November 1) – Measuring Minority Influence

READINGS [All Posted to the Class Website]:

- 1) Fraga, Luis Ricardo, Ricardo Ramírez, and Gary M. Segura. 2005. "Unquestioned Influence: Latinos and the 2000 Elections in California. In Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Louis DeSipio, eds. *Muted Voices: Latinos and the 2000 Elections*, pp. 173-193. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- 2) Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick; Janelle Wong; Taeku Lee; and Jane Junn. 2009. "Race-Based Considerations and the Obama Vote: Evidence from the 2008 National Asian American Survey." *Du Bois Review* 6 [1]: 219-238.
- 3) Barreto, Matt; Fernando Guerra; Mara Marks; Stephen A. Nuño; and Nathan D. Woods. 2006. "Controversies in Exit Polling: Implementing a Racially Stratified Homogeneous Precinct Approach." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39 [July]: 477-483.
- 4) DeSipio, Louis, and David L. Leal. 2010. "Introduction: A View From the Battleground's Periphery: Latinos and the 2004 Elections." In Rodolfo O. de

la Garza, Louis DeSipio, and David L. Leal, eds. *Beyond the Barrio: Latinos and the 2004 Elections*, pp. 1-72. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Week Six (November 6 & 8) – Final Expectations and Initial Assessment of Minority Influence in the 2012 Elections

READINGS: Abrajano and Alvarez, Postscript (pp. 185-198)
Additional readings to be posted to the class website

Analytical Essay due in Drop Box by the beginning of class on November 6.

Week Seven (November 13 & 15) – Minority Influence in State and Local Politics, Disaggregating the 2012 Vote & The Future of U.S. Minority Politics and Exam Review

READINGS: Bowler and Segura, chapters 12 & 13 (pp. 259-285).
Abrajano and Alvarez, chapters 6 & 7 (pp. 152-184).

Week Eight (November 20) – Midterm Exam

Weeks Nine and Ten (November 22 & 29, December 4 & 6) – Class Discussion of Student Research on Group Outreach in the 2012 Election

Research Paper due in Drop Box on December 6.