

**The University of Western Ontario
Department of Political Science
Political Science 4419F
Voting Behaviour: Canada, the United States and the
United Kingdom Compared**

Instructor: Cameron D. Anderson

Office: SSC 4140

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30am-1pm

Telephone: 519-661-2111 x81163

Email: cander54@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This seminar course will critically assess the topic of voting behaviour in comparative politics. While Canada will be the focus, each week's topics will be assessed in light of their applicability in other democratic contexts including the United States and the United Kingdom. The course opens with a broad introduction to the major theoretical traditions in voting behaviour research before taking up a number of thematic areas and debates within the literature.

Course Readings:

Anderson, C. and L. Stephenson (eds.). 2010. *Voting Behaviour in Canada*. University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver.

Denver, D., C. Carman and R. Johns. 2012. *Elections and Voters in Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan: London.

Gidengil, E., N. Nevitte, A. Blais, J. Everitt and P. Fournier. 2012. *Dominance and Decline*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto.

Lewis-Beck, M. W. Jacoby, H. Norpoth and H. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor.

These books can be purchased at the UWO bookstore and are available on reserve at the Weldon Library. All other course readings will either be available on the OWL course page or online through the Western Libraries webpage.

Course Requirements:

Participation 25%

Class Presentation 20%

Research Paper Proposal 5%

Research Paper 50%

DISCUSSION OF COURSEWORK:

a) Class Participation - As this is a 4th year seminar course, there will be no lectures and students are expected to actively participate each week. The participation grade will be based on the quality of comment, evidence of preparation, willingness to challenge accepted ideas and concern for the views expressed by others. If unable to attend, please inform the instructor in advance. Students will be given a preliminary grade for participation in the seventh week of the course. The final participation grade may change based on whether performance improves, declines or stays the same.

b) Presentation and discussion- All students will be required to give at least one presentation (depending on course numbers). Your presentation should not be a summary of the assigned readings. Rather, in your presentation, you should seek to provide critical analysis of the ideas, arguments and issues arising from the readings. Following your presentation, you are expected to pose directions/questions for and lead class discussion. Please provide a copy of your presentation to the instructor.

c) Research Paper Proposal - Due in class on **October 29, 2013**. This proposal should consist of a 2 page outline of the paper which includes an introduction of the topic, a thesis statement, tentative plan of the paper and a working bibliography of at least **8 (eight)** academic sources (books and refereed journal articles).

d) Research Essay - You are required to write a research paper of 13-15 double-spaced pages in length using 12-point font. This paper will be due at the beginning of class on **December 3, 2013**. Papers handed in after this date and up until 4pm on **December 10, 2013** will not receive a late penalty but will not receive written comments. The intent of this assignment is to have you write a research essay which probes some topic of relevance within the field of voting behaviour. You may choose to further delve into a topic covered in class or you may find something outside of the class which is both of interest to you and within the broad subject nature of the class. As this is a research essay, you will be expected to utilize a minimum of **15 (fifteen)** academic sources (books and refereed journal articles) to develop and support your arguments/ideas. **NOTE FOR MA STUDENTS:** Your research paper should be 18-20 pages in length and draw on at least **20 (twenty)** sources.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON READINGS: The amount of readings assigned for this course is heavy for an undergraduate load. To help make the load manageable, undergraduate students will be required to read all readings on Canada and then choose either the readings on the United Kingdom or the United States on a week by week basis. As a class we will decide which students are reading on which country. This will occur for classes on September 17, 24; October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; and November 19. However, for the week in which you present you will be required to complete all readings. MA students are required to complete all readings.

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

Submission of Assignments:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date that they are due.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Late penalty:

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will **not be accepted** for grading.

Extensions:

Extensions are not given. However, if there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances, please consult with Academic Counselling in the Social Science Centre. They are located at <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/>.

Course Topics and Readings:

September 10: Course Introduction

Readings: none

September 17: Introducing Vote Models I

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 1

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 1

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 1 & 2

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain Chapter 1

September 24: Region, Language, Race, Religion and Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 2

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 2-4

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 11&12

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain pp.53-61, 65-70

October 1: Party Identification and Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 4

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 5

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 6 & 7

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain pp. 61-65. 70-89

October 8: Economic Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 5

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 6 (Chapter 7 is recommended not required)

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 13

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain pp.108-121

Lewis-Beck, M. and M. Stegmaier. 2007. "Economic Models of Voting." in Dalton and Klingemann (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* Oxford University Press: pp. 518-537.

October 15: Issue Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 6

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 8

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain pp.90-108,121-122

Blais et al. 2004. "Which Matters Most? Comparing the Impact of Issues and the Economy in American, British and Canadian Elections" *British Journal of Political Science* 34 (3) 555-63.

Fournier et al. 2003. "Issue Importance and Performance Voting" *Political Behavior* 25: 51-67.

October 22: Leader Effects on Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 7

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 8

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 3

OR

Elections and Voters in Britain Chapter 5

October 29: Campaign and Poll Effects on Voting

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 8

Voting Behaviour in Canada Chapter 9-10

Elections and Voters in Britain Chapter 6 (recommended but not required)

Farrell, D. and R. Schmitt-Beck. 2002. *Do Political Campaigns Matter?* Routledge: London. Chapters 1 and 11 (available through UWO Library website as an e-book)

November 5: Personality and Voting

Readings:

Barbaranelli, C. et al. 2007. "Voters' personality traits in presidential election." *Personality and Individual Differences* 42, 7, 1199-1208.

Gerber, A., G. Huber, D. Doherty and C. Dowling. 2012. "Personality and the Strength and Direction of Partisan Identification." *Political Behavior* 34, 4, 653-88.

Mondak, J. 2010. *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behaviour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1,2,5

November 12: Correct Voting

Readings:

Lau, R. and D. Redlawsk. 1997. "Voting Correctly." *The American Political Science Review*, 91, 585-98.

Lau, R. R., Andersen, D. J. and Redlawsk, D. P. (2008). "An Exploration of Correct Voting in Recent U.S. Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52: 395-411.

McGregor. 2013. "Measuring 'Correct Voting' Using Comparative Manifestos Project Data" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 23, 1, 1-26.

November 19: Turnout

Readings:

Elections and Voters in Britain Chapter 2

OR

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 5

Blais et al. 2004. "Where Does Turnout Decline Come From?" *European Journal of Political Science* 43, 2, 221-36.

Rubenson et al. 2004. "Accounting for the Age Gap in Turnout" *Acta Politica* 39, 4.

November 26: Voting in Canada, Britain and the USA

Readings:

Dominance and Decline Chapter 11

Elections and Voters in Britain Chapter 8

The American Voter Revisited Chapter 14 and 15

December 3: Conclusion and Catch-up

Readings: none

(Graduate) Statement of Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf