

Voting Behavior

MA level class

by Levente (Levi) Littvay

E-mail: littvayl@ceu.hu

Mobile: +36 70 538-3683 (only call between 11am and 11pm Central European Time)

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:15, Wednesday 4:00-5:00 or at an agreed time.

(Appointment is always required 24 hours before meeting or you can't expect me to be there. Email me or call me.)

Class Website: <http://e-learning.ceu.hu>

You need to sign up for the on-line class. Once the class has started, you can log in with your CEU ID and password. The code to sign up for the class is: barack

All readings will be posted on line. (I do not believe in printed readers. I believe in choice, print it if you wish.) All assignments are also posted and submitted through the website.

Summary

One of the foundations of democratic politics is free and fair elections and the act of voting. Questions concerning how people vote and the ideal way to elect our representatives have been around since the first elections were held. This is a four-credit MA-level course recommended to students who want to know what state of the art political science literature says about these questions. More specifically, students with an interest in voting behaviour, electoral systems and empirical democratic theory should sign up for this course. We will focus on the implications of different models of representation and review the electoral behavior literature to better understand why and how people vote.

Evaluation

A reaction paper is due before every class (Sunday at 11:00am and Wednesday at 11:00am) responding to the readings for that class. They will be graded by the time of the class. (Grading your assignments before class helps me decide what topics to emphasize.) You can miss one (and only one) assignment without penalties. Use it wisely. Attendance (with timely arrival) is **required**. Late arrivals are counted as unexcused absences. Three unexcused absences will lead to an automatic failure of the class. If you will miss a class or come late for any reason, make sure I know about it **before** the class.

Final paper in this class will be an original research paper. You will have to do some kind of empirical analysis. It does not have to be analytically sophisticated but it needs to be theoretically sound and based on a good idea. Your research topic has to be pre-approved. A one-page research proposal will be due November 24.

Grading

Reaction Papers 60% (due 11am on Sundays and Wednesdays)

Research Proposal 5%

Final Paper 35%

Important Notice

Complete academic honesty is expected of everyone. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in automatic failure in this course (and subsequently in the program) and additional disciplinary action on higher levels. This is an American university and American standards will be applied. For more information about these standards see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_dishonesty **(READ VERY CAREFULLY!)**

All assignments are to be done individually. You can talk about how to do it but none of the actual work can be done in a group. Any evidence to the contrary will be investigated.

Topics Covered

I. The Rational Voter

- Rational Models
- Spatial Models
- Heuristics
- Cues

II. Institutional Explanations

III. Behavioral Explanations

- Models and Predictors of Voting Behavior
- Vote Choice vs. Voter Turnout
- Alternative Models
- The Michigan Model
- Genetics of Voting Behavior