

HNRS 366:
Voting and Democracy

<http://home.sandiego.edu/~cparker/hnrs366/index.html>

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Course Description

Democracy is based on the idea that individuals' preferences can be aggregated to make decisions for the group through the voting process. However, the assumption that preferences can be consistently and fairly aggregated has shown to be false in a number of situations. This course will examine the mathematical reasons why the basic requirements for voting systems necessarily lead to paradox, and the political ramifications of these problems for the democratic legitimacy of rulers.

This course will focus on two areas in which voting systems can fail, addressing first some mathematical paradoxes of preference aggregation, and then some political science implications of it.

Readings, Outlines and Evaluation Procedures

Text: Alan D. Taylor and Allison M. Pacelli, *Mathematics and Politics: Strategy, Voting, Power and Proof*. 2nd edition. (New York: Springer 2008).

Other readings will be on E-Reserve through Copley Library. Password: VOTING

Grades:

Attendance and participation	15%
Midterm on Political Science	15%
Homeworks (Math)	20%
Research project	25%
Final exam	25%

Specifics on your research project will be introduced in a few weeks. The topic of your final project will determine if you will receive upper division credit in political science or mathematics. An example of a final project you might do in political science is to analyze likely winners and losers in a given electoral regime in a particular country, state, US city, county, or special district. An example of a final project you might do in math is to calculate the probability of a particular undesirable outcome in a given election under different circumstances. This can be done theoretically for a small number of voters and by simulations in more complicated cases.

Syllabus

We will move from topic to topic as appropriate during the class. We will announce where we are on the syllabus and what you should read before the following class at the end of each meeting.

1. Introductions.

2. The general will as understood by political philosophers.

Readings:

- i. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* Book IV Chapters 1 and 2. 1762. Please download as a free google e-book, translated by G.D. H. Cole, (New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1920).
- ii. John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government* Chapter 8, sections 95-99. Available free online from Project Gutenberg:
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm#CHAPTER_VIII.

3. Other definitions of democracy

Readings:

(ER) Robert A. Dahl, "Chapter 4: Equality, Diversity, and Intensity" from *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

4. An introduction to comparative democracy in the real world

Readings:

(ER) "Chapter 8: Democracy: How does it work? State Institutions and Electoral Systems." Excerpt from Michael J. Sodaro, *Comparative Politics* Second edition. McGraw Hill 2004.

5. Introduction to mathematical modeling and how it applies to social choice. Social choice and positive and negative results.

Readings:

Taylor and Pacelli, Chapter 1.

6. Spoiler candidates in the real world.

Readings.

(ER) Seth McKee and Stephen C. Craig, "Rubio vs. Crist vs. Meek in Florida's Senate Race: Coming Out of Nowhere" in Randall E. Adkins and David A. Dulio, *Cases in Congressional Campaigns* (Routledge 2011).

(ER) Jack H. Nagel, "The Burr Dilemma in Approval Voting" *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Feb., 2007), pp. 43-58

7. Yes-No Voting.

Readings.

Taylor and Pacelli, Chapter 2.

(ER) Stephen Brooks, "Chapter 6: Institutions of Government" in *Understanding American Politics* (University of Toronto Press 2009).

8. Political Power as understood by political philosophers and political scientists.

Readings.

TBA.

9. Calculating political power.

Readings.

Taylor and Pacelli, Chapter 3.

10. Presidential power and the veto.

a. Readings.

(ER) "Presidents and Lawmaking in a Separated System," Chapter 6 of Charles O. Jones, *The Presidency in a Separated System* (Washington, DC: Brookings 1994).

(ER) "Provoking a veto," Chapter 4 of John B. Gilmour, *Strategic Disagreement*. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press 1995). Pp. 119-131.

(ER) Andrew W. Barrett and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "Presidential Success on the Substance of Legislation" *Political Research Quarterly* 60:1 (Mar. 2007, pp. 100-112).

11. Legislative decision-making and minimum winning coalitions

Readings.

TBA.

12. Social Choice.

Readings.

Taylor and Pacelli, Chapter 7.

13. Implications and Complications.

Readings.

(ER) Gregory B. Markus, "Stability and Change in Political Attitudes: Observed, Recalled, and "Explained"", *Political Behavior*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1986), pp. 21-44.

(ER) John R. Zaller, Chapters 2 and 3, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1992).

Additional TBA.

14. Ordinal Power Distribution

Readings.

Taylor and Pacelli, Chapter 9.

15. And Just when you thought democracy couldn't get messier...

Readings.

(ER) "Fixing the Vote" Ted Selker
Scientific American (October: 92-97).

(Internet) Kim Alexander, "The Need for Transparent, Accountable, and Verifiable U.S. Elections." Presented at the National Academies' Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, Dec. 9, 2004, Menlo Park, CA.
http://openvoting.org/files/project_evoting_alexander.pdf

16. Final days of class will be reserved for special topics of interest to the class (fairness? Apportionment and redistricting?) and to presentations on student research.

Final Exam: Friday, May 18, 11-1pm