

Gavett 301, 12:30-1:45 T-Th  
Professor L. Powell [lynda.powell@rochester.edu](mailto:lynda.powell@rochester.edu)

### American Elections

We will study presidential and Congressional primary and general elections, with additional brief discussions of

factors influence the result of the general election? (If you are in the writing section, you may not do the similar class assignment). Papers are due the last day of class, December 13. A 3 page draft is due 4 weeks earlier in class, November 15. Also the class participation and assignment section will count 20% of the total grade.

**Grading:**

Class Participation and Assignments	15%
Midterm Exam October 27	40%
Final December 19 7:15 PM	45%

**Introduction.**

**Partisanship—Voters and Electorates.** Sep 6 (T) & Sep 8 (Th)

Wayne, Ch 3 and Ch 10 pp 349-352; Streb, Rethinking, Ch 2 and 3; Hetherington Ch 6, Michael P. McDonald “Voter Turnout in the 2010 Midterm Election” *The Forum* Vol 8 Issue 4, 2010.

Think about and be prepared to discuss the following:

For the first class, what does the term turnout mean and why should we care about levels of turnout?

For the second class, do voters know enough?

~~Readings should be completed for the first class.~~

Assignment: In addition to the above readings, look at the redistricting process for the U. S. House in one state. (Be sure to choose a state that elects more than one representative to Congress.) Bring a one-page summary to class. Your discussion should include how the redistricting decision is made in the state, the partisanship

Alan Siaroff "How Barack Obama's Votes Beat Hillary Clinton's Votes in the 2008  
Democratic Presidential Contest: Not Malapportionment, But Turnout Variation

and the Florida Election Administration, *Journal of Democracy*, 2008

Assignment For the 2008 presidential election describe the rules used in one state to choose delegates to a national convention and indicate the 2008 result. Discuss how the rules may have affected the result.

**Money in Elections.** Sep 29 (Th) Oct 4 (T).  
Wayne, Chapter 2 Campaign Finance and Ch 10 pp 342-346;  
Streb, *Rethinking* Ch 10 and Hetherington, Ch 4

"A Galleries of the Congress" *Journal of Democracy*, 2008

how were they defined?) How many individuals were surveyed? How was the vote question asked? Were there any questions preceding the vote question that might have biased the answers? Did the predictions of the polls vary, if so how? Hint: Try the National Journal in Databases through the library portal. Then go to Hotline and Tipsheet for any House and Senate race and click on the link for poll results. To get details on how the poll was done try googling the particular polling company they cite. Also try real clear politics or any of the excellent aggregator sites.

or Kathryn Lopez, "Hillary is Wrong," in the National Review Online, November, 2000.) Write no more than one page (double-spaced) summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the Electoral College. (Be sure you know how the Electoral College works first.)

**General Elections—Presidential.** Nov 3 (Th) and Nov 8 (T)  
Wayne, Ch 7 Organization, Strategy and Tactics and Chapter 9 Understanding  
Presidential Elections;

Assignment Find one article online that discusses the 2008 presidential election

election outcome. Choose a quality source such as the Washington Post, NYTP

does it support? How do you...  
\_\_\_\_\_

an offline group?

**Culture War & Ideological Polarization** Dec 1 (Th) and Dec 6 (T)

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70:542-555.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel A. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings." *Journal of Politics* 70:556-560.