POS 3273, (88571), Voting and Elections

Fall Term 2025 Syllabus

(August 18 – December 7)

(Traditional/ Lecture Course Format)

(Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00 P.M. – 1:20 PM., PSY (105)

(3 Credit hours)

Part 1: General Course Information.

Instructor: Alvin (AJ) Quackenbush

Email: alvin.quackenbush@ucf.edu

Office Hours: Fall 2025

On Campus: Faculty Center, Classroom Building 1 (CB1), room 207: Monday from 10:30 A.M. - 11:30 P.M. and Thursday from 11:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.

Students can also contact me via the WebCourses message system and I can make myself available via the Chat function.

Political Science Department Office: Howard Phillips Hall, Room 302

Phone: (407) 823-2608

Website: https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/

Required Materials:

1. "Classics in Voting Behavior," Niemi and Weisberg, ISBN: 9780871876515.

2. "Analyzing Elections," Morton, ISBN: 9780393978292.

Course Description: (3 Credits)

Theoretical and substantive inquiry into U.S. electoral system; includes focus on voter behavior as well as national and state electoral systems. Prerequisite(s): PR: POS 2041 or C.I..

Introduction:

Welcome to Voting and Elections. In this course we will examine the roles of the basic actors in elections—voters, candidates, parties and interest groups—and the institutional process through which the actors move. Special attention is devoted to the effects of money and the mass media on electoral outcomes, the extent to which elections can control errant officials, and the problems of measuring public opinion and preferences. Additionally, we will look at unique issues involved in congressional redistricting, presidential primaries, the Electoral College, minor party and independent candidates, and the problems minorities face in achieving representation in the American electoral process.

Topics and Discussion:

Please keep in mind that in this course we will be analyzing and debating topics that are current, relevant, political, and sometimes controversial. Some students may find that certain topics hard to discuss and there may be a level of discomfort. Please keep in mind that the intent is to promote critical thinking, present alternative ideas, challenge preconceptions, and deepen important conversations.

It is natural for students to sometimes feel overwhelmed. If this happens, please advise me in class or afterwards via email. As always, the goal is to maintain a safe space for learning.

Time will be dedicated every other week for in-class discussion. Please see the course schedule at the bottom of the syllabus.

Part 2: Classroom Policies.

<u>Attendance</u>: Regular class attendance is expected. There is a direct correlation between class attendance and overall success in the course. Attendance will be taken for Extra Credit purposes. This will be the only extra credit offered in the course.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be on time for class. Students who are tardy disrupt other students and the overall learning environment, so tardiness is not acceptable. Students who are late on Exam days will not receive extra time for their quiz.

Email: It is the policy of this professor to communicate with you via UCF email or the WebCourses message system. Failure to check for e-mail messages will not be accepted as an excuse for missed work.

Cell Phone**:** Students are expected to turn off or make silent all cell phones and electronic devices before the beginning of class because they can disrupt the learning environment. If a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student may be asked to leave for the remainder of the class. If there is an emergency situation warranting the use of a cell phone during class time, the student must notify the professor in writing prior to the beginning of class. During a testing situation, if a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student's test or examination will be collected and the student will be asked to leave without an option for completion.

Laptop Computers: Students may use their laptop, tablet, or "mini-computer' (smart phone) during class to take notes or to access the Internet for research. A student who uses this freedom in an inappropriate fashion may be asked to leave the class for that day or to turn off their laptop or phone.

Student Recordings: Students may record video and/or audio of class lectures for their personal use. Recordings may be a useful tool to support your learning and provide a resource for review. It is important to be respectful of your peers' rights to privacy; with that in mind, please refrain from recording your peers during lectures. You may not record class discussions, student presentations, labs, group work, and private conversations. Further, you may not publish or share recordings without my written consent, nor may you provide recordings to classmates as a substitution for class participation and attendance. If necessary, I will handle violations of this section through the College's Student Code of Conduct.

Protected Course Learning Materials: All course learning materials are protected information and cannot be shared via social media or outside of the class canvas page. In order to maintain a comfortable and private learning environment, students should not take screen shots of the course website. This is to protect the privacy rights of you and your fellow students. Such conduct may be determined to be a violation of college policy and the student code of conduct.

Part 3: Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Evaluation: Your grade will be determined by grades on a Syllabus Quiz, 10 Discussion Posts, and 4 Exams (your lowest exam score is dropped), and a Written Assignment.

Syllabus Quiz: 10 points.

Discussion Posts: 20 points each (200 Total)

Exams: 100 points each (300 Total)

Written Assignment: 150 Points.

Total Points: 660

Syllabus Quiz: There will be a 10 point syllabus quiz due on Friday, August 22nd during the first week of the semester to ensure student attendance in the course.

Discussion Posts: During the semester there will be 10 discussion posts related to current events in US Government. In your post you should answer the questions and reply to at least two other students. Please see the discussion rubric for additional information. Due dates will be indicated in the posts and in the assignment schedule.

Examinations: There will be 4 exams in this course during the semester and your lowest score will be dropped. Any student missing an exam is expected to drop that exam as their low score.

The tests will consist of fill in the blank, multiple choice and true/false questions. The exam dates are listed in the course schedule. Any student not completing the examination will receive 0 of those possible points, and this will impact the final average in the course.

Any student who misses TWO of the four in class exams will only be granted a make up, with documentation of illness or emergency. Please note that all make up exams will be short answer and essay format only.

Written Assignment: During the semester you will be required to write one short research paper. The assignment will be type written and will be at least 2000 words (based upon the word count in Microsoft word) not including titles and work cited. Papers that do not meet the minimum word count will not be accepted. The paper assignment will be posted on WebCourses during the semester with specific details. The due date will be included in the

assignment and is listed in the course schedule at the bottom of the syllabus. Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to make sure that your paper is attached correctly.

Extra Credit: There will **NOT** be any specific assignments for extra credit; however, attendance will be taken from time to time and points will be added for extra credit. Thus, missing regular class will not hurt your grade but you may miss out on valuable extra credit opportunities.

Late Work Policy: You can submit late online work (syllabus quiz, discussions, or the written assignment) with a 20% penalty per day. See the course schedule for all due dates.

All graded materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grades section of Webcourses@UCF. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades.

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	**Range**
A	100% to94%
A-	< 94%to90%
B+	< 90%to87%
B	< 87%to84%
B-	< 84%to80%
C+	< 80%to77%
C	< 77%to74%
C-	< 74%to70%
D+	< 70%to67%
D	< 67%to64%
D-	< 64%to61%
F	< 61%to0%

Part 4: University Policies.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of

record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty of staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.

- **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
- **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
- **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Disclaimer: Changes in the syllabus and/or schedule may be made at any time during the term by announcement of the professor. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

Part 5: Course Schedule.

All the dates and assignments listed below are tentative and can be changed at the discretion of the professor with proper notification via UCF email.

Week 1: (August 18 – 24), **Drop/Swap Deadline - August 22.**

Topic: Introduction.

Readings: None.

Assignments: Syllabus Quiz due by 5:00 pm, on Friday, August 22.

Week 2: (August 25 – 31)

Topic: Elections in a Democracy.

Readings: Chapter 1: How Elections Rule American Politics (Morton)

Assignments: Discussion 1 due, August 31.

Week 3: (September 1 – 7), **No Classes, Monday, September 1, Labor Day**

Topic: Voter Turnout.

Readings: Chapter 2: Understanding Voter Turnout (Morton) and Chapter I, Election Turnout (N & W)

Assignments: Discussion 2 due September 7.

Week 4: (September 8 – 14)

Topic: Political Ideologies.

Readings: Chapter II, Ideology, (N & W)

Assignments: **Discussion 3 due September 14.**

Week 5: (September 15 – 21)

Topic: Primaries.

Readings: Chapter 4: Candidates, Primaries, and Ideological Divergence (Morton)

Assignments: Exam 1: in class on Tuesday, September 16.

Week 6: (September 22 – 28)

Topic: Voter Choice.

Readings: Chapter III: Vote Determinants (N & W)

Assignments: Discussion 4 due September 28.

Week 7: (September 29 - October 5)

Topic: Party Identification

Readings: Chapter V: Party Identification, (N & W)

Assignments: Discussion 5 due October 5

Week 8: (October 6 – 12)

Topic: Campaign Finance.

Readings: Chapter 6: How Campaigns are Financed (Morton)

Assignments: Exam 2 in class on Tuesday, October 7 and Discussion 6 due October 12.

Week 9: (October 13 – 19)

Topic: Elections and Political Behavior and Congressional Elections.

Readings: Chapter 9: Controlling the Behavior of Elected Officials (Morton). Chapter 11: Congressional Elections (Morton) and Chapter IV: Congressional Elections (N & W)

Assignments: Discussion 7 due October 19.

Week 10: (October 20 – 26)

Topic: Electoral Primaries.

Readings: Chapter 12: Presidential Primaries (Morton)

Assignments: Discussion 8 due October 26.

Week 11: (October 27 – November 2), **Withdrawal Deadline - October 31.**

Topic: Presidential Elections

Readings: Chapter 13: Presidential Elections (Morton)

Assignments: Exam 3: in class on Tuesday, October 28.

Week 12: (November 3 – 9)

Topic: Third Parties.

Readings: Chapter 14: Minor Parties and Independent Candidates (Morton)

Assignments: **Discussion 9 due November 9.**

Week 13: (November 10 – 16), **No Class Tuesday November 11, Veteran's Day.**

Topic: Minorities and Representation

Reading: Chapter 15: Minority Voters and Representation (Morton).

Assignments: Discussion 10 due November 16.

Week 14: (November 17 – 23)

Topic: Conclusion

Reading: Chapter 16: The Future and Analyzing Elections (Morton) and Chapter VI: Historical Perspectives (N & W)

Assignments: **Written Assignment, Due November 23.**

Week 15: (November 24 – 30), **No Classes November 27 - 29, Thanksgiving.**

Topic: Review for Exam 4 on Tuesday, November 25.

Reading: None.

Assignments: None.

Week 16: (December 2 - 8), **Final Exam Period.**

Exam 4: in class on Thursday, December 4 at 10:00 AM