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Fall 2005  
OSH 111

### **POLS 5810-01--Senior Seminar: Voting Rights**

This year the country marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, an ambitious attempt to bring to reality the promise of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, which was passed in 1870. In 2007 Congress will vote to extend or to terminate some portions of the Voting Rights Act. This seminar explores the evolution of voting rights in the United States and current controversies about their scope and appropriate enforcement of them. As a “capstone” to a political science major, the course will also explore different modes of analysis--empirical, legal, and theoretical—used by political scientists in studying public policy issues. Using one or more of these approaches, each student will write a research paper of 15-20 pages.

The format of the class will be primarily discussion, so you must come to class prepared to discuss the day’s readings. In the second half of the semester there will be a break from formal class sessions, during which you will have individual conferences about your research papers. Near the end of the semester all students will give oral presentations of their papers. Some class time will be devoted to instruction and feedback about writing research papers in political science. The last day of class will be devoted to a debate on the reauthorization of two major sections of the Voting Rights Act.

By the end of this course, students should:

- Understand the mix of legislative, judicial, and regulatory actions that determine voting rights,
- Understand the history of voting rights in the United States,
- Know the various sections and the history of the Voting Rights Act,
- Understand the different concepts of identity underlying debates over voting rights (Bybee),
- Be able to take a position on reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act.

In addition to learning about the substantive content of this class, students should develop the following skills or competencies:

- Researching materials in the library,
- Synthesizing the ideas of various authors on related topics,
- Selecting a research topic and articulating a thesis about the topic,
- Using research and analytical skills to make an original argument,
- Writing a formal research paper,
- Making a conference-style oral presentation to a group,
- Contributing to a group discussion or debate.

## Readings

Please purchase the following three books, which are available at the bookstore:

Charles L. Zelden, Voting Rights on Trial (2002).

Keith J. Bybee. Mistaken Identity: The Supreme Court and the Politics of Minority Representation (1998).

Lee Cuba, A Short Guide to Writing about Social Science, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (2002) Available at the bookstore.

The remainder of the required readings are or will be shortly available on Marriott Library reserve, most in both paper (one-hour) and electronic copies. Please note that when a chapter from a book is placed on electronic reserve and the whole book is on paper reserve, they show up as two separate entries on the electronic reserve list.

## Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments

From time to time short assignments in **Cuba's Guide** will be added to the following.

August 24 Introduction and overview

August 26 Who votes, who doesn't, and does it matter?  
Arend Lijphart. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." American Political Science Review 91: 1-14.  
Bybee, pp. 30-36

August 31 Sources of legal regulation of voting  
Zelden, chap. 1 and pp. 185-90; Bybee, pp. 36-50

September 2 History of the right to vote: class and gender voting exclusion  
Zelden, pp. 39-58; 193-97  
Mark Bean on the writing process: Cuba, chap. 5

**Last day to drop classes without penalty; must add by September 6**

September 7 Library research orientation. **Meet in Marriott, Room 304**  
Cuba, chap. 2

September 9 History of the right to vote: Ethnic/racial voting exclusion  
Zelden, pp. 58-85, 190-93

September 14 American Indians and the right to vote  
Jeanette Wolfley. 1990. "Jim Crow, Indian Style: The Disenfranchisement of Native Americans." American Indian Law Review 16: 167-202.  
**Library research assignment due**

September 16 Voting access gains prior to the Voting Rights Act of '65

Zelden, pp. 101-119, 197-214

September 21 The one-person/one-vote standard  
Zelden, pp. 119-126, 214-222, 235-37

September 23 “Eyes on Prize: Bridge to Freedom” video  
Bybee, chap. 1.

September 28 Original sections of the VRA: the controversial Section 5  
Zelden, 126-35, 222-29; Peyton McCrary, Christopher Seaman, Richard  
Valelly. 2005. “The Law of Preclearance: Enforcing Section 5 of the  
Voting Rights Act.”

September 30 Language minority amendments  
Bybee chap. 3; Michael Jones-Correa. 2005. “Language Provisions Under  
the Voting Rights Act: How Effective Are They?” Social Science  
Quarterly 86: 549-64.

October 5 Vote dilution and the 1982 amendments  
Zelden, pp. 135-50, 229-34, 238-41; Bybee, chap. 4

**October 7—Fall break. No class.**

October 12 The Court checks the VRA re redistricting  
Zelden, pp. 150-57, 242-46; Bybee, chap 5  
Guest speaker: Dan MCool  
**Prospectus and annotated bibliography due**

October 14 The 2000 election and election administration reform  
Zelden, chap. 4; “Voting Rights in Florida, 2002,” U.S. Commission on  
Civil Rights, 202  
Guest speaker: Thad Hall

October 19 Representation and identity  
Bybee, chap. 6  
Prospectuses back; research paper and debate planning

October 21 Mark Bean on research/writing  
Guest speaker on oral presentation skills

**Last day to withdraw from classes**

October 26 Partisan gerrymandering  
*Veith v. Jubelirer* excerpt; Robert Richie. 2004. “Full Representation:  
Uniting Backers of Gerrymandering Reform and Minority Voting  
Rights.” National Civic Review. Summer: 3-9; Mark E. Rush. 2000.

“Redistricting and Partisan Fluidity: Do We Really Know a  
Gerrymander When We See One?” Political Geography 19: 249-60.

October 28-November 16 Individual appointments instead of regular class sessions,  
while students work on papers in consultation with instructor

November 18-December 2 Resume class with student paper presentations

**November 25 Thanksgiving holiday. No class.**

December 7 Debate: Shall Section 5 and the language minority provisions be  
extended?

Reading Day is Dec. 9. No final exam. Papers due on staggered dates.

### **Grades and Assignments**

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|---|-----|
| Library research assignment (1 page)              | 5%  |
| Prospectus and annotated bibliography (2-4 pages) | 15% |
| Preliminary draft of research paper (15-20 pages) | 20% |
| Final research paper (15-20 pages)                | 25% |
| Oral presentation                                 | 10% |
| Class participation                               | 15% |
| Debate  | 10% |

The purpose of a class participation grade is to induce you to do the reading on time, to think about what you’ve read, and to share your thoughts with classmates. The grade will be based on your oral participation in discussion of readings, lecture material, and fellow students’ papers. Attendance counts, since you obviously can’t participate if you’re not present, but not as much as speaking up with your ideas and questions. Sometimes but not always I will often give out discussion questions the day before.

The written assignments build on each other toward the final paper. The library research assignment, due September 14, is an opportunity to practice the research skills demonstrated on September 7 and begin thinking about possible paper topics. By October 12, in the prospectus and annotated bibliography, you will have defined a research question, have located and read some relevant sources, and be ready to give a progress report on your paper. **The preliminary and final drafts of the research paper have staggered due dates.** The first draft gives you feedback toward the final paper of 15-20 pages, which demonstrates your achievements in research, analysis, and writing. The oral presentation gives you the opportunity to share your research and analysis with your classmates and practice professional presentation skills. A separate hand-out will give a more detailed description of these assignments.

Topics for the research paper will be the students’ choice, but they must relate to the general themes of the course. I hope that a number of students will select topics that directly contribute to the question of extending the Voting Rights Act in 2007. Such topics might include:

The impact of the VRA on different population groups

The impact of particular sections of the VRA  
The impact of the VRA in different regions of the country  
Constitutional arguments about the VRA  
Different conceptions of “representation”  
The politics of VRA reauthorization

Other topics may be less directly relevant to the reauthorization debate, such as:  
Voting systems other than single-member districts  
The voting rights bar (i.e., attorneys)  
Still-excluded groups of potential voters  
Electronic voting  
Registration requirements  
Compulsory voting  
Other laws besides the VRA that are administered by the U.S. Department of Justice  
(Home page of the Voting Section: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/index.htm>)

**Please consult me early and often about your ideas for paper topics.**

The class will culminate with a debate about the reauthorization of the two major sections that will terminate in 2007. A detailed description of the debate procedure will be handed out later, but approximately ten students will act as presenters or moderators and the remainder act as judges. Somewhat more credit will be available to those who are debaters.

### **Class Policies**

Assignments must be turned in on the date specified or be subject to a grade penalty. Exceptions will be permitted only for documented absences excused by university policy or, at the professor’s sole discretion, for very serious reasons documented in writing by the proper authority. Feeling unprepared is not sufficient grounds for an extension. If you are having trouble with the course, seek help from me right away. Do not wait until the day before an assignment is due. Office hours are your opportunity to talk to me to clarify points you are not understanding, explore at greater length your interest in issues related to class, or seek my advice on general academic matters. I also welcome appointments at other times. Class attendance is presumed. Please arrive on time despite the early hour!

Cheating may result in failing the course and referral to campus authorities. In a course like this where most of the grade relates to the final paper, cheating consists of turning in work done by someone else and presenting it as your own (which is called plagiarism) or turning in work for which you are receiving or have received a grade in another course (unless you have explicit permission from both instructors). Working with other students in the process of writing the papers is strongly encouraged! Indeed, students writing papers on similar topics may need to share library materials. Please be cooperative in this regard. Sabotaging the work of others is clearly academic misconduct. Please read the definition of academic misconduct in the Student Code at <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>, Section V. B. **All papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism prevention site.**

The University of Utah Department of Political Science seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, <http://disability.utah.edu/>, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the CDS.

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