Macalester College
Department of Political Science

POLI 202-01
Political Participation
Fall 2010
Class Mts: MWF 2:20-3:20pm
Carnegie #204

Dr. Julie Dolan
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Ofc Hours: MW 1-2pm and
by appt

Course Description
Analysis of institutions and procedures such as parties and elections, and also
informal activities such as social movements, interest groups, and community action
[taken from the course catalog]. During this midterm election year, all of the members of
the US House, 36 members of the US Senate and 37 Governorships are up for election.
Throughout the semester, we focus on a number of themes: who participates in politics,
how and why they participate, and how political scientists, candidates, campaign
consultants, and interest groups understand and try to influence political behavior among
US citizens. Because all students in the course will track a national campaign and
participate on a local campaign, this course fulfills the practicum requirement of the
political science major.

Course Resources
Washington, DC: CQ Press.


Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. 2003. Mobilization, Participation, and

Course Projects
Campaign tracking and reporting – national campaign
a. Identify a competitive race
b. Report on context of race
c. Analysis of Campaign Communications
d. Fundraising Strategies
e. Analysis of final election results
f. Final presentation

Congressional Election Simulation
Campaign field experience and reporting – local campaign

Academic Integrity
Standards of academic integrity are set forth in the Macalester College Student Handbook. Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the College Honor System as violations will be taken very seriously. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes cheating should contact the Dean of Academic Programs.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landrem, who will serve as the coordinator for services for students with disabilities. It is important to meet with her at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place to begin the semester successfully. The Associate Dean can be reached in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, by phone at 651-696-6220, or email llandrem@macalester.edu

Course Schedule

Course Introductions and Republican Government

Week 1:  9/8
W: Course Overview
F: Federalist Papers #10 and #51

Assignments: Identify a competitive campaign to track (House, Senate, Governorship) and post on Moodle; investigate possibilities of volunteering on local campaigns

Week 2:  9/13
M: Tocqueville, "Political Associations in the United States"
W: Putnam, "Bowling Alone"
   NYT "Tea Party Lights Fuse"
F: Flanigan and Zingale, Introduction
   Dolan and Ezra, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-5)
   Ratliff and Saxe, "The Politics Before the Politics"

  Guest Speaker: Professor Karen Saxe, Department of Math,
  Statistics and Computer Science
Elections and Engagement in American Politics

Week 3: 9/20
M: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 1
W: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 2
F: Lab – Patterns of Political Participation
   MEET IN Humanities #304 Computer Lab

Assignment: Investigate voter registration requirements (age, residency, timing, etc) and rules in your home state or country and come to class prepared to share this information.


Week 4: 9/27
M: Rosenstone and Hansen, Chapters 1-2
W: Rosenstone and Hansen, Chapter 3
   Erickson, “The Puzzle of Midterm Loss”
F: Green, Gerber and Nickerson, “Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections”

Week 5: 10/4
M: Rosenstone and Hansen, Chapter 6

Determinants of Vote Choice: Party Identification, Issues, Candidate Qualities, Short-Term Influences

W: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 3 (Partisanship)
   Dolan and Ezra, Chapter 1, pp. 7-15
F: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 4 (Partisans and Partisan Change)

Week 6: 10/11
M: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 5 (Social Characteristics of Partisans and Independents)
W: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 6 (Public Opinion and Ideology)
F: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 7, pp. 173-190
Week 7: 10/18
M: Flanigan and Zingale, Chapter 7, pp. 190-204
   Tierney, "Using MRI's to See Politics on the Brain"
W: Preparation for Simulation
   Dolan and Ezra, Chapter 2
F: Group Work

CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION SIMULATION
Week 8: 10/25
M: Campaign Kickoff
W: Campaign Debate (or other media event)
F: No class – Fall Break

Week 9: 11/1
M: Campaign Media and Election Predictions
Tu: ELECTION DAY!!
W: Discussion of Election Results
F: Peer Review – Analysis of Election Results

Additional Avenues for Political Participation

Week 10
11/8
M: Rosenstone and Hansen, Ch 4
W: Social Movements
F: Political Protest
   Schussman and Soule "Process and Protest"

Week 11: 11/15
M: Running for Office
W/F: Topic TBD
Week 12:  11/22
  M:  Topic TBD
  W:  Topic TBD
  F:  NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

Week 13:  11/29
  M:  Topic TBD
  W:  Effective Oral Presentations
  F:  Open Day

Week 14:  12/6
  M:  Student Presentations
  W:  Student Presentations
  F:  Student Presentations

Week 15:  12/13
  M:  Last Day of Class