

## **Direct Legislation Political Science 128**

Class Time: 3:55 to 5:10, Tuesday and Thursday  
Classroom: 14 Schaeffer  
Instructor: Fred Boehmke  
Office: 361 Schaeffer  
Office Hours: TW 2:30-3:30, or by appointment  
Email: [frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu](mailto:frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu)  
Phone: 335-2342  
Web Page: <http://rubagalo.polisci.uiowa.edu/~fredb/Classes/polisci128/>  
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AOL IM: ProfBoehmke

### **Course description:**

This course will introduce and explore the institution of direct democracy, which allows citizens to vote directly on legislation, and in some cases to propose and pass new laws without legislative action. In particular, we will focus on the initiative process as practiced in 24 U.S. states. Topics to be addressed include: origins and historical perspectives, differences in usage across polities, differences in regulations, positive perspectives on the consequences of direct democracy and normative concerns about equality of access and the possibility of tyranny by the majority. While the focus will be on the United States, other countries with direct democracy institutions may also be studied, time permitting.

The format of the class will include lectures and student presentations, but will also include time for discussion and questions about major themes covered in the readings. The readings will serve as an introduction and supplement to the topics addresses in class, so students are expected to be familiar with the reading before class. Classes will introduce materials not covered in the reading, so on-time attendance is highly recommended. Note that class participation is a large part of the final grade. Late assignments will be penalized 5% of the total value for each day they are late (including weekends), unless prior arrangements are made.

Final grades will be determined by performance on the research paper, regular quizzes, class participation and the short research assignments, outlined below. I do not plan to give a final exam, but reserve the right to change my mind.

### **Books:**

There are six books for the class, which should be available at Iowa Book and Supply:

Chavez, Lydia. 1998. *The Color Bind: The Campaign to End Affirmative Action*. University of California Press.

Ellis, Richard. 2002. *Democratic Delusions: The Initiative Process in America*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

Goebel, Thomas. 2002. *A Government by the People: Direct Democracy in America, 1890-1940*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Matsusaka, John G. 2004. *For the Many or the Few: The Initiative Process, Public Policy, and American Democracy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Sabato Larry J., Howard R. Ernst and Bruce A. Larson. 2001. *Dangerous Democracy: The Battle Over Ballot Initiatives in America*. USA: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers.

Smith, Daniel A. and Caroline J. Tolbert. 2004. *Educated by Initiative: The Effects of Direct Democracy on Citizens and Political Organizations in the American States*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

### **Optional Books:**

Cronin, Thomas E. 1989. *Direct Democracy: The Politics of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press.

### **Course Requirements:**

Your grade will be based on four components.

1. (25%) Class participation. This consists of three parts. First, students are expected to participate in the discussion periods conducted by student leaders. To encourage preparation and discussion, questions will be circulated in advance. I will call on students randomly to answer questions if discussion is lagging. Second, we will have a roundtable discussion of at least three books (Chavez, Matsusaka and Smith and Tolbert), devoting one entire class to each book. Depending on enrollment, I may divide the class into 2 discussion sections that meet on separate days. Third, students will write short response papers (350-500 words) for each of the discussion books. These are not intended to be summaries of the reading; rather, I want you to explore some issue in the book relating to direct legislation and ideas covered in class. Papers will be due at the beginning of the discussion session.
2. (10%) Discussion leaders. Students will each have the opportunity to help lead discussion, in groups of four or five (for a total of 8 to 10 classes). Students may choose from the list of topics below and will prepare a summary of the related readings (some additional reading may be assigned for leaders) and a list of

discussion questions that they will use to lead the class in discussing the topic. Questions should seek to 1) explore the main themes in the topic; 2) compare the ideas and findings across the readings; 3) link the readings to the broader literature on the initiative process; and 4) link them to political science in general. Leaders will each submit to me their list of questions (at least ten questions; questions like “what was the reading about” do not count) by 5 p.m. the day before discussion; I expect leaders to coordinate questions for class on their own and circulate some questions to the class using the email list.

3. (25%) A research project that will entail writing up an eight to ten page review of an issue that has been the subject of at least one recent statewide initiative, including discussion of the issue at stake, the interests involved, campaigning, public opinion, and legislative activity. You should use a number of independent sources in addition to visiting the web sites of the state’s election web page and those of the groups involved. Midway through the semester you will be expected to summarize your issue in class.
4. (20%) Short assignments (probably five total). Students will be asked to conduct short research/opinion projects on specific topics. These will generally involve a small amount of research (usually web-based) and a two to three page write-up of the findings/conclusions.
5. (20%) Short in-class quizzes. About 8-10 quizzes on the topic covered in the assigned readings, given at the beginning of class. I will announce these in advance and post the announcement on the website. Quizzes cannot be made up; rather each student will be allowed to drop one quiz grade at the end of the semester. If you miss a quiz for personal reasons, you must provide official documentation. These should not be very difficult if you show up to class and do the reading.
6. A short-answer and/or short essay final examination. I reserve the right to give a final exam if I feel that students have not been prepared for discussion classes. If people do the reading and participate, I will not assign a final exam. If I do choose to give an exam, it will count for 25% of the final grade and the other categories will be adjusted appropriately (i.e., the current percentages will be multiplied by 0.75). I may allow students to take the exam to improve their discussion grades if they desire. More on this during the semester.

Final grades are adjusted (when necessary) so that the average grade in the class is right between a B and a B-. Of course this depends on the overall performance of the class and may be higher or lower in a given semester as warranted.

### **General Topics to be Covered:**

1. Course Introduction and Summary.
2. Overview of Direct Legislation.

3. Types of Direct Legislation.
4. Rules and Regulations for Usage.
5. History of Direct Legislation in the United States.
6. Variations in Usage Across States and Over Time.
7. Who Uses Direct Legislation?
8. Direct Legislation Campaigns.
9. Are Voters Informed Enough?
10. Effects on Voters: Participation and Knowledge.
11. Effects on Interest Groups: Mobilization and Lobbying.
12. Effects on Policy: Representation and Policy Adoption.
13. Direct Legislation and Minority Interests.
14. Reform and the Initiative Process.
15. Direct Legislation Abroad.

### **Policy on Late Assignments:**

Homework write-ups, papers and exams are all due at the time specified. Any late homework or paper will have points deducted unless arrangements are made *prior* to the due date. Exams will also not be excused or rescheduled without prior arrangements. If you have a legitimate, personal reason for missing a scheduled assignment and can not notify me in advance, please come talk to me afterwards and provide documentation.

### **Policy on Classroom Etiquette:**

Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and other noise-emitting devices. Please show up to class on time. If you are a consistent violator of this policy I reserve the right to deduct points from your final grade after issuing a warning.

**Discussion Topics and Readings** (Tentative – this will evolve to account for changes in the books used and recent research in the field. I will update these early in the semester.)

#### **1. Effects on Voters: Participation and Knowledge.**

- a. Everson, David H. 1981. “The Effects of Initiatives on Voter Turnout: A Comparative State Analysis.” *Western Political Quarterly* 415-425.
- b. Caroline J. Tolbert, Ramona McNeal, and Daniel A. Smith. 2003. “Enhancing Civic Engagement: The Effect of Direct Democracy on Political Participation and Knowledge.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 3 (1).

#### **Leaders Only:**

- c. Tolbert, Caroline J., John A. Grummel and Daniel A. Smith. “The Effects of Ballot Initiatives on Voter Turnout in the American States.” *American Politics Research* (29): 625-648.

**2. Who Uses Direct Legislation and When?**

- a. Chapter 05 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- b. Chapter 09 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- c. Chapter 04 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.

**Leaders Only:**

- d. Chapter 01 in Sabato, Ernst and Larson.

**3. Direct Legislation Campaigns and Consultants.**

- a. Chapter 03 in Sabato, Ernst and Larson.
- b. Chapter 03 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- c. Magleby, David B. and Kelly D. Patterson. 1998. "Consultants and Direct Democracy." *PS: Politics and Science* 31:160-169.

**4. Are Voters Informed Enough?**

- a. Chapter 07 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- b. Chapter 09 in Mendehlson and Parkin.
- c. Chapter 04 in Cronin.

**Leaders Only:**

- d. Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior In California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.
- e. "Dumber Than Chimps?", From Ch 02 in Sabato, Ernst and Larson.

**5. Effects on Interest Groups: Mobilization and Lobbying.**

- a. Elizabeth Garrett. 1999. "Money, Agenda Setting and Direct Democracy." *Texas Law Review* (June 1999), 1845-90.
- b. Boehmke, Frederick J. 2002. "The Effect of Direct Democracy on the Size and Diversity of State Interest Group Populations." *The Journal of Politics* 64 (August 2002): 827-844.

**6. Effects on Policy: Representation and Policy Adoption.**

- a. Chapter 08 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- b. Smith, Daniel A. 2001. "Homeward Bound?: Micro-Level Legislative Responsiveness to Ballot Initiatives." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 1(1): 50-61.
- c. Edward Lascher, Michael Hagen, and Steven Rochlin, "Gun Behind the Door? Ballot Initiatives, State Policies and Public Opinion," *Journal of Politics* 58 (August 1996): 760-75.

**Leaders only**

- d. Chapter 03 in Gerber, Kiewiet, Lupia, and McCubbins.

**7. Direct Legislation and Minority Interests.**

- a. Chapter 10 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- b. Chapter 11 in Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert.
- c. Gamble, Barbara S. 1997. "Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote." *American Journal of Political Science*. 41:245-269.

**Leaders Only:**

- d. Todd Donovan and Shaun Bowler, "Direct Democracy and Minority Rights: An Extension," *American Journal of Political Science* (July 1998), 1020-24

- e. Bruno Frey and Lorenz Goette, "Does the Popular Vote Destroy Civil Rights." *American Journal of Political Science* (October 1998), 1343-48.
- f. Tolbert, Caroline J., and Rodney E. Hero. 1996. "Race/Ethnicity and Direct Democracy: An Analysis of California's Illegal Immigration Initiative." *Journal of Politics* 58 :806-818.

**8. Proposition 13**

- a. Chapter 06 in Schmidt.
- b. Chapter 04 in Smith.
- c. Chapter 15 in Gerber, Lupia, McCubbins and Kiewiet.
- d. Schrag?

**Other Information:**

Please visit the Political Science Department's Website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~polisci>. It is frequently updated regarding events and procedures in our department, changes in the Schedule of Courses, plus TA and faculty hours when available. You may also find current information on pre-advising, and registration. Our Vernon Van Dyke Computing Facility (Political Science ITC) is located in Room 21 Schaeffer Hall. Available hours are listed at our website and also posted outside Room 21 Schaeffer.

**Department of Political Science  
The University of Iowa  
Professor Michael Lewis-Beck, Chair, 341 Schaeffer Hall, 335-2358**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental or learning disabilities. Students with disabilities which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements are to inform the instructor during the instructor's office hours) so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

It is the student's responsibility to contact Student Disability Services, 3100 Burge Hall (335-1462) and obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request form (SAAR). The form will specify what course accommodations are judged reasonable for that student. An instructor who cannot provide the accommodations specified, or has concerns about the accommodations, must contact the Student Disability Services counselor who signed the request form within 48 hours of receiving the form from the student.

**DEPARTMENTAL/COLLEGIATE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

A student who has a complaint against any member of the college's teaching staff is responsible for following the procedures described in the Student Academic Handbook, which is available on the web site of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/ix.shtml/](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml/). The student should attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member or teaching assistant involved. Lacking a satisfactory outcome, the student can turn to the department chair, whose name is listed above along with contact information. (If the complaint concerns a teaching assistant, the student should contact the supervising faculty member first.) If a satisfactory outcome still is not obtained, the student can turn to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 120 Schaeffer Hall, (335-2633). Complaints may concern inappropriate faculty conduct (including inappropriate course materials), incompetence in oral communication, inequities in assignments, scheduling of examinations at other than authorized and published times, failure to provide disability accommodations, or grading grievances. In complaints involving the assignment of grades, it is college policy that grades cannot be changed without the permission of the department concerned.

**PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of assignments and in test-taking situations. Plagiarism and cheating are serious forms of academic misconduct. Examples of them are given in the Student Academic Handbook: [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook//ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook//ix.shtml). The department of Political Science works with individual instructors to detect plagiarism and cheating and to ensure that appropriately serious punishments are applied. An instructor who suspects a student of plagiarism or cheating must inform the student (in writing) as soon as possible after the incident has been observed or discovered. Instructors who detect cheating or plagiarism may decide, in consultation with the departmental executive officer, to reduce

the student's grade on the assignment or the course, even to assign an F. The instructor writes an account of the chronology of the plagiarism or cheating incident for the departmental executive officer who sends an endorsement of the written report of the case to the Associate Dean for academic programs. A copy of the report will be sent to the student.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your responsibilities to this class-and to your education as a whole-include attendance and participation. This syllabus details specific expectations the instructor may have about attendance and participation. You have a responsibility to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in return.

### **PLUS-MINUS GRADING**

All the department's instructors can append plus or minus grades to the letter grades they assign for the course. If the instructor does not specifically indicate in the syllabus that he or she will not assign plusses or minuses, students should assume that this form of grading will be used.

### **HOMEWORK EXPECTATION**

For each semester hour of credit that a Political Science course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

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