

POLSCI 690S-4  
Spring 2026  
Class: W. 8:45-11:15am  
Sign-up for OH: T 1:15-3:15pm

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# Political Participation & Representation

Department of Political Science  
Duke University

## Course Description

Participation is central to representation—or so political theorists have posited. In theory, participation links the people to those who govern them and is the means through which the popular will becomes policy. In this course we ask: IS participation central to representation? Empirically, what do we know about the conditions under which government officials listen to the people? Who participates in politics and does it matter? Given works on these questions, we'll determine how democracy works in both principle and practice.

## Goals and Learning Objectives of the Course

The goal for this course is to prepare you to engage—as a consumer and creator—with social science literature on democratic representation. To this end, our class will expose you to the theoretical landscape of scholarship on this topic and we will work through major debates. In addition, we will actively develop three skills central to social science inquiry: describing and defining key ideas; identifying contributions; and providing constructive feedback that pushes scholarship forward. Our class sessions are designed to build these skills and course assessments will examine your growth in these areas. Specifically, by the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Describe and connect key ideas, in both speech and writing, on the empirical study of participation and political representation in American politics
- Identify the contributions of existing work, especially as it relates to “big questions”
- Provide constructive feedback through analyzing the merits and shortcomings of social science scholarship and identify areas for future work
- Apply key ideas and constructive feedback to develop your own research ideas

## Assignments

There are three types of assessments in this class, each designed to provide an opportunity to practice and receive feedback on describing key ideas, identifying contributions, and providing constructive feedback.

**Short Papers.** *Describe key ideas, identify contributions, develop your research ideas.* (40%)  
Over the course of the semester, you will write five short papers responding to the week's readings. The goal of each paper is to construct a novel argument that challenges, connects, or identifies extensions from the week's works, posing questions you could explore in the future. Which weeks you write for are up to you, but you must sign up in advanced. Details about the assignment, including how to sign-up, are available on Canvas.

**Concept Maps.** *Describe key ideas, identify contributions.* (35%)

At the conclusion of each unit, you will develop and submit a concept map that organizes the unit's content around the central question. These concept maps give you an opportunity to hone your definition of key ideas and evaluate contributions of existing literature. In addition, they are meant to serve as a resource for you down the line. By organizing the unit's key concepts, authors, ideas, and connections in a single page, your map provides an easy framework to return to in the future when writing literature reviews, studying for exams, or beginning new projects. Each map is worth progressively more over the course of the semester: Unit 1 – 15%; Unit 2 – 20%. This choice is based on the expectation that your organizing and critical analytical skills will improve as you practice with each consecutive map. More information about this assignment is available on Canvas.

**Participation.** *Describe key ideas, identify contributions, provide constructive feedback.* (25%)

Classroom discussions provide a continual training ground for practicing our key skills. Coming to class each week having read the assigned material allows you to practice describing key ideas, identifying contributions, and analyzing existing work with an eye toward constructive feedback. You will be assessed on your willingness to practice and grow in these three areas over the course of the semester. Success in this requires regular attendance, reading all materials in advance of class, and taking risks to develop new participatory skills. We'll discuss my expectations on this more in class and work through details about participation, including a list of skills to implement in class, which is available on Canvas.

## **P o l i c i e s   a n d   N o r m s   o f   t h e   C o u r s e**

### **Academic Honesty.**

Duke University is a community dedicated to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Members of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and non-academic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity. Duke University has high expectations for students' scholarship and conduct. In accepting admission, students indicate their willingness to subscribe to and be governed by the rules and regulations of the university, which flow from the Duke Community Standard (DCS): <https://dukecommunitystandard.students.duke.edu/> In this class, we will follow these academic standards and procedures.

### **Generative AI Course Policy.**

AI is a powerful tool that can facilitate research but in early stages of learning, it is important to develop your own voice and foundational skills. As a result, in this class, Generative AI is prohibited from use in all assignments. If I suspect you have used Generative AI in your assignments, we will address the concern together. This may result in requiring you to re-

complete the assignment under supervision or a zero for the assignment.

### **Late Submissions.**

Late work puts an unnecessary burden on the grader and as a result, is subject to a penalty. An assignment submitted one day late is subject to a 5% penalty; two days late is a 10% penalty; three days late is a 15% penalty. Work will not be accepted after three days from its due date. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor in advance; I am often happy to give extensions but MUST receive the request at least 24 hours before the assignment deadline.

### **Reading and Materials.**

In this class, you are expected to read and annotate all the assigned reading before each class. Ideally, you will bring hard copies or annotated digital copies on the assigned days. I suggest reading the materials in the order listed on the syllabus.

### **Self-Plagiarizing.**

It is important that over time and across your classes you develop expertise in an area, refining your research question, and working towards completion of your dissertation. Generally, I think it is good to use classroom assignments to produce writing that is actually useful to you; that is, explores topics you're interested in and thinks through projects you might actually pursue. As you get into your second and third year, you might want to use courses to work on tasks related to your second or third year paper. I think this is all a great use of your time and very strategic – but I remind you that you cannot turn in a single paper to more than one class without explicit permission of the instructor. If you want to build on an idea from a previous paper, discuss with the instructor how you will continue to push forward the project from where it was. If you want to develop your prospectus in multiple classes in a single semester, discuss with the instructor your plans and how you can meet their goals. Turning in the same, or close to the same assignment, across multiple classes without discussion with the advisor will be seen as an ethical violation, and violates the university honor code.

### **Students with Disabilities.**

If you need course accommodations due to a disability, please make an appointment with the instructor. We will work together along with Duke Access and Accommodation Services to meet your needs: <https://access.duke.edu/requests/>

### **The Stuff of Life.**

Inevitably, things come up during the semester that can make it challenging for some students to follow the policies outlined above or affect their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc. If at any point you are struggling to fulfill the expectations of this course, please contact the instructor so we can find solutions together to help you succeed in class. The earlier you do this, the easier it is to find a solution. Further, here is a list of resources that can help:

- Duke Reach. Provides services to support students in managing all aspects of wellbeing, challenges related to mental health, physical health, social adjustment, and other stressors. Write the team at [dukereach@duke.edu](mailto:dukereach@duke.edu)

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Offers counseling services. You can walk in or call 919-660-1000 to get started.
- TimelyCare. Online platform for 24/7 mental health support.
- Writing Studio. Consults available at all stages of the writing process.

## Required Texts

Please purchase the following texts from a vendor of your choice. Some of these books are also available digitally through the library—if reading this way, please download and read on a reading/writing tablet that has a corresponding stylus. All additional readings are available on Canvas.

- Anoll, Allison. 2022. *The Obligation Mosaic: Race and Social Norms in US Political Participation*. University of Chicago Press. (Also available digitally through Duke library.)
- Dahl, Robert. 1998. *On Democracy*.
- Francis, Megan Ming. 2014. *Civil Rights and the Making of the Modern American State*. Cambridge University Press.

## Course Schedule

### UNIT 1: Do government officials respond?

*Representative democracy is premised on the idea that once in positions of power, elected officials and others working in government should be responsive to the preferences of the demos...but are they? Under what conditions? How do we measure responsiveness and identify “good” representation when we see it?*

#### Week 1: Class Introduction—Setting the Stakes (1/7)

- Dahl. 1998. *On Democracy*. Ch. 1, 2, 4-8, 10 (8 total chs.)

#### Week 2: Defining & Measuring Representation (1/14)

- Eulau & Karps. 1977. “The Puzzle of Representation.”
- Griffin & Flavin. 2011. “How Citizens and Their Legislators Prioritize Spheres of Representation.”
- Achen. 1978. “Measuring Representation.”
- Mansbridge. 2003. “Rethinking Representation.”
- Dovi. 2018. “Political Representation.”
- *For further exploration:* Pitkin’s *The Concept of Representation*; Disch’s *Making Constituencies*.

#### Week 3: ...To Public Opinion (1/21)

- Miller & Stokes. 1963. “Constituency Influence in Congress.”
- Stimson, Mackuen, & Erikson. 1995. “Dynamic Representation.”
- Enns. 2014. “The Public’s Increasing Punitiveness and Its Influence on Mass Incarceration in the United States.”
- Hinton, Kohler-Hausmann, & Weaver. 2016. “Did Black’s Really Endorse the 1994 Crime Bill?”

- Manza & Cook. 2002. “A Democratic Polity?”
- Lax & Philips. 2012. “The Democratic Deficit in the States.”
- Shepherd. 2022. “The Politics of Pain.”
- Flemming & Wood. 1997. “The Public and the Supreme Court.”
- *For further exploration:* Hill’s *Frustrated Majorities*; Caughey & Warshaw’s *Dynamic Democracy*; Lenz’s *Follow the Leader*, Griffin & Sager’s “Democratic Representation of all ‘the People’”

**Week 4: AA away to give talk – no class (1/28)**

**Week 5: ...To People Who Vote (2/4)**

- Griffin & Newman. 2013. “Voting Power, Policy Representation, and Disparities in Voting’s Rewards.”
- Hill & Leighley. 1992. “The Policy Consequences of Class Bias in State Electorates.”
- Griffin & Newman. 2005. “Are Voters Better Represented?”
- Lee & Oppenheimer. 1999. *Sizing Up the Senate*. Ch. 1, 2, 6
- Anzia. 2011. “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups.”
- Anoll et al. *In Progress*. “Representational Responsiveness to People with a Felony Conviction.”
- *For further exploration:* Grimmer, Marble, & Tanigawa-Lau’s “Measuring the Contribution of Voting Blocs to Election Outcomes.”

**Week 6: ...To Organized/Moneyed Interests (2/11)**

- Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, & Snyder. 2003. “Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?”
- Hall & Wayman. 1990. “Buying Time.”
- Broockman & Kalla. 2015. “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials.”
- Neff Powell, Judge-Lord, Grimmer. 2023. “Legislator Advocacy on Behalf of Constituents and Corporate Donors.”
- Payson. 2020. “Cities in the Statehouse.”
- Dwidar. 2022. “Diverse Lobbying Coalitions and Influence in Notice-and-Comment Rule-making.”
- Collins. 2017. “Interest Groups and the Judiciary.”
- *For further exploration:* Ban, Park, You’s “How Are Politicians Informed?”; Powell & Grimmer’s “Money in Exile”; Gilens’ *Affluence and Influence*.

**Week 7: ...To Social Movements (2/18) (Class ends 30 minutes early; AA to Emory)**

- Amenta et al. 2010. “The Political Consequences of Social Movements.”
- Wasow. 2020. “Agenda Seeding.”
- Dunivin, Yan, Ince, & Rojoas. 2022. “Black Lives Protest Shift Public Discourse.”
- Ebbinghaus, Bailey, & Rubel. 2025. “The Effect of the 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests on Police Budgets.”
- Francis. 2014. “Civil Rights and the Making of the Modern American State.” Ch. 1, 3, 4, 5
- *For further exploration:* Gause’s *The Advantage of Disadvantage*; Gillion’s *The Political*

*Power of Protest*; Enos, Kaufman, & Sands' "Can violent protest change local policy support?"; Burstein's ch. 1 in *How Social Movements Matter*.

### **Week 8: ...To People Who Look Like Them (2/25)**

- Mansbridge. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'."
- Griffin. 2014. "When and Why Minority Legislators Matter."
- Costa. 2017. "How Responsive are Political Elites?"
- Thomsen & Sanders. 2019. "Gender Differences in Legislator Responsiveness."
- Harris & Sen. 2019. "Bias and Judging."
- Canon. 2022. "Race and Redistricting."
- *DUE: Concept Map 1, Sunday (3/1) 8 PM*

### **UNIT 2: Why do some people participate and not others?**

*Early thinkers thought participation was inevitable; later thinkers claimed it was irrational to participate and so, unlikely to occur at all. The reality is somewhere in between: some people participate and others don't. Further, these choices are tied to groups. What predicts participation in politics and what produces patterns across politically relevant groups?*

### **Week 9: Collective Action Framework & Constraints (3/4)**

- Verba, Scholzman, & Brady. 1995. *Voice & Equality*. Ch. 2, 7, 8.
- Wong et al. 2011. *Asian American Political Participation*. Ch 1.
- Ansolabehere & Hersh. 2013. "Gender, Race, Age and Voting: A Research Note."
- Riker & Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting."
- Salisbury. 1969. "Exchange Theory of Interest Groups."
- Anoll. 2022. *Obligation Mosaic*. (ch. 2)
- Junn. 2010. "On Participation."
- John Oliver Episode: <https://youtu.be/CesHr99ezWE>
- *For further exploration:* Leighley & Nagler's *Who Votes Now?*; Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action*; Keyssar's *The Right to Vote*; Green & Shapiro's *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*.

### **3/11 Spring Break – no class**

### **Week 10: Variable 1, Costs/Resources (3/18)**

- Campbell. 2012. "Policy Makes Mass Politics."
- Brady, Verba, & Scholzman. 1995. "Beyond Ses."
- Markovich & White. 2022. "More Money, More Turnout?"
- Gomez, Hansford, & Krause. 2007. "The Republicans Should Pray for Rain."
- Mettler. 2002. "Bringing the State Back Into Civic Engagement."
- Berinsky. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States."
- Clinton, Eubank, Fresh, & Shepherd. 2020. "Polling Place Changes and Political Participation."

### **Week 11: Variable 2, Efficacy (3/25)**

- Blais. 2000. "To Vote or Not to Vote?" Selections.

- Brunk. 1980. “The Impact of Rational Participation Models on Voting Attitudes.”
- Soss. 2000. *Unwanted Claims*. (ch. 7)
- Weaver, Piston, & Prowse. 2019. “Too Much Knowledge, Not Enough Power.”
- Wolak. 2018. “Feelings of Political Efficacy in the Fifty States.”
- Groenendyk & Banks. 2013. “Emotional Rescue.”
- Finkel. “Reciprocal Effects of Participation and Political Efficacy.”
- *For further exploration:* Fraga’s “Candidate’s or Districts?”; Easton and Dennis’s “The Child’s Acquisition of Regime Norms”; Enos and Hersh’s “Campaign Perceptions of Electoral Closeness”

**Week 12: (Interlude)*Eyes on the Prize* Screening** (4/1)

- Hogan. 2007. *Many Minds, One Heart*. (Intro, 1, 2)
- Meet in Rubenstein Library, Room 150 for screening and introduction to SNCC archives

**Week 13: Variable 3, Selective Incentives** (4/8)

- Gerber, Green, & Larimer. 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout.”
- McClendon. 2014. “Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics.”
- Valentino & Neuner. 2017. “Why the Sky Didn’t Fall.”
- Anoll. 2022. *Obligation Mosaic*. Ch. 3, 4, 6, 8.

**Week 14: The Demand Side (i.e., Recruitment)** (4/15)

- Rosenstone & Hansen. 2003. *Mobilization, Participation, & Democracy in America*. ch2.
- Hersh. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate*. Ch 2, 3, 6.
- Enos, Fowler, & Vavreck. 2014. “Increasing Inequality.”
- Ramírez, Solano, Wilcox-Archuleta. 2018. “Selective Recruitment or Voter Neglect?”
- Thomsen & King. 2020. “Women’s Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power.”
- *DUE: Concept Map 2, Sunday (4/19) 8 PM*