

# Elections, Political Behaviour and Public Opinion in Australia

## POLS 2111

---

### Course description

The course is designed to introduce students the field of comparative political behaviour with a specific focus on elections, political behaviour and public opinion in Australia. Some of the questions that we will be looking at include:

1. Why do Australians vote the way they do?
2. Why are young people more likely to support minor parties?
3. What would happen if voting were not compulsory?
4. Do Australians want the government to play a larger or smaller role in our lives?

The answers to these questions have very important implications for Australian democracy. This course will also examine how the dimensions of political behaviour and public opinion have been changing over time and the implications of this for the future of Australian politics.

This course is weighted towards quantitative research methods which are a powerful way to explore substantive research questions in political science. Skills in quantitative research and data analysis are highly sought after by employers in both public and private sectors.

---

### Teaching staff

#### Lecturers/Academic Contacts:

Professor Jeff Karp, Professor Ian McAllister

#### Research Interests:

Professor Jeffrey Karp specializes in research on public opinion and elections, and political behaviour. He was previously Director of the Centre for Elections, Media, and Parties at the University of Exeter and is the principal investigator of a four year program to facilitate research and training in the area of comparative cross-national electoral research. His research has appeared a wide range of academic journals and he has edited or co-authored three books on New Zealand elections and is a contributor to a number of edited volumes. He has held positions at universities in the United States, New Zealand, and the Netherlands and teaches courses on American politics and methodology.

#### Contact details:

6125 4825, jeffrey.karp@anu.edu.au

#### Office hour/s: By appointment

Professor Ian McAllister works on elections, parties and public opinion in Australia and cross-nationally. His most recent books are *The Australian Voter* (UNSW Press, 2011) and (co-author) of *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage* (Cambridge, 2011) and *Conflict to Peace: Politics and Society in Northern Ireland Over Half a Century* (Manchester, 2013). He has been director of the Australian Election Study since 1987, and was Chair of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems project from 2004 to 2009 and editor of the *Australian Journal of Political Science* from 2004 to 2010. His scholarly research covers comparative political behaviour, postcommunist politics and Northern Ireland and Australian politics. He is currently completing a book on Russian voting and elections.

#### Contact details:

6125 5553, ian.mcallister@anu.edu.au

**Office hour/s:** By appointment

---

## Course website

Wattle. Some (but not all) lectures will be recorded. If the lectures are not recorded, there will be a summary of the lecture notes available on wattle. Students will be expected to put in at least an additional six hours per week in revision, weekly readings and assignment preparation.

During the first introductory hour of the course, a student representative will be called for. Students should make themselves familiar with this person and contact them if any significant issues arise.

---

## Mode of delivery

The course will be taught intensively over the winter break. The course is designed to enhance group work, interaction/engagement, learning and presentation skills.

Full day classes will run at the following dates and times, finishing with a half day on Friday 12 July:

- Monday 1 July, 9:30am - 5pm
- Wednesday 3 July, 9:30am - 5pm
- Friday 5 July, 9:30am – 3.30pm
- Monday 8 July, 9:30am - 5pm
- Wednesday 10 July, 9:30am - 3pm
- Friday 12 July, 9:30am - 1pm

Classes will be held in: John Dedman Building Lecture Theatre JD101.

Laboratory classes will be in the Peter Baume Building (42A), InfoPlace.

### Recommended reading:

The course will draw on a wide range of sources and reading. However, the following three books will cover a lot of the material that appear throughout the course. *Elections and Voters* covers the main theories of voting behavior, and employs a wide range of cross-national examples. *The Australian Voter* primarily deals with Australian evidence, while the *Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour* is particularly valuable for international sources of literature.

Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin. 2009. *Elections and Voters*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ian McAllister, 2011. *The Australian Voter: Fifty Years of Change*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors, 2007. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Throughout the course there will be a mixture of lectures, group exercises, discussion, and presentations. Students are expected to actively engage in lecture material and group activities while in class in order to achieve learning outcomes 1 to 6.

Lectures will not be taped consistently due to the interactive format of the course, however the power point slides will be available on Wattle, 24 hours after the lecture has been delivered.

---

## Learning outcomes

By successfully completing this course students will have the skills and knowledge to:

1. Analyze academic surveys and public opinion polls using software packages.
2. Evaluate the contribution that surveys and opinion polls make to our understanding of Australian politics.
3. Critically assess and present arguments based on empirical evidence and theoretical models based on the voter behaviour literature.
4. Assess the most important events and issues driving electoral outcomes.
5. Develop analytical and writing skills through the research essay and exam.
6. Discuss and reassess central ideas in weekly assessment tasks.

## Schedule of activities

### Monday 1 July

	<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Learning outcomes</i>
Morning	9.30-10.00	Course introduction, overview, assessment, key issues [JK, IMcA]	6
	10.00-10.30	Group work: Assigning groups and tasks [JK, IMcA]	6
	11.00-12.00	Lecture: The electoral rules of the game [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	12.00-12.30	Group discussion: electoral institutions and their consequences [IMcA]	3 & 4
	Lunch		
Afternoon	1.30-2.30	Lecture: Parties and party loyalties [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	2.30-3.00	Group discussion: do parties matter? [IMcA]	3 & 4
	3.30-4.30	Lecture: What voters know about politics [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	4.30-5.00	Group discussion: do voters' views matter? [IMcA]	3 & 4

### Wednesday 3 July

	Time	Topic	Learning outcomes
Morning	9.30-10.30	Lecture: How to measure behaviour and opinions [IMcA-JP]	1, 4 & 5
	11.00-12.00	Lecture: Where to find data and how to use it [JK]	1, 4 & 5
	12.00-12.30	Group discussion: methodology Q & A [JK, IMcA]	3 & 4
	Lunch		
Afternoon	1.30-5.00	Laboratory work: data analysis [JK]	1 & 2

## Friday 5 July

	Time	Topic	Learning outcomes
Morning	9.30-10.30	Lecture: Influences on the vote 1: social background [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	11.00-12.00	Lecture: Influences on the vote 2: class and economic interests [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	12.00-12.30	Group discussion: Influencing the vote [IMcA]	3 & 4
	Lunch		
Afternoon	1.30-2.30	Lecture: Influences on the vote 3: Leadership traits [IMcA-Caitlin Milazzo]	1, 4 & 5
	3.00-4.00	Lecture: Influences on the vote 4: Beliefs, attitudes and values [IMcA]	3 & 4
	4.00-4.30	Group discussion: do voters' views matter? [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5

## Monday 8 July

	Time	Topic	Learning outcomes
Morning	9.30-10.30	Lecture: Influences on the vote 5: leaders [IMcA]	1, 4 & 5
	11.00-12.00	Lecture: Influences on the vote 6: media and election campaigns [JK]	1, 4 & 5
	12.00-12.30	Group discussion: leadership and campaigns [JK, IMcA]	3 & 4
	Lunch		
Afternoon	1.30-5.00	Laboratory work: data analysis [JK]	1 & 2

## Wednesday 10 July

	Time	Topic	Learning outcomes
Morning	9.30-10.30	Lecture: Campaigns and political participation [JK]	1, 4 & 5
	11.00-12.00	Lecture: Elections and the democratic process in advanced democracies [Todd Donovan]	1, 4 & 5
	12.00-12.30	Group discussion: The media and elections [JK]	3 & 4
	Lunch		
Afternoon	1.30-5.00	Presentation of seminar papers [JK, IMcA]	5 & 6

## Friday 12 July

	Time	Topic	Learning outcomes
Morning	9.30-10.30	Lecture: Democratic accountability [JK]	1, 4 & 5
	11.00-11.30	Group discussion: The comparative context [JK]	3 & 4
	11.30-12.00	Group discussion: Course assessment and feedback [JK, IMcA]	3 & 4

## Assessment details

### Assessment tasks

Group discussion participation (10%)	Due 12 July 2013
Seminar presentation (10%)	Due 12 July 2013
Essay (40%)	Due 15 August 2013
Take home exam (40%)	Due 19 July 2013

Students will need to attend and participate in group activities for at least the equivalent of **four days** teaching to be deemed eligible for passing the course. This ensures that all students can achieve learning outcomes 5 and 6.

Students will have an opportunity to discuss the assessment items during the first day of teaching. Any issues relating to the assessment should be raised at this time.

---

## Essay

**Learning objectives assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**

**Due date: 15 August 2013**

**Weighting: 40%**

**Length: 2,000 words (including footnotes and tables)**

The essay will be on a topic agreed with the lecturer in the first week of the course. The topic will relate to one of the areas covered in the lectures, and will be based on an analysis of survey or other data, using one of the databases used in the laboratory sessions on Wednesday 3 July and Monday 8 July 2013. The essay will be expected to cover:

- Research question(s): What is the research question(s) 'or problem?
- Theoretical framework: What is the theoretical framework (i.e. literature review which includes theories and/or past research used to introduce and justify the relevance of the study)? Discuss the most important elements of the theoretical framework and how it is appropriate for the research question(s). 'addressed in this study.
- Hypotheses: What are being hypothesised tested? Justify the hypotheses in terms of the theoretical framework and prior research.
- Methodology: Describe the research design and any particular sampling method. Discuss how well the methodology is suited to the research question posed and the specific hypotheses tested.
- Results: Discuss the main findings in relation to the research question(s).
- Discussion and conclusion: Discuss the findings in relation to the theoretical framework used.

Use the Harvard style referencing system for your work. A detailed description of this style can be found at the following webpages:

- <https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/node/80>

You should submit your assignment using the online submission tool on Wattle by 5pm on 15 August 2013.

## Final exam

**Learning Objectives Assessed: 1, 3, 4, 5**

**Due Date: 19 July 2013**

**Weighting: 40%**

### Task description:

The final exam will cover material presented during the course. Lectures and readings will be part of the exam as well as guest lectures. The questions will be available by the end of the course and will be a take-home exam

---

## Guideline for word limits

Students are expected to adhere to the word limits for each assignment. Students are able to go either side of the word limit by 10%. If you exceed the 10% quota you will be penalised by 10%.

You will be marked on how well you express your argument within the given word limit, so it is in your interest to strictly adhere to the word limit for each assignment.

---

## Penalties and extensions

As per the policy for late submission of assessment approved by the CASS Education Committee on 17 May 2010, assignments submitted without an approved extension will attract a penalty of 2 per cent per working day deducted from the mark of that assignment.

The policy states:

- Extensions will not be granted retrospectively, except in medical emergencies or on the advice of the Disability Services Centre.
- Extensions will be granted only for medical conditions, bereavement, other compelling reasons or on the advice of the Disability Services Centre. Extensions on medical grounds require a medical certificate.
- Extensions will normally not be granted because of conflicts with other study commitments, work commitments, holidays, family gatherings, competing assessment deadlines, sporting commitments or commitments to student organisations.
- Even when an extension has been granted, assignments will normally not be accepted beyond the date when the assessment on that question/topic has been returned to other students enrolled in the course. If a student is unable to submit assessment by that time, alternative assessment may be set by the course coordinator.

All applications for extension need to be made in writing before the due date. Applications should be submitted using the form available on the back of the assignment submission cover sheet. This can be found outside the Joint School Office for Sociology and Politics and International Relations, Ground Floor, Haydon-Allen, Building 22.

---

## Learning resources, recommended texts and readings

Recommended readings:

Aitkin, Don A. 1977, 2nd edition 1982. *Stability and Change in Australian Politics*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Birch, Sarah, 2009. *Full Participation: A Comparative Study of Compulsory Voting*. New York: United Nations University Press.



- Blais, Andre, 2007. 'Turnout in Elections', in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bowler, Shaun & David M. Farrell, editors, 1992. *Electoral Strategies and Political Marketing*. London: Macmillan.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller & Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Dalton, Russell J., David M. Farrell & Ian McAllister. 2011. *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors, 2007. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Farrell, David & Ian McAllister. 2003. *The Australian Electoral System: Origins, Variations and Consequences*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Franklin, Mark N. 2004. *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition, in Established Democracies Since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibson, Rachel & Ian McAllister. 2011. 'Do Online Election Campaigns Win Votes? The 2007 Australian YouTube Election.' *Political Communications* 28: 227–244.
- Goot, Murray. 2000. 'Distrustful, Disenchanted and Disengaged? Polled Opinion on Politics, Politicians and the Parties: An Historical Perspective.' Available from <[www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/pops/pop38/c02.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/pops/pop38/c02.pdf)>
- Inglehart, Ronald. 2007. 'Postmaterialist Values and the Shift from Survival to Self-Expression Values', in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, editor, 2009. *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S. & Mary Stegmaier, 2007. 'Economic Models of Voting, in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McAllister, Ian. 2007. 'The Personalization of Politics, in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McAllister, Ian. 2009. 'Elections and Electoral Behavior', in R.A.W. Rhodes, *The Australian Study of Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McAllister, Ian. 2011. *The Australian Voter: Fifty Years of Change*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Mackerras, Malcolm & Ian McAllister (1999). 'Compulsory Voting, Party Stability and Electoral Advantage in Australia, *Electoral Studies*. 18: 217–33.
- Pietsch, Juliet & Ian McAllister. 2010. "'A Diabolical Challenge": Public Opinion and Climate Change Policy in Australia', *Environmental Politics* 19: 217-36.
- Schmitt-Beck, Rudiger. 2007. 'New Modes of Campaigning', in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Semetko, Holli A. 2007. 'Political Communication', in Russell J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## General information

### Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

<http://academichonesty.anu.edu.au/index.html>

Academic misconduct can seriously jeopardize your academic career, your future, and, if you are an international student, your ability to stay in Australia to study. It is the responsibility of each individual student to ensure that:

- they are familiar with the expectations for academic honesty both in general, and in the specific context of particular disciplines or courses
- work submitted for assessment is genuine and original
- appropriate acknowledgement and citation is given to the work of others
- they do not knowingly assist other students in academically dishonest practice.

When in doubt about anything, ASK ... and .... ask EARLY—don't leave it until the assignment due date. Your lecturers, tutors and College administration staff are here to help you.

It is the responsibility of everyone at the ANU to uphold and promote fundamental principles of quality and integrity in scholarly work.

### Academic Skills and Learning Centre

<https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/>

The Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC) offers ANU students free and confidential help with their academic work through individual consultations, workshops, courses, podcasts and handouts. Their aim is to assist students to develop the academic, critical thinking and communication strategies that are foundational to all scholarly activity. For ANU students, the ASLC offers:

- individual consultations
- workshops/courses
- online and print materials and publications
- the Language Exchange Program
- podcasts
- the Essay and Report Writing File

The ASLC is located on the lower ground floor of the Pauline Griffin Building and is only closed on weekends and public holidays.

## **Appeals Procedure**

<http://cass.anu.edu.au/current-students/rules-and-policies/appeals>

If you genuinely believe you have received an inappropriate or incorrect result, there are steps you can take to have that result reviewed. This must be done within 30 working days of the formal notification of results. Your first point of contact should always be your tutor or the course convenor.

### **Assignment formatting guidelines**

Your assignment must contain a title page regardless of which method of paper copy submission you choose. This title page should include the following:

- student name and number?
- course catalogue number?
- course name?
- due date
- assignment item number
- convenor names
- tutor name if applicable

This title page is in addition to the cover page sign and attach to your assignments. The following are guidelines for the submission of assignments:

- Assignments must include a cover sheet (see above).
- Word process or type your assignment (12 point font), using only one side of each page.
- Staple in top left hand corner of page.
- Use A4 size paper and leave at least a 3cm margin. This is the most useful format for both marking and photocopying.?
- Double or one and a half line spacing should be used unless the convenor has specified otherwise below. Single line spacing is used for quotes when these are separated and indented.
- Number each page of the assignment.
- No plastic covers or folders unless otherwise notified by your convenor