SPECIAL TOPICS: VOTING TRENDS IN NATIONAL AND STATE POLITICS

Course: RPOS 399 (17439)

Instructor: Bruce N. Gyory

Spring 2010: Monday and Wednesday 4:15-5:35

Place: Physics Room 123

Schedule of Topics for Class Discussion and Related Assignments

**January 20:** Overview of Course (Requirements for exams, research paper, reading and attendance).

Preliminary Discussion: Anatomy of 2009 Races in NYS: NYC Mayoral and key County Executive and Congressional Special in 23rd CD returns.

**Readings:** No assignment, but a handout essay will be distributed, supplementing discussion.

**January 25:** Did the 2008 Election Produce a Political Realignment? What is a realigning election? What do the 2008 election returns tell us about the potential for an enduring Obama coalition?

**Readings:** No assignment, but a handout essay will be distributed, supplementing discussion.

**January 27:** Discussion: Why do people vote the way they do? Theories of voting matched against exit polling and actual returns. Examination of V.O. Key’s, The Responsible Electorate, updated by Stanley Greenberg’s The Two Americas.

**Readings:** Suggested not required. Key and Greenberg books see above (out of print, hence library reading);

Required Zogby: The Way We’ll Be: The Zogby Report on the Transformation of the American Dream (Introduction and Chapters 1-3).

**February 1 and 3:** Forming Party Coalitions: The Democrats. Analyzing the national coalition the Democrats are searching for and hoping to secure.

**Readings:** Required John B. Judis and Ray Teixeira The Emerging Democratic Majority (Introduction and Chapters 2, 3, 4, Conclusion and Afterward). Suggested: Schaller: Whistling Past Dixie: How Democrats Can Win Without the South (Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7).

**February 8 and 10:** Forming Party Coalitions: The Republicans. From Reagan to beyond. Where are the Republicans heading?

**Readings:** Required: Ross Douthat & Reihan Salam: Grand New Party and Judis and Teixeira (Chapter 1 and 5).

**Winter Break:** No class February 15th.
**February 17 and 21**: Disintegration of Party Coalitions. The Rise of Independent Voting and the Prelude to Realignment or Dealignment?

- **Readings**: Required – Catch up on reading assignments from January 26 – February 2nd and Zogby (op. cit) Chapters 4-7
- Suggested – Joe Klein *Politics Lost.*

**February 24**: Theories of Realignment.

- **Topics for Term Papers**
  - Suggestions and Discussion of topics to help students choose topic. Should have topic presented to me by March 1. In one page memo with topic and rationale.

**March 1**: Breaking down the electorate: Gender

- A. Students submit paper topics in written memo.

**March 3 and 8**: Breaking down the electorate: Ethnic voting – The political experience of Irish and Black communities.


**March 10**: Breaking down the electorate: Italian and Hispanic Communities.

- **Readings**: Required: Barone (op. cit) Part 2: Chapter 3 and 4
  - Suggested: Jorge Ramos: *The Latino Wave*

**March 15**: Breaking down the electorate. Rise of Jewish and Asian communities


**March 17**: Review for Mid-term (Take Home Mid-Term)

- A. Approval of Term Paper topics returned.
- B. Mid-term Essay Topic distributed!!!

**March 22**: Polling – Science or Art. An examination of the techniques, strengths and limitations of polling.

  - A. Mid-term returned: Due by End of Class!!!

**March 24**: An introduction to analyzing political trends in swing states.
Readings: Required Judis and Teixeira (op. cit) Chapter 3 and handouts distributed on March 16.

Spring Break Week of March 29 – April 5

April 7 and 12: NYS - A study in regionalism. Tracking political trend lines in New York State over last 3 decades.
   Readings: Required from E Reserve: The Crouching Future of New York State Politics – What the 2002 General Election Returns Reveal, by Bruce N. Gyory

April 14: NYS break down the electorate in 2004 and 2008

April 19: Breakdown and update of NYS electorate 2004 - 2008. Focus on the regional voting patterns within NYS and NYC.
   A. Research Term Papers Due!!!

April 21 and 26: NYS electorate in 2010 and beyond
   Readings: Required. Catch up from March 23-April 11th reading assignments.
   A. Final Exam Essay Question Distributed – April 26th

April 28 and May 3: In class presentations on paper topics by students. Volunteers get an extra credit bump on paper grade, in return for making a cogent presentation.
   A. Research Papers Returned – April 28.

May 3: Last Class. Final Exam Essay Due!!!!