

PLS 303: ELECTIONS & VOTING BEHAVIOR
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Spring 2013

Dr. Roger C. Lowery

I hope that you had a good holiday and are looking forward to getting started on your new courses. In order to get an overview of our course's objectives, structure, assignments, and schedule, please:

- print a copy of these instructions and
- complete the following assignments before the next class.
- Send me an e-mail from your UNCW email account if you have any questions or concerns.

**ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED
PRIOR TO OUR 2ND CLASS, TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2013**

- I. Go to the course web site at: http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls303/index_new.htm
 - A. Click the **SYLLABUS** link,
 - B. And then print a copy of the course syllabus.
 - C. Go back to the course homepage and click the **COURSE SCHEDULE** link,
 - D. And then print a copy of the course schedule.
 - E. Read the syllabus and schedule carefully. If you have any questions, phone or e-mail me.

- II. Purchase the four course materials **required** for this course:
 - A. Abramowitz, Alan I. 2013. *The Polarized Public?: Why American Government is So Dysfunctional*. ISBN-10: 0-205-87739-7
 - B. Fiorina, Morris P. 2009. *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. ISBN-978-0-8061-4074-2
 - C. Wayne, Stephen J. 2012. *The Road to the White House 2012: The Politics of Presidential Elections*. ISBN-10: 1-111-34150-8
 - D. *CPSrf 2nd Generation Student-Response Keypad for Higher Education*. 2009. Denton, TX: eInstruction Corporation. ISBN:-10: 1881483711

- III. Once you have purchased your student-response keypad,
 - A. Follow the activation instructions posted at:
http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls303/Student-response_keypad_instructions_Spring_2013.pdf.
 - B. **Bring your activated Student Response Keypad to every class – starting with the first class meeting.**
 1. You will use the keypad in every class meeting to anonymously respond to true/false or multiple-choice questions that arise during class discussion.
 2. The aggregated class responses are projected on an overhead screen as full-color bar- or pie-charts, so that the class and I can see and comment upon the distribution of class responses. I find that the anonymity and confidentiality of this feedback method encourages all students to enthusiastically participate in this interactive form of active learning. Students who rarely or never raise their hand in response to questions are comfortable in responding with their keypads and are more likely to join the resulting discussion of how and why the class divided in their collective responses.
 3. The keypad responses also give me immediate feedback regarding the extent to which students understand concepts being discussed. This allows me to make informed decisions about the pace and organization of class discussions.

- IV. Memorize the following definitions:
 - A. **Society**: a collection of individuals that interact with each other
 - B. **Politics**: **the process of conflict resolution**
 - C. **Law**: the rules and principles used to resolve conflict
 - D. **Government**: law makers, enforcers, and adjudicators
 1. The basic *ends* of government:
 - a. Balancing individual liberty with collective security or order
 - b. Balancing individual liberty with collective equality
 2. The alternate *means* that can be used to achieve those ends:
 - a. Constitutional limits on governmental power
 - b. Unlimited (authoritarian or totalitarian) governmental power

