

Elections

Class Notes	

Terms to remember...

- registering to vote
 - US citizen, states have varying rules for residency; for example, TX requires residence in a county, 18 on election day, not a convicted felon, not legally judged mentally incapacitated
- polling place—location of voting machines; ballot boxes; where votes are cast on primary or election days
- election judge—oversees polling place
 - administers oaths to election officers and assistants
 - all must wear identifying badges
 - holds list of eligible voters
 - arranges tables and voting booths
 - post distance markers, sample ballots, notices
 - markers (rules vary; in TX markers go 100 feet in all directions from the entrance to the polling place)
- voter ID
- poll watchers
 - parties may appoint up to 2 poll watchers, must have a certificate of appointment; no cell phones or devices may be used; may not talk with anyone directly
 - Secretary of State may appoint election inspectors; sometimes federal & international observers
- ballot types
 - office-block—focus on office rather than candidate or party affiliation
 - party-column—focus on candidate and party affiliation over office
- ticket types
 - straight—vote by pulling one lever, pressing one button for the party of choice
 - split—vote based on individual choices of candidates; possible split of vote between parties' candidates
- primaries/caucuses
 - open—all registered voters may vote in the party primary of their choice without being a member
 - closed—only voters registered in advance with the party can vote—loyalty
 - frontloading—a few states are allowed by parties to hold their primary or caucus very early in the election season; receiving more time and attention from media and candidates; more choice in the field of candidates
 - early voting—an accommodation that allows voting before Election Day

- early voting
 - begins weeks in advance; ends Friday before election day
 - may vote by mail, but requests for ballots take awhile and must be in before the election day deadline
- election day
 - polls open 7 am to 7 pm
 - take ID with you
- conventions
 - run by political parties but must abide by state rules and regulations on line at SOS.Texas.gov/elections
 - precinct—usually night of primary election day; any registered voter who votes that day
 - county/district
 - state
 - national—every 4 years; write/update platform; nominate candidates for general election
 - super delegates
 - party platform
- mid-term election—middle of presidential term
- general election
 - voter turnout—measure of political engagement
 - early voting—attempt to increase turnout
 - running for office (method of participation)
 - incumbent—current office holder
 - competitive seat—challenger runs against incumbent
 - open seat—incumbent not running for reelection
 - PACs (political action committees) influence vote; organizations created to raise money for campaigns and spend money to influence policy
 - Electoral College—ballots cast in December following November general presidential election; each state has electors equal to number of national legislators; a majority of EC votes is required to win the presidency; in \Rightarrow Voter Disenfranchisement a tie situation, the House elects
 - winner-take-all—all electoral votes for a state are given to the candidate who wins the most votes overall
 - district-electoral votes divided based on state rules for districts

Expanding Voting Rights for Elections...

- ⇒ 15th Amendment—all males citizens regardless of race unless Native American
- 19th Amendment—all women citizens
- 24th Amendment—no more poll taxes
- 26th Amendment—all persons over age 18 and citizen

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Review...

- ⇒ Voting—channel for people to get involved with the policy making process
- ⇒ Parties—teams seeking control of government through political office/elections
- ⇒ Participation by Citizens
 - ⇒ initiative—ballot proposal by voters
 - ⇒ referendum—vote by citizens on law proposed by state government
 - ⇒ recall—removal of politician or government official from office

New...

- ⇒ Motor—Voter Act (NVRA of 1993)—open opportunity for registration at time of change to driver's license; registration for government aid, etc.
- - ⇒ literacy test—must pass exam on politics, history, etc.; illegal under Voting Rights Act
 - ⇒ grandfather clause—no exam or tax if grandfather had previously voted
 - ⇒ poll tax—pay a fee to vote; ended by 24th Amendment
- ⇒ Campaign Finance
 - ⇒ *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) limits on personal spending by candidates is protected free speech if not using federal money; FEC (regulatory agency) Federal Election Commission oversees spending