Discourse and Voting Rights in the United States
Winter 2019

Instructor: Richard D. Anderson
Office: 4351 Bunche Hall
Office hours: By appointment Tuesday Wednesday Thursday except 145-345 Tuesday and Thursday and 145-445 Wednesday; on other days you may also talk to me by telephone at 310 562 2210 (please do not text me). Send an email to randerso@ucla.edu proposing a time to meet or talk.

Purpose: This seminar concerns the effects of changes in political discourse on the extension and withdrawal of voting rights to or from inhabitants of the United States. I think of political discourse as shaping the compilation and interpretation of all utterances about politics, with the most important utterances being those of the most important politicians. Contrary to the view that “talk is cheap,” in this seminar we will study both how talk might make politics and how an observer might be able to decide whether it does. The investigation will begin with an examination of restrictions on the right to vote in the US and the gradual process of the removal of those restrictions. Then we will look at how political speeches have changed over time and correlate the changes in speeches with the loosening or tightening of restrictions on the right to vote.

Requirements: There are four requirements: (1) constant attendance, except that I ask you not to attend if you are ill and you have permission not to attend if you inform me of an emergency (please don’t tell me you have scheduled a conflict with the seminar meeting); (2) preparation in three forms—(a) attentively reading the assigned book before each session, (b) posting a weekly writing assignment and (c) commenting thoughtfully on other students' postings; (3) oral participation in seminar discussions; (4) submission of a research paper of 5000 words using the techniques taught in the seminar to answer the question whether change in political discourse can explain the observed pattern of extension and contraction of the right to vote. Your paper must discuss how each assigned reading pertains to the question. The paper is due Friday of finals week through turnitin.com. No paper copies or attachments to email will be accepted.

Assignments: Each student must post each weekly assignment on the course site "discussion forum" by Monday at midnight. The assignments are graded only when you fail to post them. They are learning opportunities for all students, not tests. By Tuesday at midnight, each student must also post a thoughtful response to at least three other students' postings. Do not duplicate other students’ postings! Bring to the seminar a copy of your original post that you can consult during the discussion. The weekly assignments should be not more than 500 words and can be very brief if they are to the point. For your own benefit, make sure you provide references in the form of page numbers for each statement you make from the assigned readings.
In preparing your paper, make sure you read and follow the guidance posted on the classweb site concerning references and use of quotations and paraphrases.

Reading schedule and assignments:

All readings except Ratcliffe are available at ASUCLA; Ratcliffe is posted on classweb

Week 2: Alexander Keyssar, The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States (Introduction and chapters 1-3); Note: Revised 2009 Edition!
Assignment: Who had the right to vote in 1789 and who obtained or lost it by 1855?

Week 3: Keyssar, The Right to Vote (chapters 4-6)
Assignment: Who obtained or lost the right to vote between 1855 and 1920?

Week 4: Keyssar, The Right to Vote (chapters 7-9 and Afterword)
Assignment: What does Keyssar think changed the right to vote, and does his own evidence agree with him? Hint: Review Introduction

Week 5: Andrew W. Robertson, The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain, 1790-1900 (US chapters only)
Inaugural Addresses: John Adams, Jefferson 1, Hayes
Assignment: What three forms of political discourse were encountered in the United States before 1900 and how do they correspond to the sequence of expansions and contractions in voting rights?

Week 6: Jeffrey Tulis, The Rhetorical Presidency (presidential discourse 1789-1980)
Inaugural Addresses: Pierce, T. Roosevelt, Wilson 1
Assignment: How has presidential discourse changed over time?

Week 7: George Lakoff, Moral Politics (contemporary political discourse), 3-178, 322-334, 389-426
Inaugural Addresses: L. Johnson, G.W. Bush 1, Obama 1
Assignment: What is characteristic of modern political discourse in the United States?

Week 8: Richard D. Anderson, Jr., Discourse, Dictators and Democrats: Russia’s Place in a Global Process (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014), Chapters 1 and 2
Assignment: Why do voting rights depend on discourse?
Week 9: Anderson, *Discourse, Dictators and Democrats*, Chapters 4 and 5
Assignment: How has enfranchisement in the United States differed from enfranchisement in Europe, Japan, and other British settler colonies?

Week 10: Analysis of inaugural addresses
Assignment: Bring texts of inaugural addresses that you intend to analyze in your papers with examples of the kinds of discourse discussed in the other assigned readings.