

Voting Rights and the 2018 Mid-Term Elections

Many of us are deeply concerned about the direction of our country and want to be involved in turning it around. Others may support the current administration's policies. But all agree that the upcoming mid-term elections will significantly affect governance in the US.

Voter turnout will be crucial to the outcome. So, we have to ask, despite living in a country where the right to vote tends to be taken for granted, "Who can vote?" To understand why this is even a question as well as to understand the complex answer, this course will first examine the history of voting rights in the US, starting with the Constitution and state law, whose primacy in establishing qualifications within particular states has so complicated the issues. We'll look at the history of restrictions on voting, particularly those relating to race, religion, age, gender, disability, incarceration, felony status, residency, regional or territorial status, and citizenship.

Turning to the current problems facing potential voters in the mid-term 2018 elections, we'll focus on a host of new state rules, ranging from strict photo ID requirements, to early voting cutbacks, to registration restrictions, as well as issues like gerrymandering. Recent Supreme Court cases, as well as key decisions in state courts, are particularly important with respect to the gerrymandering issue and will be discussed in depth.

Finally, throughout the course, we'll identify and track the progress of some key races that will likely be affected by the issues we're discussing. The active involvement of class members will be important to this process.

No text will be required for the course, but on-line sources and handouts will be provided. **Recommended reading** for background and discussion will also be listed on a syllabus to be provided before classes begin.

Leader: Elaine Jacoby is an attorney who leads courses on civil rights, women's issues, and politics.

Tuesdays: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., 8 weeks: September 25 through November 13

Location: Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville