

17.200
Graduate Seminar in American Politics

Fall 2006
Wednesday 3:00-5:00
Room E51-393

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Purpose and Requirements

This seminar is designed to acquaint students with current research approaches in the various subfields of American politics. The aim is to serve students with a variety of reads, including those who intend to specialize in American politics and those who want to acquire a basic understanding of American politics without further specialization. Particular attention will be given to debates over theory, methodology, and substance. This course is not designed to provide a complete survey of the field; no one-semester course could possibly include all approaches or all subfields in American politics.

Each seminar will center on a critical analysis of the assigned readings for the week. Although I hope that much of our class time will be spent in group discussion, I will typically open with a commentary on the week's readings. At the end of each seminar I will introduce the next week's readings – describing them briefly and suggesting issues for you to think about.

Each week, one-half of the class will be required to write a short essay responding to the week's readings, no longer than two single-spaced page. These essays should try to engage a number of the week's readings, by, for example, doing one or more of the following: juxtaposing and commenting on alternative explanations or approaches to a substantive topic; criticizing the methodologies used and proposing other strategies of research; criticizing the conceptualization and/or measurement of a particular construct; analyzing the implications of a set of findings; suggesting new questions or hypotheses for research; developing similarities and contrasts with arguments or research found in the readings from previous weeks. More generally, these papers should contain an argument, not a summary or description of the readings. These papers should be distributed to instructors and class participants by 4:00 on the Monday before the scheduled Wednesday meeting. I will comment on them and turn them back at the end of Wednesday's session. These essays will serve as the starting point for our discussion.

A longer paper is due on the last scheduled day of class, December 14, 2006. This paper should review and interpret relevant literature and propose a research project that could be undertaken with limited financial resources, such as are available to most graduate students. In addition to reviewing the relevant literature, the paper should develop a significant hypothesis related to some topic in American politics and/or government and propose a practicable research design for assessing it. If you are writing a research paper for another course, you are permitted to combine the assignment with this one if you first clear the plan with us and the professor in the other course. If you combine the assignment, you will ordinarily be expected to carry out a research project. You will be expected to submit a preliminary memo outlining your research project by November 26, 2006. Late submissions are not permitted.

Grading

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation: 35%

Short papers: 40%

Final Paper: 25%

Required Reading

I will provide links to several recommended books on my homepage, but these are not required for purchase. Depending on your personal interests, you may wish to purchase of these books. Please note that course participation is a critical part of your grade for this course. I expect that you will come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings.

Course Outline

1. Introduction and Course Overview (September 6)

Political Behavior

2. Public Opinion I: Micro Public Opinion (September 13)

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in the Mass Publics," in David Apter (ed.) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.

Achen, Christopher H. 1975. "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response." *American Political Science Review*. 69:1218-1231

Kinder, Donald R. 1983. "Diversity and Complexity in American Public Opinion." in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ada Finifter. Washington, DC: APSA Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-5.

3. Public Opinion II: The Macropolity (September 20)

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1,2,8,9

Stimson, James A. 2004. *Tides of consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pages 1-82.

Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89:543-565.

Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40:194-230.

4. Voting Behavior (September 27)

Bartels, Larry M. 1988. *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press Chapters 3, 4, and 6.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: HarperCollins., Chapters 1, 8, and 13.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Mebane, Walter R., Jr. 2000. "Coordination, Moderation, and Institutional Balancing in American Presidential and House Elections." *American Political Science Review*, 94(1): 37-57

Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.

5. Political Participation (October 4)

Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen, 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: MacMillan. Chapter 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8.

Verba, Sidney, Kay L. Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 16, 17.

Schlozman, Kay L. 2002. "Citizen Participation in America: What Do We Know? Why Do We Care?" in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline (Centennial Edition)*. Pp. 433-361.

Robert D. Putnam. 1995. "Tuning in, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in American." *Political Science and Politics*, 28(4):664--683

Berinsky, Adam J. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States." *American Politics Research* 33: 471-491

6. Interest Groups (October 12)

Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. Chapter 1.

Schattschneider, E.E. 1975. *The Semisovereign People*. Hinsdale: Dryden., Chapters 1 and 2.

Walker, Jack L. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America." *American Political Science Review* 77:390-406.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Hall, Richard, and Frank Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *American Political Science Review* 84:797-820.

7. Political Parties I: Mass Behavior (October 19)

Mayhew, David R. 2000. "Electoral Realignment." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3:449-74

Fiorina, Morris P., 1980. "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics," *Daedalus* 109: 25-45

Larry M. Bartels. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996," *American Journal of Political Science*, 44: 35-50

Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." *American Political Science Review*. 95:619-631.

Institutions

8. Political Parties II: Elite Behavior (October 26)

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7

Snyder, James and Michael Ting. 2002. "An Informational Rationale for Political Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1): 90-110.

Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. New York: Oxford University Press.

9. Congress I: Institutional Development (November 2)

Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62:144-168.

Schickler, Eric. 2000. "Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1998: A Test of Partisan and Ideological Power Balance Model Models." *The American Political Science Review* 94: 269-288.

Charles Stewart III and Barry R. Weingast. 1992. "Stacking the Senate, Changing the Nation: Republican Rotten Boroughs, Statehood Politics, and American Political Development." *Studies in American Political Development*, pp. 223-71.

10. Congress II: Congress as a Political Institution (November 9)

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-79.

Krehbiel, Keith 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press., Chapters 1-3.

Cox, Gary W. and Matthew D. McCubbins 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. Introduction, Chapters 1-5.

Aldrich, John, and David Rhode. 2000. "The Consequences of Party Organization in the House" in *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era*, eds. Jon Bond and Richard Fletcher. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

11. The Executive Branch: The Presidency, and Inter-Branch Bargaining (November 16)

Krehbiel, Keith 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, Chapters 1-2.

Moe, Terry and William Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29:850-72.

Charles Cameron. 2000. *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6.

Cohen, Jeffrey E. 1995. "Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda." *American Journal of Political Science* 39:87-107.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2001. "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45:313-29.

12. Bureaucratic Politics (November 30)

Lindblom, Charles. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review* 19: 79-88.

McCubbins, Mathew, and Thomas Schwarz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28:165-79.

McCubbins, Mathew, Roger Noll, and Barry Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3:243-77.

Dan Carpenter. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Introduction, Chapter 1 and Conclusion.

Huber, John, Charles Shipan, and Madelaine Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and Statutory Control of Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science*. 45(2): 330-46.

13. The Judiciary and The Supreme Court (December 7)

Dahl, Robert A. 1958. "Decision Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy Maker." *Journal of Public Law*. 6:279-95.

Wahlbeck, Paul J, James F. Spriggs, and Forrest Maltzman. 1998. "Marshalling the Court: Bargaining and Accommodation the United States Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science* 42(1): 294-315.

Segal, Jeffrey. 1997. "Separation of Powers Games in the Positive Theory of Law and the Courts." *American Political Science Review*. 91: 28-44.

Whittington, Keith. 2005. "Interpose Your Friendly Hand': Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review*. 99(4): 583-59.

Mass/Elite Linkages

14. American Democracy (December 14)

Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.

American Political Science Association Task Force. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality" *Perspectives on Politics*. 2:651-666. [read also responses, pp. 667-689).

15. Wrap-Up (Makeup Class TBA)