

17.260
Field Seminar in American Politics
MIT
Fall 2000
R9-12
E51-393

Charles Stewart III
Department of Political Science
E53-463
x3-3127
E-mail: cstewart@mit.edu
URL: <http://web.mit.edu/cstewart/www>
Office hours: TBA

Introduction

The Field Seminar in American Politics is intended for graduate students in political science who intend to take the general examination in American politics or declare American politics as their write-off field. The coverage of the literature in American politics is not comprehensive, but it is sufficiently broad to give students an introduction to major empirical questions and theoretical approaches that guide the study of American politics.

Requirements

Weekly attendance and class participation are mandatory.

Depending on enrollments, everyone will lead the seminar discussion at least once, and perhaps twice or thrice.

Weekly one-page memos are required, summarizing an important theme raised in the preceding week's readings and proposing a question or line of discussion to be pursued during the seminar. The one-page memos are due midnight the night before class and must be distributed to all seminar participants beforehand, either physically or via e-mail.

Four longer, four-page essays are also required at various times throughout the semester. The assignment is as follows: You will take a week's reading and pose a general exam-like question that pertains to the reading. You will then write an answer to your question. I will grade the essay and return it to you for your revision, which you will complete by the end of the term. The schedule for these assignments is as follows:

Mass politics I, due October 2
Mass politics II, due October 23
Institutional politics I, due November 13
Institutional politics II, due December 11

Book purchases

The following books are available for purchase at the Coop. Each belongs on the bookshelves of any student of American politics, and so you should own them all.

1. Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* Yale University Press.
2. David Brady, *Critical Elections and Congressional Policy Making* Stanford University Press.
3. Anthony Downs, *The Economic Theory of Democracy* Harvard University Press.
4. Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, *The American Voter* University of Chicago Press.
5. John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinions* Harvard University.
6. Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* Yale University Press.
7. David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* Yale University Press.
8. Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics* Yale University Press.
9. Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power*
10. Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*
11. David Mayhew, *Divided We Govern* Yale University Press.
12. Alexander M. Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch*
13. Gerald Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring about Social Change?*
14. James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*

Other books are on reserve in Dewey Library. I will distribute photocopied versions of some of the articles and book chapters that are assigned.

Reading Schedule

Part I: Mass Politics

September 7
Introduction

September 14
Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (all)
David Truman, *The Governmental Process* chaps. 1 3, 9, 10, 16

September 21

David Brady, *Critical Elections and Congressional Policy Making* (all)

James Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party Systems*, chaps. 1 3, 13 (reserve)

Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*, chaps. 1 2 (reserve)

September 28

V.O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936 1960* (all) (reserve)

Anthony Downs, *The Economic Theory of Voting* (all)

October 5

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, *The American Voter*, chaps. 1 11.

Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinions*, chaps. 1 7.

October 12

Wolfinger and Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (all)

Verba, *Participation in America* (excerpts TBA)

Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (excerpts TBA)

October 19

Recent research TBA

Part II: Institutional Politics

October 26

David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (all)

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics* (all)

November 2

Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power* (original chapters)

Richard Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make* (chaps. 1 7)

Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell, Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 1999: 850 872.

November 9

Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch* (all)

Gerald Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope*, chap. 1, Part I.

November 16

James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (all)

William Niskanen, *Bureaucracy and Representative Democracy*, chaps. 1-7, 17-21

Terry M. Moe, The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure, In John E. Chubb and Paul E. Petersons, eds., *Can the Government Govern?* (reserve)

November 23

Thanksgiving

November 30

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (all)

Bauer, Poole, and Dexter, *American Business and Public Policy* (all, except Part III)

December 7

Recent Research TBA