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
- Institution 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.

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

October 5

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)
November 9
Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch* (all)

November 16
James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (all)
William Niskanen, *Bureaucracy and Representative Democracy*, chaps. 1 7, 17 21

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