

**POLS 6100**  
**Pre-seminar in American Politics**  
**Fall 2019**

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Office hours: By appointment  
Classroom: Baldwin 302  
Meetings: Monday 3:30-6:15

This seminar provides an overview of several subfields in American Politics. We will discuss and critique seminal research in the field as well as recent publications. This seminar is also designed to develop your ability to conduct and analyze original research. To this end, we will discuss general approaches to political inquiry, basic methodological issues, the review process, and other related topics.

Students are required to purchase the following books:

- \* Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957)
- \* Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965)
- \* John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992)
- \* Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public* (1992)
- \* David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (2004 edition)
- \* A. Campbell, P. Converse, W. Miller, D. Stokes, *The American Voter* (1980 edition)

Student performance evaluations are based on (1) course participation (30%), (2) a 12-15 page literature review on a relevant topic (30%), and (3) a final examination (40%). This is not a lecture course; participation is required. You must complete and think critically about the reading before you come to seminar. You will be evaluated on the quality of your analysis, which is comparable to serving as a discussant at an academic conference.

**Literature Review.** The literature review summarizes major findings, explains the underlying theory (or competing theories), discusses research methods, and addresses problems or gaps in the literature. In an empirical project, the review “sets up” the hypotheses and research design that are the foundation for analyzing the data.

Your literature review should address several general questions: What do we know about this? What are the various theories, perspectives, approaches or “schools of thought” in this area? What are the gaps in or problems with our existing knowledge base? What questions still need to be answered; what issues need to be addressed?

You should follow a format used by the major journals in the discipline (APSR, JOP, AJPS, PRQ, etc.). If you are unfamiliar with these formats, refer to any recent edition of a major Political Science journal or a recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

## Course Schedule

### **August 20: Democratic Theory**

1. Publius. 1787. The Federalist Papers [No. 10-11, 47-51]
2. The Constitution of the United States
3. Dahl, Robert A. 1956. A Preface to Democratic Theory. [chapters 1-3]

### **August 27: Public Opinion: Opinion Formation**

1. Zaller, John. 1992. The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [read chapters 1-3 and 7-10; skim rest of book]
2. Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1987. "Networks in Context: The Social Flow of Political Information." *American Political Science Review* 81: 1197-1216.
3. Jacoby, William G. 1995. "The Structure of Ideological Thinking in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 314-35.

### **September 3: Public Opinion: Political Sophistication**

1. Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences. [read chapters 1-4 and 8-10; skim rest of book]
2. Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 194-230.
3. Haller, Brandon H. and Helmut Norpoth. 1994. "Let the Good Times Roll: The Economic Expectations of U.S. Voters." *American Journal of Political Science* 38: 625- 650.
4. MacKuen, Micheal B., Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1992. "Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy." *American Political Science Review* 86: 597-611.

### **September 10: Political Parties**

1. Aldrich, John H. 1994. Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [chapters 1-2]
2. Rohde, David W. 1991. Parties and Leaders in the Post Reform House. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [chapters 1-3]
3. Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23: 235-66.
4. Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1993. Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House. [chapters 4-5]

### **September 17: Partisanship**

1. Key, V.O., Jr. 1955. "A Theory of Critical Elections." *Journal of Politics* 17: 3-18.
2. Key, V.O., Jr. 1959. "Secular Realignment." *Journal of Politics* 21: 198-210.
3. Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. The American Voter. New York: John Wiley. [read chapters 6-7]
4. Carmines, Edward G., John P. McIver, and James A. Stimson. 1987. "Unrealized Partisanship: A Theory of Dealignment." *Journal of Politics* 49: 376-400.
5. Miller, Warren E. 1991. "Party Identification, Realignment and Party Voting: Back to the Basics." *American Political Science Review* 85: 557-68.

### **September 24: Participation and Civic Engagement**

1. Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. [chapter 14]
2. Riker, William, and Peter Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62: 25-41.
3. Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 246-78.
4. Jackman, Robert W. 1993. "Rationality and Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 279-90.
5. Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89: 271- 294.
6. McDonald, Michael P., and Samuel L. Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter." *American Political Science Review* 95: 963-74.

### **October 1: Voting**

1. Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. [chapters 1-8]
2. Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. [chapters 1-4 and 19-20]
3. Erikson, Robert S. 1990. "Economic Conditions and the Congressional Vote: A Review of the Macrolevel Evidence." *American Journal of Political Science* 34: 373-99.

### **October 8: Interest Groups**

1. Truman, David. 1951. *The Governmental Process* [chapters 2-3]
2. Olson, Mancur, Jr. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. [chapters 1-2 and 5-6]
3. Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America." *American Political Science Review* 77: 390-406.
4. Wright, John R. 1990. "Contributions, Lobbying, and Committee Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 84: 417-38.

### **October 15: Congressional Elections**

1. Mayhew, David R. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, 2nd ed.
2. Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in their Constituencies." *American Political Science Review* 71: 883-917.
3. Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-1986." *American Political Science Review* 83:733-793.

### **October 22: Institutional Change and American Political Development**

1. Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62: 144-68.
2. Ragsdale, Lyn, and John J. Theiss. 1997. "The Institutionalization of the American Presidency, 1924-1992." *American Journal of Political Science* 41:1280-1318.
3. McGuire, Kevin M. 2004. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. Supreme Court." *Political Analysis* 12: 128-142.
4. Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 1991. "Patterns in Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 35: 228-78.
5. Wawro, Gregory and Eric Schickler. 2004. "Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Precloture Senate" *American Journal of Political Science*. 48: 758-774.
6. Jenkins, Jeffrey A. 1999. "Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses." *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 1144-1165.

**October 29:** no class meeting

**November 5: Representation**

1. Miller, Warren E., and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57: 45-57.
2. Erikson, Robert S. 1978. "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Behavior: A Reexamination of the Miller- Stokes Representation Data." *American Journal of Political Science* 22: 511-35.
3. Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89: 543-565.
4. Giles, Micheal W., Bethany Blackstone, and Richard L. Vining, Jr. 2008. "The Supreme Court in American Democracy: Unraveling the Linkages between Public Opinion and Judicial Decision Making." *Journal of Politics* 70: 293-306.
5. Stein, Robert M., and Kenneth N. Bickers. 1994. "Congressional Elections and the Pork Barrel." *Journal of Politics* 56: 377-400.

**November 12: The Executive Branch**

1. Neustadt, Richard E. 1991. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*. Revised edition. New York: Free Press. [chapters 1-3]
2. Kernell, Samuel. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 3rd edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. [chapters 1-4]
3. Cameron, Charles. 2000. *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. [chapter 2]
4. Niemi, Richard G., Harold W. Stanley, and Ronald J. Vogel. 1995. "State Economies and State Taxes: Do Voters Hold Governors Accountable?" *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 936-957.
5. Hogan, Robert. 2005. "Gubernatorial Coattail Effects in State Legislative Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 587-97.

**November 19: Bureaucratic Politics**

1. McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-79.
2. Balla, Steven, and Christopher Deering. 2013. "Police Patrols and Fire Alarms: An Emprical Examination of the Legislative Preference for Oversight." *Congress & the Presidency* 40: 27-40.
3. Bendor, Jonathan, and Terry M. Moe. 1985. "An Adaptive Model of Bureaucratic Politics." *American Political Science Review* 79: 755-74.
4. Kiewiet, D. Roderick, and Mathew McCubbins. 1991. *The Logic of Delegation*. [chapter 2]
5. Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd ed. [chapter 1]

**November 26: Courts**

1. Dahl, Robert A. 1957. "Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker." *Journal of Public Law* 6: 279-295.
2. George, Tracey E., and Lee Epstein. 1992. "On the Nature of Supreme Court Decision Making." *American Political Science Review* 86: 323.
3. Segal, Jeffrey A., and Harold J. Spaeth. 1996. "The Influence of Stare Decisis on the Votes of United States Supreme Court Justices." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 971-1003.
4. Segal, Jeffrey A., and Albert D. Cover. 1989. "Ideological Values and the Votes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices." *American Political Science Review* 83: 557-66.
5. Epstein, Lee, and Jack Knight. 2000. "Field Essay: Toward a Strategic Revolution in Judicial Politics: A Look Back, A Look Ahead." *Political Research Quarterly* 53: 625- 62.
6. Epstein, Lee, Rene Lindstadt, Jeffrey A. Segal, and Chad Westerland. 2006. "The Changing Dynamics of Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees." *Journal of Politics* 68: 296-307.

**December 3: The Media and American Politics**

1. Graber, Doris A. 2009. *Mass Media in American Politics*, 8th ed. [chapters 1-2 and 4-5]
2. Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87: 267-85.
3. Hetherington, Marc J. 1996. "The Media's Role in Forming Voters' Retrospective Economic Evaluations in 1992." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 372-95.
4. Vining, Richard L., Jr., and Teena Wilhelm. 2010. "Explaining High-Profile Coverage of State Supreme Court Decisions." *Social Science Quarterly* 91: 704-23.
5. Nie, Norman, Miller, Darwin, Saar Golde, Daniel Butler, and Kenneth Winneg. 2010. "The World Wide Web and the U.S. Political News Market." *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 428-439.

Final Exam: Take-home examination, due date TBA

\* Final exam will be placed in graduate student mailboxes to be completed within 24 hours of opening envelope. Submit hard copy to Political Science main office or to Dr. Vining.