

Political Representation

POLS 4580

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Katelyn Stauffer
Office: Baldwin 380B
Email: kstauffer@uga.edu

Course Time: 12:45-2:00pm T/TR
Office Hours: 2:15-3:45pm T

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The concept of representation is central to the study of American politics. Despite this centrality, there is no single definition of the term and there is no clear standard for measuring what constitutes “good” representation. In this course students will be asked to consider competing definitions of representation, and the implications that these standards have for evaluating democracy in the U.S. Students will work normative work on representation as well as empirical political science articles. In all cases, students will be asked to identify how the author defines good representation and the standards used to evaluate representation.

In addition to a substantive understanding political representation, students should leave the course with a firmer understanding of how political scientists conduct research, including: formulating hypotheses, gathering data, and testing empirical claims. As such we will read a number of empirical social science articles, and students will also be asked to produce a research design where they will employ these skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following completion of this course students should be able to do the following:

- Understand the central concepts and debates in the political science literature on representation
- Understand how institutions influence who is represented (and who becomes a representative)
- Understand how competing interests work together/against each other in American democracy and how this influence democratic governance
- Understand how institutional structures influence the role of sex/gender in American politics
- Identify testable hypotheses in political science research
- Formulate testable hypotheses for political questions
- Synthesize arguments and produce evidence to support and refute empirical claims

READINGS

There is no assigned textbook for this course. Instead we will be reading academic articles and chapters over the course of the semester. These readings will be available on eLC.

GRADING

Class Participation (20%): Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading materials. Students are expected to critically engage with the material and to discuss how the material relates to current events. **There is no official attendance policy for this class.** If you need to miss class for any reason you are not obligated to inform me. However, if you are facing an issue that requires you to miss many classes you should come talk to me so that we can figure how to keep you up to speed in the course. ***Please do not come to class if you are sick!*** While there is no official attendance policy, please note, **it is impossible to receive a high participation grade if you consistently do not attend class and do not discuss with me how to keep yourself up to date.**

Reading Quizzes (15%): Completing the assigned readings is essential for success in this course. Throughout the semester I will give a total of 8 reading quizzes. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and will not be announced in advance. These quizzes are not meant to be difficult, and if you carefully complete the assigned readings you should do well. Students' **best five** quizzes will count towards this score. Please note that make-up reading quizzes will NOT be given. If you miss a quiz, you will receive an automatic 0 (but remember your lowest 3 quiz scores will be dropped).

Research Design (25%): A crucial part of this class is learning how political scientists go about conducting scientific research. To that end, students will complete a research design paper. Papers should be between 8-10 pages in length. Successful papers will: identify a research question related to gender and politics, formulate and discuss a hypothesis/hypotheses, discuss the data that would be needed to test the hypothesis, and discuss the relevance of the proposed research to our understanding of gender and politics. Political science research often takes on a collaborative nature. Students who choose to do so may collaborate on their research designs. **However, no more than 3 students may work on a single project.** Research design papers will be due on 12/9.

Students should email me their proposed topic and preliminary hypotheses by 5:00pm on (10/16).

Mid-Term Exam (15%): There will be an in-class midterm exam. This exam will be based on the readings, material covered in lecture, and class discussion. The midterm will be on October 1.

Final Exam (20%): There will be an in-class final exam. The final will primarily focus on material covered in the second half of the class, although there will be some cumulative elements of the exam (i.e. questions related to research design). Like the midterm, the content of this exam will come from readings, lectures, and class discussions. Our final exam is currently scheduled for 12/9 at 12:00pm.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used to determine final grades in the course.

- A 93 and above
- A- 90 – 92.9
- B+ 87 – 89.9
- B 83 – 86.9

- B- 80 – 82.9
- C+ 77 – 79.9
- C 73 – 76.9
- C- 70 – 72.9
- D+ 67 – 69.9
- D 63 – 66.9
- D- 60 – 62.9
- F 59.9 and below

Electronic Devices: Prior to class, please ensure that all electronic devices (phones, tablets, MP3 players, etc.) are turned off or silenced. Students are permitted to use laptops in class; however the instructor reserves the right to change this policy if computers become a distraction/become disruptive. Please remember that using a laptop for purposes other than note taking not only prevents you from fully engaging in the course but may also distract those around you. Also note that it is difficult to receive a high participation grade if you are browsing the internet rather than engaging with the material.

Tardiness: Please arrive to class on time. Failure to do so is disruptive to your fellow classmates. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will not receive credit for attending class.

Grade Disputes: If you disagree with a grade you received on an assignment (or have questions about why you received the grade that you did), please see me during office hours. I will not have an extended discussion regarding grades via email. Students wishing to dispute a grade must write a half page response explaining why they believe they deserve a different grade. This response should be emailed to the instructor prior to meeting, and students should also bring a hard copy to the meeting. Please note however, **that I reserve the right to adjust students grades up OR down** upon review.

Class Discussion: Student discussion should be respectful at all times. Since this is a class about politics, there will be many topics on which not everyone in the class will agree. It is important that we engage with each other constructively and that we are open to hearing each other's opinions. Disrespectful behavior (interrupting speakers, personal attacks, aggressive language, etc.) will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Office Hours: I will hold office hours on **Tuesdays from 2:15-3:45pm**. If you have questions about the class you should talk to me during this time. If you are unable to make office hours, please email me and we can arrange an alternate time. I am also available on email and am happy to answer any questions electronically. I will make every effort to respond to emails before the beginning of the next class period. **Please note that discussions about grades must be held "in person."**

Email: If you have questions about the course, or would like to set up an appointment outside of office hours please email me at kstauffer@uga.edu Please include "POLS 4580" in the subject line of your email. Emails that do not follow this rule cannot be assured a response from the instructor. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours or before the start of the next class.

Did you read the syllabus? Prior to the start of the course, I emailed the class asking you to read the syllabus before our first meeting. If you followed my instructions, please email me a picture of an animal dressed as a person (with the subject line "POLS 4580 Extra Credit"). **Students who email me prior to our first meeting will receive 2 extra credit points on the final exam.**

Disclaimer: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Georgia defines plagiarism as: "Using another's work as your own without correct citations." Examples include, but are not limited to:

- I. Directly quoting another's written or spoken words without quotation marks.
- II. Paraphrasing without attribution.
- III. Presenting someone else's original idea or theory as your own original work without attribution.
- IV. Using statistics, images, or data without recognizing who compiled them.
- V. Turning in work that another wrote as your own work.
- VI. Self-Plagiarism: Submitting an assignment for credit that has already been submitted, unless the current instructor authorizes its use prior to submission.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and any work that is plagiarized will receive an automatic 0. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite a particular source please contact me prior to turning in the assignment.

Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, looking at notes during the exam, copying or paraphrasing the answer of a fellow classmate, or relying on any materials/readings during the exam period. If students are caught cheating during any exam they will automatically receive a 0 for that exam.

You are also responsible for being aware of the other obligations/restriction outlined by the University of Georgia's Academic Honesty Policy. Additional information about the policy can be found here: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/.

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

USE OF AI FOR COURSEWORK

This course requires you to complete various assignments that assess your understanding and application of the course content. You are expected to do your own work and cite any sources you use properly. You are not allowed to use any artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or solvers, to complete any part of your assignments. Any attempt to use these tools will be considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to complete all work independently and without the assistance of AI-generated content. If you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable use of AI tools, please consult with the instructor *before* submitting your work. This course

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STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to establish eligibility through the Disability Resource Center. A memo of verification should be obtained from DRC. More information can be found here: <https://drc.uga.edu/>

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements please **register with DRC and inform me within the two weeks of class.**

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>). If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

8/14 – Introduction to the Course and Tools of the Trade

- Syllabus

8/19 – Consuming Social Science Research

- Cassese, Erin C., Christina Farhart, and Joanne Miller. 2020. "Gender Differences in COVID-19 Conspiracy Theory Beliefs" *Politics & Gender*. 16(4): 1009 – 1018.
- Kim, Jeong Hyun, Anna Gunderson, Elizabeth A. Lane, and Nichole M. Bauer. 2023. "State Courts, State Legislatures, and Setting Abortion Policy." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. 48(4): 569 – 592.

8/21– Frameworks for understanding representation

- Dovi, Suzanne 2006. "Political Representation." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Weissburg, Robert 1978. "Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress." *American Political Science Review*. 72(1): 535-547.

8/26 – Frameworks for understanding representation II

- McCrone, Donald and James Kuklinski. 1979. "The Delegate Theory of Representation." *American Journal of Political Science*. 23: 278-300.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 515- 528.

8/28 – Who are representatives? (the decision to seek office)

- Moore, Robert G. 2005. "Religion, Race, and Gender Differences in Political Ambition." *Politics & Gender* 1(4): 577-596.
- Fox, Richard and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2004. "Entering the Arena." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 264-280.

9/2 – Who are representatives? (structural realities of institutions)

- Olson, Michael P. and Jon C. Rogowski. 2018. "Legislative Term Limits and Polarization." *Journal of Politics*
- Murray, Rainbow. 2014. "Quotas for Men: Reframing Gender Quotas as a Means of Improving Representation for All." *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 520-532.

9/4 – Who are representatives? (structural realities of institutions)

- King, Jonathan, Jessica A. Schoenherr, Ian Ostrander. 2025. "Anchoring or Expanding? Gender and Judicial Nominations." *Political Research Quarterly* 78(1)
- **Extra Credit:** King, Jonathan M., Jessica A. Schoenherr, and Ian Ostrander. "Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Judicial Nominees." Working paper: <https://jaschoenherr.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/kingschoenherrostranderapsa2024.pdf>
- Badas, Alex and Katelyn E. Stauffer. 2019. "Voting for Women in Partisan and Nonpartisan Elections" *Electoral Studies*

9/9 – Who are representatives? (political parties and candidate recruitment)

- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2006. "The Legislative Party and Candidate Recruitment in the American States." *Party Politics* 12(2): 233-256.
- Crowder-Meyer, Melody. 2013. "Gendered Recruitment without Trying: How Local Party Recruiters Affect Women's Representation." *Politics & Gender* 9(4): 390-413.

9/11 NO CLASS - Dr. Stauffer at a Conference

9/16 – The constituency connection

- Fenno, Richard. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.
- Eulau, Heinz, and Paul D. Karp. "The Puzzle of Representation: Specifying Components of Responsiveness." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 233-254.

9/18 -- The constituency connection II

- Miller, Warren E. and Donald Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57: 45-56.
- Butler, Daniel and David Nickerson. 2011. "Can Learning Constituency Opinion Affect how Legislators Vote? Results from an Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 6(1): 55-83.

9/23– The constituency connection III

- Grimmer, Justin. 2013. “Appropriators not Position Takers: The Distorting Effects of Electoral Incentives on Congressional Representation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 624-642.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members’ Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127-140.

9/25 – What do people want from their representatives?

- Wolak, Jennifer. 2017. “Public Expectations of State Legislators.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42(2): 175-209.
- Costa, Mia, Kaylee T. Johnson, and Brian F. Schaffner. 2018. “Rethinking Democracy from a Communal Perspective.” *Political Behavior* 40(2): 301-320.

9/30 – What do people want from their representatives?

- Costa, Mia. 2021. “Ideology Not Affect: What Americans Want from Political Representation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2): 342-358.
- Ahler, Douglas J. and David E. Broockman. “The Delegate Paradox: Why Polarized Politicians Represent Citizens Best.” *Journal of Politics* 80(4)

10/2– Policy Responsiveness

- Erikson, Robert S., Gerald C. Wright and John P. McIver. 1993. *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in the American States*. Chapters TBD.
- Caughey, Devin, and Christopher Warshaw. 2018. “Policy Preferences and Policy Change: Dynamic Responsiveness in the American States, 1936-2014.” *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 249-266.

10/7 – Midterm Review

10/9 – Midterm

10/14 – Consuming Social Science Research

- Badas, Alex and Katelyn E. Stauffer. 2023.
- Shoub, Kelsey, Katelyn E. Stauffer, and Miyeon Song. 2021. “Do Women Officers Police Differently? Evidence from Traffic Stops.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(3): 755-769.
- **Email me proposed topic and preliminary hypotheses by 10/16 at 5:00pm**

10/16 – Research Design Workshop (Dr. Stauffer out of town)

10/21 – Accountability

- Broockman, David E., Joshua L. Kalla, Sean J. Westwood. 2022. “Does Affective Polarization Undermine Democratic Norms or Accountability? Maybe Not.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67(3): 808-828.
- Rogers, Steven. 2017. “Electoral Accountability for State Legislative Roll Calls and Ideological.”

10/23 – Access and Influence

- Kalla, Joshua and David E. Broockman. 2016. “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558.
- Hall, Richard and Frank Wayman. 1990. “Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees.” *American Political Science Review* 84:797-920.

10/28 – Access and Influence II

- Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564-581.
- Strolovitch, Dara. 2006. “Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender.” *Journal of Politics* 68(4): 894-910.

10/30 – Speaking for Underrepresented Interests

- Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes’.” *Journal of Politics*. 61: 628-57.
- Dietrich, Bryce, Matthew Hayes, and Diana Z. O’Brien. 2019. “Pitch Perfect: Vocal Pitch and the Emotional Intensity of Congressional Speech.” *American Political Science Review* 113(4): 941-962.

11/4 – Speaking for Underrepresented Interests II

- Broockman, David E. 2013. “Black Politicians are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks’ Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 521-536.
- Reingold, Beth, Kirsten Widner, Rachel Harmon. 2020. “Legislating at the Intersections: Race, Gender, and Representation.” *Political Research Quarterly* 73(4): 819-833.

11/6 – Speaking for Underrepresented Interests III

- Carnes, Nicholas. 2012. “Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter?” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37(1): 5-34.
- Barnes, Tiffany D., Victoria D. Beall, and Mirya R. Holman. 2021. “Pink-collar Representation and Budgetary Outcomes in the US States.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 46(1): 119-154.

11/11 Research Design Workshop (Dr. Stauffer out of town)

11/13 – Symbolic Representation I

- Atkeson, Lonna R. 2003. “Not All Cues are Created Equal: The Conditional Impact of Female Candidates on Political Engagement.” *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 1040-1061.
- Dolan, Kathleen. 2006. “Symbolic Mobilization? The Impact of Candidate Sex in American Elections.” *American Politics Research* 34(6): 687-704.

11/18 -- Symbolic Representation II

- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O’Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2019. “All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 113-129.
- Hayes, Matthew and Matthew Hibbing. 2017. “The Symbolic Benefits of Descriptive and Substantive Representation. *Political Behavior* 39(1):31-50.

11/20 – Symbolic Representation III

- Philpot, Tasha and Hanes Walton Jr. 2007. “One of Our Own: Black Female Candidates and the Voters who Support Them.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 49-62.
- Rocha, Rene R., Caroline J. Tolbert, Daniel C. Bowne, and Christopher J. Clark. 2010. “Race and Turnout: Does Descriptive Representation in State Legislatures Increase Minority Voting?” *Political Research Quarterly* 63(4): 890-907.

11/25 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

12/2 – NO CLASS (Friday Schedule in Effect)

12/9 – Final Exam, 12:00-3:00pm