

Political Science 249
SEMINAR IN AMERICAN POLITICS
Spring 2007
Wednesday, 3-6 p.m.
Jenkin Library

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Office hours: Tuesday, 1-3 p.m.

This seminar explores classic and contemporary research in American politics. The class introduces major theoretical approaches to American politics and several “evergreen” issues in American politics – topics that have been of interest for decades and will likely remain of interest for some time to come. The study of American politics is driven by topics, research questions that center on the U.S., its people, the practice of democracy here, and government decision-making, among other things. This class will focus primarily on domestic politics.

While the definition of “American politics” tends to the topical, the best research in this area is theory-driven. For example, as interested as we might be in the question “Why do Americans vote?” the equally, if not more compelling research question would be “Why do people vote?” and we could presumably study this and generate explanations exportable to the variety of setting where voting or other authoritative expressions of policy wants are relevant. This class primarily focuses on institutions and organizations in U.S. politics.

Required Books

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Univ. of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226012727.
- Cook, Timothy. 1998. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Univ. of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226115003.
- Kernell, Samuel. 2006. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 4th edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN 1568028997.
- Olson, Mancur. 1971 [1965]. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard Univ. Press. ISBN 0674537513
- Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *City Limits*. Univ. of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226662934.
- Segal, Jeffrey A., and Harold J. Spaeth. 2002. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521789710
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1982. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*. Cambridge Univ. Press. ISBN 0521288657.

In addition to these books, there will be a great deal of supplementary readings, discussed below. Most of these will be available either through J-STOR (www.jstor.org) or through other electronic resources at the library (library.ucr.edu). Note that *American Political Science Review* (APSR), *American Journal of Political Science* (AJPS), and *Journal of Politics* (JOP) are abbreviated in the references below.

Class Presentations

Each week, two students will be responsible for presenting brief summaries of the research we read (*discussants*) and one other will be responsible for organizing class discussion and having

prepared questions about the reading to promote discussion (*chair*). Everyone is responsible for participating in the discussion.

Essays and Research proposal

You are required to write 5 papers for the class.

Essays

You are responsible for writing four essays, 6-8 pages in length, in response to questions I pose throughout the quarter. You will have eight opportunities to write these papers. Instead of writing this in response to readings and turning in your essay before a given class, you will write the answer to the question following class discussions, integrating across literatures and pulling in additional resources as needed. These papers should be conceptual and analytical critiquing theory and method as called for by the question.

Research proposal

The fifth paper should be longer, 15-20 pages, a specialized research proposal and literature review on a topic of your choice related to American politics. This paper is intended to allow you to begin thinking through a topic you would find of interest in developing your own original research. The paper will be due on the last day of instruction for the spring quarter. The proposal will pose an original research question related to American politics, review relevant research, propose testable hypotheses and develop a research design to test these hypotheses. The paper will explain why the research question is interesting and how it relates to literature about American politics and government. You will **certainly** incorporate literature outside of the course's main readings. Done well, this design will be executable and perhaps in time form the basis of a fully developed paper for a conference, your prospectus, or publication.

Grading

Class preparation and participation	30%
Thought papers (4, 10% each)	40%
Research proposal	30%

Course Outline

April 4. Introductions and syllabus

April 11. Institutions and American politics: Historical and organizational approaches

Clemens, Elisabeth S., and James M. Cook. 1999. "Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25:441-66.

March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *APSR* 78:734-49.

Orren, Karen, and Steve Skowronek. 2002. "The Study of American Political Development," in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. New York:Norton.

Smith, Rogers M. 1993 "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *APSR* 87:549-66.

April 18. Congressional and legislative politics

- Davidson, Roger H., and Walter J. Oleszek. 2004. *Congress and Its Members*. 9th edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Chapters 2 ("Evolution of the Modern Congress"), 7 ("Committees: Workshops of Congress"), 8 ("Congressional Rules and Procedures"), and 14 ("Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy Making").
- Miller, Warren E., and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *APSR* 57:45-56.
- Polsby, Nelson W., and Eric Schickler. 2002. "Landmarks in the Study of Congress since 1945." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5:333-67.
- Squire, Peverill. 2006. "Historical Evolution of Legislatures in the U.S." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9:19-44

April 25. Bureaucratic politics

- Lindblom, Charles E. 1959. "The Science of 'Muddling Through.'" *Public Administration Review* 19:79-88.
- Mashaw, Jerry. 1990. "Explaining Administrative Process: Normative, Positive and Critical Studies of Legal Development." *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization* 6(Special Issue):267-298. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=8756-6222%281990%296%3C267%3AEAPNPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>
- Miller, Gary J. 2005. "The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models." *Annual Review of Political Science* 8:203-225
- Moe, Terry M. 1985. "Control and Feedback in Economic Regulation: The Case of the NLRB." *APSR* 79:1094-1116.
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1982. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*. Cambridge Univ. Press.

May 2. Presidency and executive politics

- Cameron, Charles, and Nolan McCarty. 2004. "Models of Vetoes and Veto Bargaining." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 409-435.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, Michael C. Herron, Kenneth W. Shotts. 2001. "Leadership and Pandering: A Theory of Executive Policymaking." *AJPS* 45:532-550.
- Kernell, Samuel. 2006. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 4th edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Krause, George A., and Jeffrey E. Cohen. 2000. "Opportunity, Constraints, and the Development of the Institutional Presidency: The Issuance of Executive Orders, 1939-96." *JOP* 62:88-114.
- Moraski, Bryon J., and Charles R. Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations: A Theory of Institutional Constraints and Choices." *AJPS* 43:1069-1095.

May 9. Judicial politics

- Segal, Jeffrey A., and Harold J. Spaeth. 2002. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gillman, Howard and Cornell Clayton. 1999. *The Supreme Court in American Politics: New Institutional Interpretations*. Kansas University Press. Selected Chapters TBA.
- Martin, Andrew D., and Kevin M. Quinn. 2002. "Dynamic Ideal Point Estimation via Markov Chain Monte Carlo for the U.S. Supreme Court, 1953-1999." *Political Analysis* 10: 134-153.

May 16. News media, the Fourth Estate

- Cook, Timothy. 1998. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Schudson, Michael. 2002. "The News Media as Political Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5:249-269
- Zaller, John. 2003. "A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen." *Political Communication* 20:109-130.
- Bennett, W. Lance. 2003. "The Burglar Alarm That Just Keeps Ringing: A Response to Zaller." *Political Communication* 20:131-138.

May 23. Interest groups in American politics

- Gais, Thomas L., Mark A. Peterson, and Jack L. Walker, Jr. 1991. "Interest Groups, Iron Triangles and Representative Institutions," in Jack L. Walker, ed. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professionals and Social Movements*. Univ. of Michigan Press.
- LaVaque-Manty, Mika. 2006. "Bentley, Truman, and the Study of Groups." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9:1-18.
- Olson, Mancur. 1971 [1965]. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard Univ. Press.
- Smith, Richard A. 1984. "Advocacy, Interpretation, and Influence in the U.S. Congress." *APSR* 78:44-63.
- Stigler, George J. 1971. "The Theory of Economic Regulation." *Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science* 2:3-21.
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1991. "Explaining the Mobilization of Interests," in Jack L. Walker, ed. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professionals and Social Movements*. Univ. of Michigan Press.

May 30. Parties and partisanship in the U.S.

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Carmines, Edward G., and James A. Stimson. 1986. "On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution." *APSR* 80:901-920.
- Layman, Geoffrey C., and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate." *AJPS* 46:786-802
- Fiorina, Morris P. 2002. "Parties and Partisanship: A 40-Year Retrospective." *Political Behavior* 24:93-115.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1984. "On the Theory of Party Organization." *JOP* 46:369-400.

June 6. Federalism and subnational politics

- Chubb, John E. 1985. "The Political Economy of Federalism." *APSR* 79:994-1015.

Cities

- Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *City Limits*. Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of Political Economy* 64:416-424.

States

- Brace, Paul, and Aubrey Jewett. 1995. "The State of State Politics Research." *Political Research Quarterly* 48:643-681.
- Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 1996. "The State Politics Literature: Moving beyond Covariation Studies and Pursuing Politics." *Polity* 28:559-579