

POLS G6210: Theories & Debates in American Politics

Wednesdays, 1:30-3:20pm, Fall 2005

IAB 270b

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This graduate student field survey provides an overview of the scholarly study of American politics. The course has been designed for students who intend to specialize in American politics, as well as for those students whose primary interests are comparative politics, international relations, or political theory but who desire an intensive introduction to the “American” style of political science.

Course Requirements

Readings and discussion

The readings, though extensive and representative, are not comprehensive. Most sections in the syllabus balance classics with work representative of the best current research in the field. The class is conducted predominantly in a discussion format, although we will lecture on various topics. Students are expected to have completed the assigned weekly reading before each class and to arrive prepared to contribute actively to all discussions. You should expect to be called on at any time, to discuss any reading in any session. Sessions will aim to clarify and probe the character, puzzles, theories, methods, and evidence presented in the various texts and assess the contributions they make to an understanding of American politics and the broader development of social and political science.

Assignments

All students will write two short papers (typed, double-spaced, and no longer than six pages) during the course of the semester. The first paper will be written on readings from one class in the first part of the semester (weeks II-VII), and the second on readings from a class in the second part of the semester (weeks VIII-XIII). Students must submit by the second week of class the numbers of the weeks on which they wish to write. The papers are due at noon on Wednesday, treating material to be discussed later in the day (late papers and electronic versions will not be accepted). We will write comments on the papers and return them to you, and then you may revise the paper in light of the comments. Revised papers are due one week after the first draft is returned.

The purpose of these papers is not to determine whether you have completed and understood the readings. Rather, they are assigned to help you develop your skills in the

art of scholarly argumentation. It is thus vital you not waste your space or our time summarizing the works. What you should do is critically analyze one or more of the week's readings from the perspective of theory, logic, design, method, evidence, on conclusions, relationships to other works, and contribution to the development of political science. You should stake out a coherent position clearly and forcefully in the first paragraph, then press it relentlessly forward in every subsequent sentence. Papers that fail to develop a forceful, compelling argument will receive a poor mark. They should be carefully edited, tightened, and revised. They do not demand reading or research beyond the week's assignments. When in doubt, substitute more thinking for additional reading or writing.

Please staple an extra blank sheet to the back of your paper for our comments and provide each instructor with a copy of your paper. We will try to return the paper with comments approximately a week after they have been submitted, though we cannot guarantee a consistently speedy turnaround. You must save these papers along with our comments on them and return them to us at the end of the semester so that we can compute final grades for the course.

Grading

Course grades will reflect effort and performance in class discussions and the two papers.

Availability of Readings

The following books have been ordered at Labyrinth Books, located next to the post office on 112th Street, east of Broadway.

John Aldrich. 1995. *Why Parties: The Origins and Transformation of Party Politics in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal. 1995. *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy*. Cambridge University Press.

Michael Alvarez. 1998. *Information and Elections*. University of Michigan Press.

Charles Cameron. 2000. *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. Cambridge University Press.

Dan Carpenter. 2001. *Forging Bureaucracies*. Cambridge University Press.

Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan*. University of California Press.

Michael Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters*. Yale University Press.

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row.

David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Costs Politics Approach to Politics under the Separation of Powers*. Cambridge University Press.

Lee Epstein and Jack Knight. 1998. *Choices Justices Make*. CQ Press.

Robert S. Erikson, Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver. 1993. *Statehouse Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Cambridge University Press.

Sam Kernell. 1993. *Going Public*. CQ Press.

Keith Krehbiel. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

Keith Krehbiel. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. University of Michigan Press.

David Mayhew. 1991. *Divided We Govern*. Yale University Press.

Dennis Mueller, ed. 1997. *Perspectives on Public Choice*. Cambridge University Press.

Richard Neustadt. 1990. *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*. Free Press.

Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg, eds. 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed. CQ Press.

Douglass C. North, 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press.

Mancur Olson. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press.

Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. University of Chicago Press.

Paul Peterson. 1981. *City Limits*. University of Chicago Press.

Gerald Rosenberg. 1991. *The Hollow Hope*. University of Chicago Press.

Stephen Skowronek, 1982. *Building a New American State*. Cambridge University Press.

John Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press.

Required readings have been placed on reserve in Lehman Library. You may make “fair use” copies if you desire. Many of the articles can be found at www.jstor.org.

Class Schedule

Sept. 7. Introduction
Sept. 14. I. Political Science: History and “Ism’s”
Sept. 21. II. Public Opinion
Sept. 28. III. Political Participation
Oct. 5. IV. Interest Groups and Political Parties
Oct. 12. V. Voting and Elections
Oct. 19. VI. Congress
Oct. 26. VII. Presidency
Nov. 2. VIII. Bureaucracy
Nov. 9. IX. Courts
Nov. 16. X. State and Local Politics
Nov. 30. XI. American Political Development (APD) and Analytical Political History
Dec. 7. XII. System Performance

I. Political Science: History and “Ism’s”

Required:

Woodrow Wilson. 1887. “The Study of Administration,” *Political Science Quarterly* 2: 197-222.

Charles Merriam. 1921. “The Present State of the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 15:173-185.

Robert Dahl. 1961. “The Behavioral Approach to Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest,” *American Political Science Review* 55:763-772.

Theodore Lowi. 1992. “How We’ve Become What We Study.” *American Political Science Review*. 86: 1-7.

Charles Cameron. 2000. “Rational Choice and the Presidency,” Chapter 3 in Cameron, *Veto Bargaining*.

Recommended:

Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner. 2002. "American Political Science: The Discipline's State and the State of the Discipline." Pp. 1-32 in Katznelson and Milner, eds. *Political Science: State of the Discipline.* (Norton)

Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 1996. "Political Science: The Discipline," pp. 3-49 in Goodin and Klingemann (eds) *A New Handbook of Political Science.* Sections II-IV, including the tables in the Appendix.

Gabriel Almond. 1990. "The Study of Political Culture," Chapter 5 in Almond, *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science.* (Sage)

Dennis Mueller. 1997. "Public Choice in Perspective," Chapter 1 in Mueller (ed.), *Perspectives on Public Choice.* (Cambridge University Press)

II. Public Opinion

Required:

Robert Erikson and Kent Tedin. 2004. *American Public Opinion*, 7th ed. (Pearson/Longman) Chapters 3,4.

Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public.* Chapters 1,2, 10.

John Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Chapters 1-7, 9, 12.

Delli Carpini and Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters.* Chapters. 1, 2, 6.

Recommended:

Philip Converse. 1964. "The Nature of Beliefs Systems in the Mass Public." in David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent.* [Abbreviated version in Niemi and Weisberg (eds.), *Controversies in American Voting Behavior*, 4th ed.]

III. Political Participation

Required:

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy.* Chapter 14: "The Causes and Effects of Rational Abstention."

William Riker and Peter Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62: 25-42.

John Aldrich. 1997. "When is it Rational to Vote?" Chapter 17 in Dennis Mueller (ed.), *Perspectives on Public Choice*.

Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg. 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed. Chapter 2: "Why is Turnout so Low (And Why is it Declining?)"

Robert D. Putnam. 1995. "Tuning in, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in American." *PS* 38 (December), reprinted as chapter 3 in Niemi and Weisberg.

Recommended:

Jack Citrin, Eric Schickler, and John Sides. 2003. "What if Everyone Voted? Simulating the Impact of Increased Turnout on Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 47 (Jan.), pp. 75-90.

William Flanigan and Nancy Zingale. 2003. *The Political Behavior of the American Electorate*. 10th ed. Chapter 2: "Suffrage and Turnout."

Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Pp, 221-227, 273-275, reprinted as chapter 4 in Niemi and Weisberg.

Martin Wattenberg. 2002. *Where Have All the Voters Gone?* (Harvard University Press)

Mark N. Franklin. 1996. "Electoral Participation." In Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris, *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in a Comparative Perspectives*, reprinted as chapter 5 in Niemi and Weisberg.

Sidney Verba, Kay L. Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Chapters 16, 17.

IV. Interest Groups and Political Parties

Required:

Mancur Olson. 1966. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6.

Jack Walker. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in the United States." *American Political Science Review*. 77: 390-406.

John Aldrich. 1995. *Why Parties: The Origins and Transformation of Party Politics in America*. (University of Chicago Press) Chapters 1,2, 4.

Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg. 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed. Chapter 17: “How Much Does Politics Affect Party Identification?”

John Aldrich and Richard Niemi. 2001. , “The Sixth Party System: Electoral Change 1952-1992” Chapter 23 in Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg (eds) *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed.

Recommended:

Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg. 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed Chapter 21: “Is the Party System Changing?”

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. (Yale University Press)

George Stigler. 1988. “The Theory of Economic Regulation,” pp. 209-233 in Stigler (ed) *Chicago Studies in Political Economy*.

Thomas C. Schelling. “Hockey Helmets, Daylight Saving, and Other Binary Choices,” In Brian Barry and Russel Hardin (eds.), *Rational Man and Irrational Society*.

Robert Erikson, Michael MacKuen, and James Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. (Cambridge University Press) Chapters 4,5.

V. Voting and Elections

Required:

Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg. 2001. “What Determines the Vote?” Chapter 10 in Neimi and Weisberg. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed.

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Chapter 8. “The Statics and Dynamics of Party Ideologies.”

Morris Fiorina, 1997. “Voting Behavior.” Chapter 18 in Dennis C. Mueller (ed.), *Perspectives on Public Choice*.

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Chapter 7. “Elections.”

McCarty, Nolan, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Partisan Polarization*. Manuscript. Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5.

Recommended:

Michael Alvarez. 1998. *Information and Elections*. (University of Michigan Press) Chapters 2, 3, 6, 10, 12.

Morris Fiorina. 2004. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. (Longman)

Richard McKelvey and Peter Ordeshook. 1990. "Information and Elections: Retrospective Voting and Elections." Chapter 12 in Ferejohn and Kuklinski (eds.) *Information and Democratic Processes*.

John Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Chapter 10.

Angus Campbell, et al. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chapters 6, 10, 20.

Angus Campbell. 1964. "Voters and Elections, Past and Present." *Journal of Politics* 26, 745-757.

Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik. 1976. *The Changing American Voter*. Chapters 10, 17, 18.

Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks. "Multi-Stage Explanations of Political Preference." Chapter 12 in Neimi and Weisberg. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed.

Milton Lodge, et al. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." Chapter 13 in Neimi and Weisberg. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. 4th ed.

Erikson & Tedin, 2004. *American Public Opinion*. 7th ed. Chapter 9.

VI. Congress

Required:

Keith Krehbiel. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Chapters 1-3.

Barry Weingast and William Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress" *Journal of Political Economy* 96: 132-63.

Shepsle, Ken, and Barry Weingast. 1994. "Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19(2): 149-179.

Cox, Gary, and Mathew D. McCubbins. Forthcoming. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the US House of Representatives*. Chapters TBA.

Recommended:

Ken Shepsle. 1989. "The Changing Textbook Congress." In Chubb and Peterson (eds.), *Can the Government Govern?* (Brookings)

Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan*. Intro, chapters 4, 5,7.

David R. Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. (Yale University Press)

R. Douglas Arnold. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. Chapters 1, 4-6.

Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. (Oxford University Press) Chapters 4,5

VII. Presidency

David Neustadt. 1990. *Presidential Power*. Chapters 3 and 4.

Charles Cameron. 2000. *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. (Cambridge University Press) Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6.

Samuel Kernell. 1993. *Going Public*. Chapter 7.

Gary King. "The Methodology of Presidential Research." In Michael Nelson (ed.) *Researching the Presidency*.

Recommended:

Shapiro, Kumar, and Jacobs (eds.), *Presidential Power*. Jacobs and Shapiro, "Conclusion" plus any of the essays in Part 4 and/or Chapter 5 as per your interest.

Stephen Skowronek. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." In Nelson (ed.) *Researching the Presidency*.

Terry Moe. "The Politicized Presidency." In Chubb and Peterson (Eds.), *New Directions in American Politics*.

VIII. Bureaucracy

Required:

Dan Carpenter. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Introduction, Chapter 1, and Conclusion.

David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Costs Politics Approach to Policy Making Under Separation of Powers*, Chapters 5,6,9.

Terry Moe. 1984. "The New Economics of Organization," *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 739-777.

Randy Calvert, Mark Moran, and Barry Weingast. 1987. "Congressional Influence Over Policy Making: The Case of the FTC," pp. 493-522 in McCubbins and Sullivan (eds) *Congress: Structure and Policy*.

Recommended:

Jonathan Bendor and Adam Meirowitz. 2004. "Spatial Models of Delegation." *American Political Science Review*. 98 (May), pp. 293-310.

Hugh Heclo. 1974. *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden*. Chapter 6

John Huber and Charles Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press.

Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior*. 1947.

IX. Courts

Required:

Gerald Rosenberg. 1991. *The Hollow Hope*. Chapters 1 and 12. Skim Chapter 2.

Lee Epstein and Jack Knight. 1998. *Choices Justices Make*. Chapter 1.

Cameron, Charles M., Jeffrey A. Segal, and Donald Songer. 2000. "Strategic Auditing in a Political Hierarchy: An Informational Model of the Supreme Court's Certiorari Decisions." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 94, March .

Jeffrey Segal and Harold Spaeth. 2002. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. (Cambridge University Press) Chapters 3 and 8.

Recommended:

Charles Epp. *The Rights Revolution*. Chapters 2-4.

Epstein, Lee, and Jack Knight. 2000. "Field Essay: Toward a Strategic Revolution in Judicial Politics: A Look Back, A Look Ahead." *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 53, No. 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 625-661

X. State and Local Politics

Required:

Paul E. Peterson. 1981. *City Limits*. Chapters 1-4, 11.

Erikson, Wright, and McIver. 1993. *Statehouse Democracy*. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6.

Wright, Gerald C., and Brian F. Schaffner. 2002. "The Influence of Party: Evidence from the State Legislatures." *American Political Science Review* 96 (June): 367-79.

Stephen Ansolabehere, Alan Gerber, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2002. "Equal Votes, Equal Money: Court Ordered Redistricting and the Distribution of Public Expenditures in the American States." *American Political Science Review* 97 (Feb.) 767-777.

Recommended:

John D. Huber, Charles R. Shipan, and Madelaine Pfahler. 2001. Legislatures and Statutory Control of Democracy. *American Journal of Political Science*. April.

XI. American Political Development and Analytic Political History

Required:

Stephen Skowronek. 1982. *Building a New American State*. Chapters 1 and 2.

Douglass C. North. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. Chapters 2-3, 7, and 10 (especially the latter).

Theda Skocpol, "Introduction: Understanding the Origins of Modern Social Provision in the United States," in *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*

Paul Pierson. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of History," *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 251-268.

Recommended:

Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress*, Chapter 5

Eric Foner. 1984. "Why is there No Socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop* 7 (Spring) 57-80

John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* Chapter 3

David Mayhew. 2002. *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*.

(Yale University Press)

Linda Kerber. 1988. "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June): 9–39 (JSTOR)

Samuel Huntington. 1968. "Political Modernization: American vs. Europe," Ch 2 in *Political Order in Changing Societies*.

Robert Bates et al. 1999. "Introduction" in *Analytical Narratives*.

Jon Elster. 2000. "Rational Choice History," *APSR* 94 (September).

XII. System Performance

Required:

Keith Krehbiel. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. Chapters 1-3, 10.

David Mayhew. 1991. *Divided We Govern*. Chapters 1-4, 7.

Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal. 1995. *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy*. Chapters 4, 7.

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*, Chapters 9, 11.

Gregory Wawro and Eric Schickler. 2004. "Where's the Pivot?: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate." *The American Journal of Political Science* 48:758–774 (October).

Recommended:

Morris Fiorina. *Divided Government*. 2nd ed. Chapters 2, 3, 5.

Charles Cameron. 2000. *Veto Bargaining*. Chapter 6.

Lawrence Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2002. "Politics and Policy-Making in the Real World: Crafted Talk and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness." In Manza, Cook, and Page (eds.). *Navigating Public Opinion*. (Oxford University Press)

Erikson and Tedin. 2004. *American Public Opinion*. 7th ed. Chapters 10, 11.