

# PS 2200: American Government and Politics

Fall 2017

2-3:55 Monday  
4430 Wesley W. Posvar Hall

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The purpose of this course is to provide you with an overview of some of the classic and new controversies in American politics. You cannot expect by the end of the course to have a complete, or even a partially complete, picture of research in American politics, but you will have a taste for some of the areas Americanists study. Furthermore, this course provides a rather unique opportunity to study both “institutions” and “behavior” side-by-side, thus allowing us the opportunity to explore interconnections in ways that are not possible in most other courses. You can also expect to learn more about constructing a proper research paper, to hone your ability to read work in political science with a critical eye, and to think about political science as an evolving literature rather than a disjointed collection of articles and books.

## Required texts

Albertson and Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics*.  
Aldrich, 2011. *Why Parties?*  
Braman. 2009. *Law, Politics, and Perception*.  
Grossman and Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics*.  
Hero. 2007. *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*.  
Lee. 2016. *Insecure Majorities*.  
Mayhew. 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*  
McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America*.  
Ostrom. 1990. *Governing the Commons*.  
Shapiro, et. al. 2010. *Political Representation*.

## Assignments

Your grade in this class will be based on your performance on four assignments, as follows:

Weekly reaction papers:	20 percent
Discussion participation:	10 percent
Annotated bibliographies:	30 percent
Final research design:	40 percent

Weekly reaction paper: Each week, you should prepare a 1-2 page critical reaction to the readings for that week. You may discuss all of the readings or select one or more on which to focus your comments (of course, you're expected to have read them all). Four sets of questions that might help spur some thoughts for you (and which will form the basis for the start of in-class conversation) are:

1. What is the **motivation** behind the paper? Why did the authors write it? What is the puzzle?
2. What is the **null hypothesis**? How would we know if the data do not confirm the theory?
3. What are the **premises**? What assumptions do the authors make? What choices do they make? Would you make similar assumptions/choices?
4. What are the **conclusions**? What is the paper's contribution to the literature?

You are required to complete 10 reaction papers over the course of the semester. This means that you will have several bye-weeks, of your choosing, in which you do not write a reaction paper. You may choose to use these bye-weeks when you are especially busy with other work, or when the papers or books assigned don't move you to put pen to ink. Each reaction paper is due at noon, via courseweb, on the Friday prior to the class for which the discussion of those readings will be held. I encourage you to take a look at courseweb after the noon deadline, to get a sense of what others in the class are thinking about the readings.

Discussion participation: You should come to class each week prepared to discuss the readings in depth. Be sure to think carefully about connections between the readings.

Annotated bibliographies: You will be writing four annotated bibliographies with at least 10 citations each on topics of your choosing (with my approval) in American politics. Look for more on these assignments in a separate document.

Research design: You will be writing an original research design based on one of the topics you chose for the annotated bibliography assignment. You do not have to do the actual research; you must construct the design, complete with a theory that connects to the extant literature and empirically testable hypotheses that connect to the theory.

#### Due dates

There are several written assignments, along with the weekly reaction papers, due throughout the course of the semester. All deadlines mean that the work should be completed prior to the class meeting that day. Important dates to keep in mind are:

October 2: Bibliography one due  
October 23: Bibliography two due  
November 6: Bibliography three due  
November 20: Bibliography four due  
December 11: Research design due

## Policies

*Late work:* I accept no late work. Be sure to budget your time so that you can get all of your work done prior to the due date.

*Incompletes:* I do not give incompletes except in the most dire of circumstances beyond your control.

*Cheating:* You can be assured that I will not decrease the value of your eventual degree by tolerating cheating. Cheaters will fail the course and will be reported to the proper University authorities.

## Schedule of readings

### **Aug 28: Introductions, trust games, that sort of thing**

### **Sep 11: Why Government?**

Ostrom, 1990. *Governing the Commons*

### **Sep 18: The theoretical underpinnings of the study of American politics**

Shapiro, et. al. 2010. *Political Representation*. (Chs. 1-5, 7, 9-11)

### **Sep 25: Public Opinion and Voting Behavior: The Classics**

Zaller, John R. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, pp.1-52

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chs. 2, 6, 7,19.

Converse, Philip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In Apter, David E. *Ideology and Discontent*.

Carmines, Edward and James Stimson. 1980. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review*. 74:78-91.

Nelson, TE and DR Kinder. 1996. "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion." *The Journal of Politics*. 58(4):1055-78.

MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1989. "Macropartisanship." *American Political Science Review*. 83:1125-1989.

## **Oct 2: Public Opinion and Voting Behavior: New Controversies**

Albertson and Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics*.

Erikson, Robert S. and Laura Stoker. 2011. "Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes." *American Political Science Review*. 105(2):221-237.

Druckman, James N., Jordan Fein, and Thomas J. Leeper. 2012. "A Source of Bias in Public Opinion Stability." *American Political Science Review*. 106(2): 430-454.

Jerit, Jennifer and Jason Barabas. 2012. "Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment." *The Journal of Politics*. 74(3):672-684.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY I DUE

### **Oct 10: Partisanship**

Grossman and Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics*.

Huddy, Leonie, Lillian Mason, and Lene Aaroe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review*. 109(1):1-17.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review*. 99(2):153-167.

Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2016. "The Political Legacy of American Slavery." *The Journal of Politics*. 78(3):621-641.

### **Oct 16: Political Parties**

Aldrich, John H. 2011. *Why Parties?*

Hall, Andrew B. 2015. "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?" *American Political Science Review*. 109(1):18-42.

Thomsen, Danielle. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *The Journal of Politics*. 76(3):786-797.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2015. "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*. 77(3):861-873.

**Oct 23: Polarization**

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America*.

Mason, Lilliana. 2015. "‘I Disrespectfully Agree’: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science*. 59(1):128-145.

Barber, Michael J. 2015. "Ideological Donors, Contribution Limits, and the Polarization of American Legislatures." *The Journal of Politics*. 78(1):296-310.

BIBLIOGRAPHY II DUE

**Oct 30: Congress: The Classics**

Mayhew, David R. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.

Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review*. 62:144-168.

Riker, William H. 1980. "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." *American Political Science Review*. 74(2):432-446.

**Nov 6: Congress: New Controversies**

Lee. 2016. *Insecure Majorities*.

Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Chs. 1-2.

Carnes, Nicholas and Meredith L. Sadin. 2016. "The ‘Mill Worker’s Don’ Heuristic: How Voters Perceive Politicians from Working-Class Families – and How They Really Behave in Office." *The Journal of Politics*. 77(1):285-298.

Bonica, Adam. 2014. "Mapping the Ideological Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science*. 58(2):367-386.

BIBLIOGRAPHY III DUE

### **Nov 13: The Executive Branch**

- Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*. Ch. 3.
- Ragsdale, Lyn and John J. Theis, III. 1997. "The Institutionalization of the American Presidency." *American Journal of Political Science*. 41:1280-1318.
- McCarty, Nolan. 2000. "Presidential Pork: Executive Veto Power and Distributive Politics." *American Political Science Review*. 94(1):117-129.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice and Kenneth W. Shotts. 2004. "The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science*. 48(4): 690-706.
- Moe, Terry. 1984. "The New Economics of Organization." *American Journal of Political Science*. 28: 739-777.
- Rogowski, Jon C. 2016. "Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance." *American Political Science Review*. 110(2):325-341.
- Carpenter, Daniel P. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, pp.1-64.
- Haeder, Simon and Susan Webb Yackee. 2015. "Influence and the Administrative Process: Lobbying the U.S. President's Office of Management and Budget." *American Political Science Review*. 109: 507-522
- Bolton, Alexander, and Sharece Thrower. 2016. "Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 649-663.

### **Nov 20: Courts**

- Braman. 2009. *Law, Politics, and Perception*.
- Moraski, Bryon and Charles R. Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations." *American Journal of Political Science*. 43:1069-1095.
- Hall, Melinda Gann and Chris W. Bonneau. 2006. "Does Quality Matter? Challengers in State Supreme Court Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 50(1):20-33.
- Black, Ryan C. and Ryan J. Owens. 2016. "Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science*. 60(1):30-43.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY IV DUE**

**Nov 27: Race, Gender and Politics**

Huddy, Leonie and N. Terkildsen. 1993. "Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science*. 37(1):119-147.

Davenport, Lauren D. 2016. "Beyond Black and White: Biracial Attitudes in Contemporary U.S. Politics." *American Political Science Review*. 110(1):52-67.

Campbell, David E. and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents." *The Journal of Politics*. 68:233-47.

Marschall, Melissa J. and Amanda Rutherford. 2016. "Voting Rights for Whom? Examining the Effects of the Voting Rights Act on Latino Political Incorporation." *American Journal of Political Science*. 60(3):590-606.

Kanthak, Kristin and George A. Krause. 2010. "Valuing Diversity in Political Organizations: Gender and Token Minorities in the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Journal of Political Science*. 54(October):839-54.

Branton, Regina; Erin C. Cassese; Bradford S. Jones and Chad Westerland. 2011. "All Along the Watchtower: Acculturation Fear, Anti-Latino Affect, and Immigration." *The Journal of Politics*. 73(3):664-679.

Abrajano, Marisa. 2015. "Reexamining the 'Racial Gap' in Political Knowledge." *The Journal of Politics*. 77(1):44-54.

#### **Dec 4: Activism and Responsiveness**

Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma*. Pp. 1-93.

Carpenter, Daniel and Colin D. Moore. 2014. "When Canvassers Became Activists: Antislavery Petitioning and the Political Mobilization of American Women." *American Political Science Review*. 108(3):479-498.

Healy, Andrew and Neil Malhotra. 2009. "Myopic Voters and Natural Disaster Policy." *American Political Science Review*. 103(3):387-406.

Gerber, Elisabeth and Daniel Hopkins. 2011. "When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy," *American Journal of Political Science*. 55(2): 326-339.

Lax, Jeffrey R. and Justin H. Phillips. 2012 "The Democratic Deficit in the States." *American Journal of Political Science*. 56(1):148-66.

Nickerson, David W. 2008. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review*. 102(1):49-57.

Egan, Patrick J. 2012. "Group Cohesion without Group Mobilization: The Case of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals." *British Journal of Political Science*. 42: 597-616.

#### **Dec 11: Diversity and Representation**

Hero. 2007. *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*.

Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2009. "Who Loses in American Democracy? A Count of Votes Demonstrates the Limited Representation of African Americans." *American Political Science Review*. 103(1):37-57.

Hansen, Eric R. and Sarah Treul. 2015. "The Symbolic and Substantive Representation of LGB Americans in the US House." *The Journal of Politics*. 77(4): 955-967

RESEARCH DESIGN DUE