Seminar in American Politics
Political Science 5100
Spring 2018

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Class time: Mondays: 7:15 – 10:00pm
Classroom: McGannon 122
Office Hours: Mondays 3 – 4pm or by appointment

Course Description

This class is a survey course of the political science American Politics subfield. By the end of this course, you should have a familiarity with some of the fundamental debates and works within American political science research. The first half of this class focuses on political institutions. Here, we will study how political elites act within the American political system to achieve their goals. The second half of the class focuses on political behavior. Here, we will focus on how voters develop and act upon their political opinions. A key goal of this course is to help you prepare for the American politics comprehensive field exam.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on institutional aspects of the United States government, with a focus on legislative, executive and judicial institutions.
2. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on political behavior, with a focus on public opinion, partisanship, and elections.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation
   Your class participation consists of three parts. Regular in-class participation; discussion questions, and in class presentations.

   First, your primary assignment is to complete the readings and contribute to weekly seminar discussion. You are permitted one unexcused absence from class. For each additional unexcused absence, your final course grade will be reduced by 2%. If you have more than three unexcused absences, you will fail the course. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason (e.g. illness, family emergency, or University sponsored activity) you should contact the professor as soon as possible. An absence is excused only if explicitly stated by Professor Rogers by email (therefore if you speak to Professor Rogers – be sure to send a follow up email to confirm excuse).

   Second, for at least two of the seminar meetings, you are required to submit a list of questions and discussion topics by 2pm on the Sunday prior to the class by email to Professor Rogers. These questions/topics should be 1 – 2 pages and reflect critical assessments of each of the week's assigned readings.

Third, you will present and lead discussion for two readings from the assigned readings. Possible readings to choose from are designated in the Course Reading list by an asterisk (*). Presentations (roughly 10 minutes) should:

- Describe the main *themes* of the reading
- Explain what its *contributions* are to our understanding of American politics
- Provide specific *criticisms* of the study (e.g., its theoretical argument, hypotheses, evidence, analysis, etc.)
- Raise *questions* about specific theoretical or empirical issues that you did not understand
- Include a one page handout for fellow students

Field Exam Papers:

There will be two papers in this course that will strengthen your skills in contrasting and critiquing key debates within the American politics subfield in preparation for the American politics field exam. These papers will be approximately 6 – 8 pages. Fuller instructions and associated readings will be posted to Blackboard. The papers will cover the following topics

- Legislative Gridlock: Due Sunday, February 11 by 9am
- Presidential Power: Due Sunday, February 25 by 9am

Literature Critique or Research Paper

You will complete either a literature critique or a research paper for this course. If you pursue the literature critique option, it will be worth 25% of your grade. If you pursue the research paper option, it will be worth 40% of your grade, but you will not be required to complete the "Field Exam Papers." Students, however, will be responsible for all readings associated with the Field Exam papers for class discussion and the final exam. To pursue the research paper option, you must meet with and receive Professor Rogers' approval by February 2.

Literature Critique Option:

The literature critique will be a paper that focuses on a topic of your choice in the study of American politics. The paper will survey the state of the literature on the topic or research question, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing work, and identify a research question that is either new or in your view has not yet been well addressed. Finally, you will outline a research design for how one might go about answering the research question**.**

Literature Critique Requirements

- **Proposal:** A 3-4 page paper outlining your topic/question, which is due on March 9 by email. After submitting this paper, you are required to meet with the professor by appointment by March 23 to discuss the topic. Worth 10% of Literature Critique grade.
- **Presentation:** A 10 minute in-class, presentation on their research design on April 23 or 30. There will then be 5 – 10 minutes of Q&A from the class. Worth 25% of Literature Critique grade.
- **Paper:** The final literature critique is due May 7. The expected paper length is 15 - 20 pages with approximately two-thirds devoted to reviewing previous literature and one-third devoted to the research design. Worth 65% of Literature Critique grade.

Research Paper Option:

The research paper will require you to execute a research project where you identify a research question relevant to American politics, provide a theory and hypothesis, and a test of this hypothesis. The aim of this project is to produce a manuscript in a similar format to an article published in a scholarly journal. It is strongly recommended this project build upon work done in a previous course (e.g POLS 5140).

Research Paper Requirements

- **Memo:** Research memos will summarize initial empirical findings and serve as a starting document for a conversation between Rogers and the student. The memo is due on March 9 by email, and you are required to meet with the professor by appointment by March 23 to discuss the memo. Memos should be between 2 – 4 pages (single spaced, excluding Tables and Figures). Memos should include brief sections:
  - Summary: Summary of entire memo in 300 words or less
  - Data & Model Specification: Description of data used; dependent and independent variables; and research design (e.g. statistical model)
  - Findings and Initial Interpretations
  - Next steps: 300 – 400 word section outlining next steps of empirical analyses
  - Meeting Discussion Questions: Questions or concerns that student would like to discuss with Rogers

  The memo is worth 10% of Research Paper grade.
- **Presentation:** A 10 minute in-class, presentation on their research project on April 23 or 30. There will then be 5 – 10 minutes of Q&A from the class. Worth 15% of Research Paper grade.
- **Paper:** The final paper should be 25 - 40 pages (excluding tables, figures, references and appendices), double spaced and twelve point font. The final the Research Paper is due May 7 by 11:59pm. Worth 75% of Research Paper grade.

Final Exam:

This course will have a take home final exam. The final exam will be open book and open note. The exam will consist of 3 to 5 questions comparable to those from a comprehensive field exam. The exam will be posted online on Tuesday, May 8 at 9am and be due on Monday, May 14 at 9am.

Grades & Key Dates

Your grade for this course will consist of the following components and relative weights:

Item	Literature Critique Option	Research Paper Option
In Class Participation	15%	15%
Discussion Questions #1	1%	1%
Discussion Questions #2	1%	1%
In-Class Reading Presentation #1	4%	4%
In-Class Reading Presentation #2	4%	4%
Field Exam Paper #1	6%	-
Field Exam Paper #2	9%	-
Final Paper	25%	40%
Final Exam	35%	35%

When determining the final grade, the following grading scale will be used. I will round final grades.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% - 100%	B	83% - 86%	C	73% - 76%
A-	90% - 92%	B-	80% - 82%	C-	70% - 72%
B+	87% - 89%	C+	77% - 79%	D	60% - 69%
				F	below 60%

When translating letter grades into numeric grades, the midpoint of the range will be used (e.g. A = 96.5%, A- = 91%, etc.)

Course Evaluations

Students are requested to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course.

Academic Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml

Students with Special Needs-Disability Services

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Required Texts

The following texts should be available from the University Bookstore or online retailers, such as Amazon.com. Other readings will be made available via Blackboard.

- Neustadt, Richard. 1991. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York, NY. The Free Press. ISBN: 9780029227961
- Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. 2016. *Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691169446

Course Schedule

Week 1 – January 22: Approaches to Institutionalism ~ [88 pages]

- Shepsle, Kenneth A. "Rational Choice Institutionalism" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. 2006. [12 pages]
- Sanders, Elizabeth. "Historical Institutionalism." in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. 2006. [14 pages]
- Simon, Herbert. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science." *The American Political Science Review*. 1985. [10 pages]
- Green, Donald, and David Shapiro. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*. 1994. ~ Chapters 2 and 3 [33 pages]
- Fenno, Richard. *Congressmen in Committees* (1973) pp. Prologue & Ch. 1 [19 pages]

Week 2 – January 29: Legislative Organization ~ [86 pages]

- Mayhew, David; The Electoral Connection – Excerpt [8 pages]
- Groseclose, Tim and David C. King. "Committee Theories Reconsidered." [Only read pages 191 – 195, 4 pages]
- Krehbiel, Keith. "Are Congressional Committees Composed of Preference Outliers." *The American Political Science Review*. 1990. [Only read pages 149 – 155, 6 pages]
- Adler, E. Scott and John S. Lapinski. "Demand-Side Theory and Congressional Committee Composition: A Constituency Characteristic Approach" *American Journal of Political Science*. 1997. [19 pages]
- Miller, Warren E. and Donald Stokes. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *The American Political Science Review*. 1963. [11 pages]
- Broockman, David and Christopher Skovron. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion Among Elites." *The American Political Science Review*. 2018. [38 pages] *

Week 3 – February 5: Representation and Groups ~ [108 Pages]

- Erikson, Robert, Michael MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. "Public Opinion and Policy: Causal Flow in a Macro System." Chapter 2 in *Navigating Public Opinion: Polls, Policy and Future of American Democracy*. [21 pages]
- Barber, Michael, and Nolan McCarty "Causes and Consequences of Polarization" (2012). p. 19 – 30. [11 pages]
- Cameron, Charles, David Epstein, and Sharyn O'Halloran. "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Black Representation in Congress." *The American Political Science Review*. 1996. [16 pages] *
- Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Goods and the Theory of Groups* (1971) ~Chapters 1 and 2 [60 pages]
    - *Do not get bogged down in the technical parts of p. 23 – 33*

➢ **Sunday, February 11: Field Exam Paper 1 Due by 9am**

Week 4 – February 12: Political Parties ~ [119 pages]

- Rhode, David. "Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century" *Journal of Politics*. 2013. [14 pages]
- Cox, Gary and Mat McCubbins. *Setting the Agenda*. (2005). ~ Chapters 1, 2, and 3 [50 pages]
- Krehbiel, Keith "Where's the Party" *British Journal of Political Science* (2003) [27 pages]
- Ansolabehere et al. "The Effects of Party and Preferences on Roll-Call Voting." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (2001).[28 pages] *

Week 5 – February 19: Interest Groups and the Bureaucracy [93 pages]

- Schattschneider, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System" in *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1960) – Chapter 2 [23 pages]
- Hojnacki, Marie and David Kimball. "Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress." *The American Political Science Review*. 1998. [10 pages]
- Moe, Terry. "The Politics of Structural Choice." In *Organization Theory*. 1995. [33 pages]
- Huber, John. Charles Shipan, and Madelaine Pfahler, "Legislatures and Statutory Control of Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science*. 2001. [14 pages]*
- Clinton, Joshua D., David Lewis, and Jennifer Selin. "Influencing Bureaucracy: The Irony of Congressional Oversight." *American Journal of Political Science*. 2013 [13 pages]

➢ **Sunday, February 25: Field Exam Paper 2 Due by 9am**

Week 6 – February 26: The Presidency ~ [45 pages]

- *Review Material Covered in Field Exam Papers 1 and 2*
- Skowronek, Stephen. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." ~ Excerpt [45 pages]

Week 7 – March 5: The Judiciary ~ [181 pages]

- George, Tracy E. and Lee Epstein. "On the Nature of Supreme Court Decision-Making." *The American Political Science Review*. 1992. [11 pages] *
- Tamanaha, Brian Z. "The Several Meanings of "Politics" in Judicial Politics Studies: Why "Ideological Influence" is not Partisanship." *Emory Law Journal*. 2012. [19 pages]
- Epstein, Lee and Jack Knight. *The Choices Justices Make*. 1998. ~ Preface, Chapters 1, 2, and 3. [118 pages]
- Rosenberg, Gerald. *The Hollow Hope*. 2008. ~ Chapter 1 [33 pages]

Week 8 – March 19: Voter Ideology ~ [134 Pages]

- Converse, Philip. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." in *Ideology and Its Discontents*. (1964) [60 pages]
    - For a summary of this piece, see Clawson and Oxley, Chapter 5. "Ideological Incongruence and Critiques."
- Zaller, John. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. (1992) ~ Chapters 1 – 3 [52 pages]
- Key, V.O. *The Responsible Electorate* (1966) ~ Chapter 1 [9 pages]
- Alford, John R., Carolyn Funk, and John Hibbing. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *The American Political Science Review*. (2005) [13 pages] *

Week 9 – March 26: Partisanship and Rational Choice Part 1 ~ [199 pages]

- Berelson, Bernard, et al. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. Chapters 1, 6-7. [77 pages]
- Campbell, Angus, et al. *The American Voter* (1960). Chapters 4, 6, & 7 [74 pages]
- Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). ~ Chapter 3 [14 pages]
- Fiorina, Morris. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981). Chapters 1 and 10 [34 pages]
    - *There is a decent likelihood we will not get to Fiorina until Week 10. In case this happens, take good notes*

April 2 – Easter Break

Week 10 – April 9 – Partisanship and Rational Choice Part 2 ~ [130 pages]

- Fiorina, Morris. *Unstable Majorities*. (2017) Chapters 2 and 3. [49 pages]
- Fowler, Anthony. "Partisan Tribalism of Policy Voting." *Working Paper* [36 pages]
- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76. [13 pages] *
- Page, Ben and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public* (1992). Chapter 1. [32 pages]

Week 11 – April 16 – The Media and Campaigns ~ [106 pages]

- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. "News that Matters." Chapters 2 – 3. 1987. [27 pages]
- Lenz, Gabriel. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science*. (2009) [14 pages]
- Prior, Markus. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout" *American Journal of Political Science*. 2005. [12 pages]
- Gerber, Alan, Dean Karlan, and Daniel Bergan. "Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment on Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions." *American Economic Journal*. (2009) [13 pages] *
- Gelman, Andrew and Gary King. "Why are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes are so Predictable." *British Journal of Political Science* (1993) [40 pages]

Week 12 – April 23 – Political Participation

- **Literature Critique and Research Paper Presentations**
- Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review*. (1995) [14 pages] *
- Putnam, Robert. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy*. (1996). [13 pages]
- Mutz, Diana. *Hearing the Other Side* (2006) ~ Chapter 4. [35 pages]
- Green, D.P., Gerber, A.S. and Larimer, C.W. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* (2008). [11 pages]

Week 13 – April 30 – Democracy in America – [73 pages]

- **Literature Critique and Research Paper Presentations**
- Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. *Democracy for Realists*. (2016)

Week 14 – May 7 – Race – [123 pages]

- White, Ismail, Chryl Laird, and Troy Allen. "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest." *American Political Science Review*. (2014) [15 pages]
- Kuklinski, James H. Michael D. Cobb, and Martin Gilens. "Racial Attitudes and the "New South" *Journal of Politics*. (1997) [24 pages] *
- Mendelberg, Tali. *The Race Card* ~ Chapters 1 and 6 [45 pages]
- Tessler, Michael. *Post-Racial or Most Racial*. (2016) ~ Chapters 2 and 5. [39 pages]