

POLS 510: Introduction to American Institutions and Processes

Washington State University, Fall 2011
Mondays, 2:10 – 5 p.m., Wilson 3

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-3 p.m., Thursday, 9-10:30 a.m.

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Introduction

This course offers a broad overview of the field of American politics. Typically, scholars divide the field into the institutions of government (e.g., Congress, the presidency) and citizen behavior, such as voting, public opinion and participation. A third possible set of object for study are those intermediaries between institutions and the people, such as the news media, political parties and interest groups. We will study all of these this semester and also spend a few weeks assessing how well democracy in the United States works in practice.

I have worked to provide a mix of classic readings—those that everyone who studies American politics should know—and cutting-edge readings, research from the past decade or so that has had an impact on how people see and study American politics.

Readings

There are three books available for purchase:

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*.

Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.

Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*.

Grading

Your final grade in this course will depend on your success in four areas:

1. Four response papers (20%). You will write 4 response papers for this course, each in the range of 3-4 double-spaced pages in length. Each paper should express your reaction to the

readings for the week. These papers should NOT simply be a summary of the readings. Instead, you might raise questions provoked by the readings, compare the arguments of different authors, critique the authors' methodology, or propose alternative explanations for the authors' findings. **These papers are due to me by 9 a.m. the day of class.** You may submit them to me at my office or send them to me via email.

2. Research paper proposal (15%). This assignment is essentially the initial step in writing your research paper for this course. This proposal should 1) raise the research question you want to study, 2) present a review of relevant literature, 3) present your theory and hypotheses derived therefrom, and 4) describe how you will answer your question. Ten to twelve pages is a good length for this assignment. DUE Friday, October 21, 4 p.m.

3. Research paper (25%). Here you will write a full-blown research paper of the type that might be presented at an academic conference. Indeed, I will encourage you to submit your papers for presentation at a political science conference (or the conference of an associated discipline). This paper should include all of the elements of the research proposal, but instead of merely describing how you will answer your question, you will answer it in the final section through the use of statistical analysis, experiments, survey research, the comparative method, non-participant observation, or some other method. DUE Friday, December 9, 4 p.m.

4. A final exam (20%). This take-home final exam will consist of four questions similar to the type that would appear on a preliminary exam. You will choose to answer two of the four in no more than 4 pages each (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times font). You may NOT use your notes or other sources when taking the exam. You will have 8 hours to take the exam. I will email you the questions on Monday, December 12, but do not look at the questions until you are ready to write the exam. You will have until 5 p.m. on Friday, December 16, to return your answers to me.

5. Class participation and attendance (20%). Class participation and attendance are required. Notify me beforehand if you will be absent from class. I also expect that everyone will make contributions to our class discussions.

Other information

If there are things I talk about in class that you do not understand, do not hesitate to talk to me about them. I am here to help you learn the course material. And if there are other matters that you think should be brought to my attention, let me know.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments must be at my office by 5 p.m. on the due date or they will be considered late. For each day an assignment is late, I will subtract 10 percent of the assignment's total point value from your score.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT. I do not tolerate plagiarizing or cheating of any kind. Such behavior will result in **failing the course** and other disciplinary action. Please see the Student Handbook at the Division of Student Affairs website at www.studentaffairs.wsu.edu for a full

description of the types of academic misconduct. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see me immediately.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION. Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

Course Outline

1. Congress

Fenno, Richard. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Ch 1.

Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Ch 1-2.

Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. All.

Miller, Warren E. and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57:45-56.

2. Presidency

Howell, William G. 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Ch 1-2.

Neustadt, Richard. 1960. *Presidential Power*. Ch 1-3.

Skowronek, Stephen. 2000. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap. Ch 1-3.

Wildavsky, Aaron. 1966. "The Two Presidencies." *Trans-Action* 4:2.

3. Courts

Dahl, Robert. 1957. "Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-maker." *Journal of Public Law* 6: 279-95.

Pritchett, C. Herman. 1968. "Public Law and Judicial Behavior." *Journal of Politics* 30: 480-509.

Segal, Jeffrey and Harold Spaeth. 2003. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 2-3.

Smith, Rogers. 1988. "Political Jurisprudence, the "New Institutionalism" and the Future of Public Law." *American Political Science Review*.

4. Interest Groups

Hall, Richard L. and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review* 100: 69-84

Latham, Earl. 1952. "The Group Basis of Politics: Notes for a Theory." *American Political Science Review* 46: 376-397

LaVaque-Manty, Mika. 2006. "Bentley, Truman, and the Study of Groups." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 1-18.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. New York: Schocken. Ch1 , 5-6

5. Parties

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Ch 1-3, 6

Burnham, Walter Dean. 1970. *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: Norton. Ch 1-2, 7

Key, V.O. "A Theory of Critical Elections." *Journal of Politics* 17: 3-18.

Key, V.O. "Secular Realignment and the Party System." *Journal of Politics* 21: 198-210.

Mayhew, David. 2000. "Electoral Realignments." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 449-474

6. Pluralism

Dahl, Robert A. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Ch. 1-3

Madison, James. Federalist 10.

7. Critiques of Pluralism

Lowi, Theodore. 1967. "The Public Philosophy: Interest-Group Liberalism." *American Political Science Review* 61: 5-24.

Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People*. All.

8. Elections and Voting

Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Ch 2-3, 11-13

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch 1-4, 6-7

Key, V.O. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality and Presidential Elections, 1936-1960*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Ch 1-2.

Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. 2006. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing during Election Campaigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 1-2

9. Mass and Elite Participation

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102: 33-48.

Hofstadter, Richard. 1965. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf. 3-40.

Schlesinger, Joseph. 1966. *Ambition and Politics*. Chicago: Rand McNally. Ch 1, 10

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Ch 1-5

10. Public Opinion

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and Discontent*, Ed. David E. Apter. New York: Free Press, p.206-261.

Lippman, Walter. *Public Opinion*. 1922. New York: Harcourt, Brace. Ch 1, 6-7

Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 1-2

Prothro, James W. and Charles M. Grigg. 1960. "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement." *Journal of Politics* 22: 276-294.

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.

11. Political Communication

Gamson, William. 1992. *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press Ch 1-3, 7.

Graber, Doris. 2004. "Mediated Politics and Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century." *Annual Review of Psychology* 55: 545-571.

Hovland, Carl I, Irving L. Janis and H.H. Kelley. 1953. *Communication and Persuasion*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch 1-4.

Klapper, Joseph T. 1960. *The Effects of Mass Communication*. Glencoe, Ill., Free Press. Ch 2-4

12. Race/Ethnicity and Politics

Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4.

de la Garza, Rodolfo O. 2004. "Latino Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 91-123.

Hutchings, Vincent L. and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2004. "The Centrality of Race in American Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 383-408.

Key, V.O. 1949. *Southern Politics*. New York: Vintage. Ch 24, 25, 29, 30.

Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings and Ismail K. White. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96: 75-90

13. Critiques of American Democracy

Bartels, Larry M. 2010. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.