

**Political Science 540**  
**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**Spring 2000**  
**9:00-11:30 Wednesdays**

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This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the basic research literature in American National Institutions. We will read widely about the design and functioning of the institutions of politics: Congress, the Courts, the Executive, Interest Groups and Parties, as well as on other topics. Readings will be extensive, and will include both classics and current research monographs. Assignments will focus on writing critical reviews and reactions during the term and on a major term paper addressing a specific element of the research literature at the end of the term. Class participation will be an essential part of the course--students will be expected to come to class with questions about the readings and with answers to the questions that others pose. I will distribute questions each week concerning the readings for the following week, and each student will write a short paper every other week based on one of these questions. In addition, these questions will serve as the agenda for our discussions. Given this format, it is essential that you read with these questions in mind and that you come to class prepared to explore the readings in detail.

The course will introduce students not only to many of the classic and current readings across a broad range of national political institutions, but it should serve the purpose of honing your critical and methodological skills as well. Discussions will focus on questions of research methodology, how another author could improve on the state of the art in the area, and on exploring the relative merits of alternative research approaches. Students should leave the course with an introduction to a range of topics of research in American institutions as well as with a reaction to a variety of research designs. Students should be able to design an appropriate research project addressing a recognizable gap in the literature in their term papers.

Course Requirements:

- Seven (7) short papers (five pages double-spaced maximum). These papers are due on Tuesdays at noon, the day before the class during which we discuss the readings in question. The papers should respond to one or more of the questions distributed in class during the previous week. These papers and the questions on which they are based will also serve as the agenda for class discussion. Together, these 7 papers will make up 40% of your grade. Late papers are not accepted.
- One term paper, due on May 1, 2000 at noon. This should be an article-length treatment (25-35 pages, double spaced). The paper should address a major gap in the literature, evaluate the research strategies that have been used, and improve on them either with a proposal or an empirical project. You should start early on your paper

and discuss the topic with me several times throughout the semester. The term paper counts for 40% of your grade.

- Class participation and discussion. This is an important part of any graduate seminar. It will count for 20% of your grade. Note that you cannot get an A in this class with a poor grade in participation.

Books for purchase:

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- American Political Science Association. 1984. *Style Manual for Political Science*. Washington, DC: APSA. Order directly through the APSA website: [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org). There are discounts for multiple orders, so you might all order together.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 1998. *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Cox, Gary and Matthew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, Richard L. 1996. *Participation in Congress*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2d. ed. New York: HarperCollins.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Edwards, George C., John H. Kessel, and Bert A. Rockman, eds. 1993. *Researching the Presidency: Vital Questions, New Approaches*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Rosenberg, Gerald N. 1993. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wildavsky, Aaron, and Naomi Caiden. 1996. *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, 3rd Ed.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

## Weekly Assignments

### 1. January 12, 2000. Introduction to course. Federalist basics

- APSA Style Manual. (Read this any time and use it in all your courses.)
- Dahl, Robert A. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Federalist Papers # 1, 6, 10, 23, 30, 39, 46, 47, 48, 51

### 2. January 19. Pluralism and a dispute

- Truman, David B. 1951. *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, ch. 1, 3-7, 16 (pp. 3-13, 45-210, 501-36.)
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press, ch. 1, 8, 12, 19, 24-28 (pp. 1-8, 89-103, 163-5, 223-8, 271-325.)
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1966. A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy. *American Political Science Review* 60: 287-95.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1966. Further Reflections on “The Elitist Theory of Democracy.” *American Political Science Review* 60: 296-305.
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1966. A Reply to “Further Reflections on ‘The Elitist Theory of Democracy.’” *American Political Science Review* 60: 391-2.
- Bachrach, Peter, and Morton Baratz. 1962. The Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56: 947-52.

### 3. January 26. Agenda-setting, randomness, leadership, and control

- Cohen, Michael, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen. 1972. A Garbage Can Theory of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17: 1-25.
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2d. ed. New York: HarperCollins.

### 4. February 2. Approaches to research on the Presidency

- Neustadt, Richard E. various years. *Presidential Power*. Any edition. Skim entire book and read chapter 3: The Power to Persuade.
- Edwards, George C., John H. Kessel, and Bert A. Rockman, eds. 1993. *Researching the Presidency : Vital Questions, New Approaches*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

### 5. February 9. Parties in Government

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### 6. February 16. Congressional organization and the committee system

- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Barry Weingast. 1987. The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power. *American Political Science Review* 81: 85-104.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1990. Are Congressional Committees Composed of Preference Outliers? *American Political Science Review* 84 (1): 149-63.

- Baumgartner, Frank R., Bryan D. Jones, and Michael C. MacLeod. Forthcoming 2000. The Evolution of Legislative Jurisdictions. *Journal of Politics*.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### 7. February 23. Party government in Congress

- Cox, Gary and Matthew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

### 8. March 1. Congressional activity, not just voting

- Hall, Richard L. 1996. *Participation in Congress*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

### Spring Break, March 6-10

### 9. March 15. Fundamentals about the bureaucracy and budgeting

- Wildavsky, Aaron, and Naomi Caiden. 1996. *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, 3rd Ed.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, esp. Ch. 1-3.
- Jones, Bryan D., James L. True, and Frank R. Baumgartner. 1997. Does Incrementalism Stem from Political Consensus or Institutional Gridlock? *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1997): 1319-39.
- McCubbins, Matthew and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms. *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-179.
- Bendor, Jonathan, and Terry M. Moe. 1985. An Adaptive Model of Bureaucratic Politics. *American Political Science Review* 79: 755-74.

### 10. March 22. The role of the courts

- Rosenberg, Gerald N. 1993. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### 11. March 29. Studying the states

- Key, V.O. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Read Chs. 1 and 14; skim one or two states.
- Hofferbert, Richard I. 1966. "The Relation between Public Policy and Some Structural and Environmental Variables in the American States." *The American Political Science Review*, 60: 73-82.
- Sharkansky, Ira and Richard I. Hofferbert. 1969. "Dimensions of State Politics, Economics, and Public Policy." *The American Political Science Review*. 63: 867-879.
- Mintrom, Michael. 1997. "Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation." *American Journal of Political Science* 41: 738-770.
- Wright, Gerald. 1987. "Public Opinion and Policy Liberalism in the American States." *American Journal of Political Science*. 31: 980-1001.
- Chubb, John E. 1988. "Institutions, the Economy, and the Dynamics of State Elections." *American Political Science Review*. 82: 133-154

- Brace, Paul. 1991. "The Changing Context of State Political Economy." *Journal of Politics* 53: 297-317.

**12. April 5. Analyzing the literature on groups**

- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 1998. *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

**13. April 12. Current research on lobbying**

- NSF Proposal and other materials to be distributed.

**14. April 19 Last day of class.** (Midwest Political Science Association meetings next week)

- Discussion and presentation of term paper projects

**Term papers due in my box, May 1, 2000 noon.**