

GOV 2305: American Politics Field Seminar

Fall 2020

Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.

NOTE reading for first class, on Sept. 3.

Instructors:

Jennifer Hochschild: Office hours on Zoom are Monday, 3-5 p.m.

hochschild@gov.harvard.edu

Join Zoom meeting

<https://harvard.zoom.us/j/91511214506?pwd=TmtuTGUvRWQyVk0vaUtxL29pSTg0UT09>

Password: 775714

Jon Rogowski: Office hours on Zoom are Thursdays, 1-3pm.

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This course aims to introduce doctoral students to some of the major themes and best scholarship in the political science literature on American Politics. The readings for GOV 2305 typically form the core of students' subsequent reading lists for major or minor general exams in American politics, and often for research projects or dissertations. Still, much in the study of American politics is not represented here -- indeed, has not been taken up by political scientists. So along the way, we will want to identify important but neglected questions: What issues should motivate the next generation of research in this field? What theoretical and methodological approaches might be appropriate to studying them?

The most important requirement of the course is to consider the assigned readings for each week carefully and critically, and to come prepared to discuss the large issues that they point us to. The readings are the focus of our weekly discussions. Even though we may not be able to talk about them all, please engage with all of them since your reading of some will affect your analysis of others, whether in the current or some other week. More generally, the readings provide us, as a group, with common terms of reference upon which good discussions will depend. (Note that we have ordered the reading assignments for a given week chronologically, but that may not be the most effective way to group and consider them.)

Tasks

To facilitate discussion, it is important to write as well as read and think in advance about how the readings address the topic of a given session. We have three ways to encourage you to do those three things:

Discussion questions and themes: For 9 of the 12 class weeks (after the first week), each student submits two discussion questions or themes for that session to the CANVAS website, with (only) *one or two sentences* about why you want to class to address those issues. That submission will be due by Wednesday at 6 p.m, before each Thursday class.

The purpose here is to make the transition from student to analyst and teacher. That is, we ask you to put yourself in the role of syllabus writer – why did the professors choose this topic? Why these readings? How do they fit together (building on each other? Contradicting each other? Talking past each other?) The goal is to begin integrating the material by framing questions or themes that bring readings into direct conversation with one another, and perhaps with material from previous weeks. That will facilitate class discussion as well as foster your sense of a developing literature in which authors “talk” with one another.

AND

Breakout sessions: Roughly halfway through some of the class sessions, we will randomly assign students into 3 or 4 person groups in breakout rooms for about 10 minutes (we will experiment with time periods.). You will discuss, and come to some conclusion about, one of the “Discussion questions” posed in the syllabus (or perhaps some other question that the class has been focusing on). In some weeks, we may assign a role or position to each small group. When the class reconvenes, one member of the breakout group will report its conclusion and the reasons for it – *in no more than 3 minutes each*. The general discussion will continue from there, hopefully in a new and more insightful direction.

The purpose here is to combat Zoom fatigue, ensure direct engagement of all students with each other, and focus attention on the most important puzzles or debates encompassed by that week’s readings. We ask you to put yourself in the role of earliest-stage researcher: what is interesting and important about this topic, and how do I initially position myself within it?

AND

Visiting speakers: We are inviting a few authors of readings on the syllabus to “attend” a class session for about ½ hour, in order to have a retrospective discussion of their publication. We will ask them to reflect on how they now evaluate their own prior writing, what they would do differently now (if anything), how they have followed up or would in principle follow up, how more funding or new methods or new ideas might affect their findings, etc. Students can then try out your own ideas for how to revise or develop the publication in a new round of research--and see how authors themselves engage with “next steps.”

The purpose here is to connect published words with real individuals, and to enable us to think concretely about research as an ongoing process, in which a given publication is one moment in a continuing collective enterprise.

AND

Research idea: We will dedicate the final 10 minutes of each class period to what research might grow out of the readings and discussion questions for that session. For each class session beginning 9.18, two groups of two students each will give an *extremely brief* one paragraph statement of a research project (not just a topic for a research project) that builds upon/challenges/improves upon that week’s topic. Group members should collaborate before the class meeting to develop these

research statements. Other students will offer suggestions of how the research project might develop. Each student should sign up for four class sessions using the following Google sheet: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1waCZZ1imZrjDuDd1n_WuIn8SC_v1VhPg-3OG6P4qPLo/edit?usp=sharing

The purpose here is to take a further step in the transition from consumer to producer of scholarship on American politics, by moving from earliest-stage researcher to next-stage researcher. That is, given my initial positioning within this topic, how might I start to investigate that position and possible alternatives to it? You might even find some inspiration about your final paper or syllabus design for the course (see below).

We emphasize brevity and sharp focus in each of these tasks, in honor of Blaise Pascal's 1637 statement: "I have made this longer than usual because I have not had time to make it shorter." (also attributed to Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau, Woodrow Wilson, and Benjamin Franklin, among others: [more information here](#)).

AND

You have two choices for the final requirement for the course:

1) write a literature review based on one or several weeks' readings, outlining the important debates in that part of the literature. Think of this as the possible basis for a project you can execute later; consider open questions, puzzles, and important concerns that you might be able to address or even resolve in your own work. To do this, you need first to persuade potential readers to devote some of their scarce time to you--that is, show them that you have a really interesting and important research question that emerges from the scholarly literature or the real world. Then, frame the literature review as the opening steps of a research design to answer that question; the design could result in collection of new evidence, new understandings of existing evidence, or new structures for analyzing a political or political science issue. Then, lay out the basic contours of the research design itself so we can see where the literature review has taken your argument. We will talk more about the form this paper might take, but an excellent paper might be 15-18 pages (total!) in length.

OR

2) design and explain a course outline, including a (mostly complete) syllabus, for a course on some aspect of American politics. Decide if it is for a graduate or undergraduate course, develop and justify the major themes and weekly topics, and choose key readings and assignments. You might also develop pedagogical and/or technological innovations. Include an outline of the introductory lecture to the course, which will explain to students the reasons for your course structure, particular topics, and crucial assignments or innovations. You may want to include some of the slides or media that you plan to present in the first class session. As with the literature review, part of your task is to persuade students to devote some of their scarce time to you--that is, show them that you have a really interesting and important set of issues that emerge from the scholarly literature or the real world.

Please make a zoom appointment with one or both of us, by November 20, 2020, to discuss the topic of your proposed paper or course outline. Send both of us a one-page proposal at least 24 hours before that appointment, describing how far you have gotten in your thinking. This memo could include an outline of more than one proposal if you are still deciding, and will probably be most helpful to both sides of the conversation if you include questions or conundrums you would like to discuss. You are not committed to this proposal, and we will be happy to have further conversations after November 20.

The paper or course outline is due on December 19, 2020 and should be emailed to the instructors as both Word documents and pdfs. Course grades will depend on participation in the seminars, weekly memos, and quality of the final paper or course outline, with these three components weighted more or less equally.

Readings

Required readings will be available on the CANVAS site for the course, JSTOR, or otherwise electronically available in Hollis. We have not asked any bookstore to order books for the course, since it will be much easier you to acquire them on your own. We encourage you to start building your lifelong library of books to which you will refer over and over, and in which you will take notes, write comments, pore over tables and crucial arguments, etc.

Writing Resources

GSAS Center for Writing and Communicating Ideas (<https://gsas.harvard.edu/center-writing-and-communicating-ideas>)

Francis-Nol Thomas and Mark Turner, *Clear and Simple as the Truth*, 2nd edition, Princeton University Press, 2011.

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, Harper, 2016.

Collaboration

Graduate school, teaching, and research are collaborative processes and you are encouraged to actively discuss and interact with your classmates. Ultimately, all written work, including weekly memos, should be your own and must conform to the standards of academic integrity for original work.

Introductory Texts

We recommend that you read (or re-read) one of the standard introductory American Politics textbooks. A good text generally organizes the literature in sensible ways, providing useful structure as well as background information. These include, but are not limited to:

Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2019. *The Logic of American Politics*.

Ken Kollman. 2018. *The American Political System*.

Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, Kenneth Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2019.
American Government: Power and Purpose.

Reading Assignments

September 3: The Political Science of Institutions and Practices, and the Real World

Please read this paper, and review the survey, before class: Constantin Bosancianu, Kim Yi Dionne, Hanno Hilbig, Macartan Humphreys, Sampada KC, Nils Lieber, Alexandra Scacco. “Political and Social Correlates of Covid-19 Mortality.” 11 June, 2020. Most recent version: [paper here](#)

Covid Correlates Expert Survey [survey. here](#)

Discussion questions:

- What institutions should political scientists pay most attention to in analyzing important phenomena, and why?
- How can we distinguish causal factors from other associations?

September 10: Institutional Foundations of the American Order

Publius (James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay), *The Federalist Papers*, Nos. 1, 10, 14, 23, 39, 42, 51, 65, 68, 70, 78, 84, 85. Any unabridged edition; one easy place to find them is: [Federalist Papers](http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1786-1800/the-federalist-papers/) (http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1786-1800/the-federalist-papers/)

Selection from “Essays of Brutus” (1787-1788) in David Hollinger and Charles Capper 2015.
The American Intellectual Tradition: Volume 1: 1630 to 1865. Oxford University Press.
Pp. 158-167.

George Mason, “Objections to the Constitution of Government formed by the Convention” (1787)

Centinel, Letter No. 1, Oc. 5, 1787

Samuel Adams to Richard Henry Lee, Dec. 3, 1787
<https://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch8s20.html>

Agrippa, Letters XV and XVI, Jan. 29 and Feb. 5, 1788
<https://politicalwordpressblog.wordpress.com/2018/12/02/agrippa-xv-massachusetts/>
<https://politicalwordpressblog.wordpress.com/2018/12/08/agrippa-xvi-massachusetts/>

Melancton Smith, Speech to the New York Ratification Convention, June 21, 1788

Melancton Smith, Speech to the New York Ratification Convention, June 25, 1788

Robert Dahl. 1977. "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States." *Political Science Quarterly* 92(1): 1-20.

Discussion questions:

- What were the crucial debates over constitutional framing?
- Who won, and with what consequences?

September 17: Information, Ideology, Opinion Formation and Citizenship

Phillip Converse. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent*. pp. 206-61 [reprinted in *Critical Review*. 2006,18(1-3): 1-74]. (especially sections III through VII).+

Jennifer Hochschild. 1986. *What's Fair?* Chs. 2, 6 and 8. **Note: access from HathiTrust via Harvard Library.**

John Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. Chs. 2, 3, 6, 7. **Note: access from HathiTrust via Harvard Library.**

Diana Mutz. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side*. Cambridge University Press. Chs. 3, 4.

Dennis Chong and James Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies," *APSR* 101(4): 637-655.

Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists*, Chs. 9, 10, 11.

Dan Kahan et al. 2017. "Motivated Numeracy and Enlightened Self-Government," *Behavioral Public Policy* 1(1): 54-86.

Discussion questions:

- Where do the opinions of the public come from?
- Is public opinion worth taking seriously?

September 24: Political Parties and Partisanship

APSA Committee on Political Parties. 1950. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." *APSR* 44(3): v-ix; 1-14.

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper & Row. Chs. 3, 7, and 8.

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identity of Voters*. Yale University Press, Chs. 1-2.

Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 10: 571-591.

Samara Klar, Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. 2018. "Affective Polarization or Partisan Disdain? Untangling a Dislike of the Opposing Party from a Dislike of Partisanship." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82(2): 379-390.

Anthony Fowler. 2020. "Partisan Intoxication or Policy Voting?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 15(2): 141-179.

Discussion questions:

- *Does The Party decide?*
- To what extent does partisanship operate as an expressive identity or instrumental cue?

October 1: Behavioral Perspectives on Groups and Identities

Pei-te Lien, Margaret Conway, and Janelle Wong. 2003. "The Contours and Sources of Ethnic Identity Choices Among Asian Americans" *Social Science Quarterly*. 84(2): 461-481

Claire Jean Kim. 2003. *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City*. Yale University Press. Chs. 1, 4, 5.

Amy Lerman and Vesla Weaver. 2010. "The Political Consequences of the Carceral State," *APSR* 104(4): 817-833.

Ismail White. 2007. "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues," *APSR*, 101(2): 339-354

Sophia Wallace, Chris Zepeda-Millán, and Michael Jones-Correa. 2014. "Spatial and temporal proximity: Examining the effects of protests on political attitudes." *AJPS*. 58(2): 433-448.

Ashley Jardina. 2019. *White Identity Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Chs. 5, 7

Arlie Hochschild. 2018. *Strangers in Their Own Land*. New Press. Chs. 9, 15.

Discussion questions:

- What shapes racial and ethnic identities, and what impact do they have on politics?
- In what ways are groups (defined by race, gender, class, religion, sex orientation, a given intersectionality. . .) analytically comparable, or not?

October 8: Structural and Institutional Perspectives on Groups and Identities

Paul Frymer. 2005. "Racism Revised: Courts, Labor Law, and the Institutional Construction of Racial Animus," *APSR*, 99 (3); 373-387.

Jennifer Hochschild and Traci Burch. 2007. "Contingent Public Policies and Racial Hierarchy: Lessons from Immigration and Census Policies," with. In Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi, eds., *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen*, New York University Press, pp. 138-170.

Aristide Zolberg. 2008. *A Nation by Design*. Harvard University Press, Chs. 1, Conclusion

Jennifer Hochschild and Brenna Powell. 2008. "Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850-1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race," *Studies in American Political Development*, 22(1): 59-96

- S. Karthick Ramakrishnan and Tom (Tak) Wong. 2010. "Partisanship, Not Spanish: Explaining Municipal Ordinances Affecting Undocumented Immigrants," in Monica Varsanyi, ed., *Taking Local Control*. Stanford University Press.
- Abigail Williamson. 2018. *Welcoming New Americans*. University of Chicago Press., Chs. 3, 5

Discussion questions:

- What is the relative impact of racial attitudes and institutional design on group outcomes?
- What institutional levers are most effective in changing group positionality?

October 15: Legislative Behavior and Congressional Institutions

- David Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press. pp 1-77
- Sarah Binder. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990." *APSR*. 90(1): 8-20.
- Keith Krehbiel. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. University of Chicago Press, Chs. 1 and 2.
- James Snyder, Jr. and Tim Groseclose. 2000. "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll Call Voting." *AJPS*. 44(2): 193-211.
- Brandice Canes-Wrone, David Brady, and John Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *APSR* 96(1): 127-140.
- Claudine Gay. 2002. "Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government." *AJPS* 46(4): 717-732.
- Frances Lee. 2008. "Dividers, Not Unifiers: Presidential Leadership and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004." *Journal of Politics* 70(4): 914-928.

Discussion questions:

- What best explains legislative conflict: partisanship or preferences?
- To whom are legislators responsive?

October 22: Presidency

- Richard Neustadt. 1960. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*. Free Press. Ch. 1.
- Brandice Canes-Wrone. 2006. *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. University of Chicago Press. Chs. 2, 3, and 7.
- William Howell. 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton University Press. Chs. 1 and 2.
- William Howell, Saul Jackman, and Jon Rogowski. 2013. *The Wartime President: Executive Influence and the Nationalizing Politics of Threat*. University of Chicago Press. Chs. 2 and 5.
- Alexander Bolton and Sharece Thrower. 2016. "Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism." *AJPS* 60(3): 649-663.
- Jon Rogowski. 2016. "Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance." *APSR* 110(2): 325-341.
- Daniel Galvin. 2020. "Party Domination and Base Mobilization: Donald Trump and

Republican Party Building in a Polarized Era.” *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*. Summer.

Discussion questions:

- What is the most important source of presidential influence: formal powers or informal powers?
- Are presidents national leaders or party leaders?

October 29: Bureaucracy

Terry Moe. 1985. “The Politicized Presidency.” In *The New Direction in American Politics*, ed. John Chubb and Paul Peterson. Brookings Institution Press. Pp. 235-271.

David Epstein and Sharyn O’Halloran. 1996. “Divided Government and the Design of Administrative Procedures: A Formal Model and Empirical Test.” *Journal of Politics* 58(2): 373-397.

Elena Kagan. 2001. “Presidential Administration.” *Harvard Law Review* 114(8): 2245-2385.

Daniel Carpenter. 2001. *Forging Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputation, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton University Press, Ch. 1.

Anne Joseph O’Connell. 2009. “Vacant Offices: Delays in Staffing Top Agency Positions.” *Southern California Law Review* 82(5): 913-1000.

Rachel Potter. 2017. “Slow-Rolling, Fast-Tracking, and the Pace of Bureaucratic Decisions in Rulemaking.” *Journal of Politics* 79(3): 841-855.

Discussion questions:

- To what degree is bureaucracy controlled by Congress? The president? Organized interests?
- What are the sources of bureaucratic power?

November 5: Organized Interests and Social Movements

Mancur Olson. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1984. “What Accent the Heavenly Chorus? Political Equality and the American Pressure System.” *Journal of Politics* 46(4): 1006-1032.

Andrea Campbell. 2002. “Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Patterns of Senior Citizens.” *APSR* 96(3): 565-574.

Daniel Gillion. 2012. “Protest and Congressional Behavior: Assessing Racial and Ethnic Minority Protests in the District.” *Journal of Politics* 74(4): 950-962.

Corrine McConnaughy. 2017. “Layers of Activism: Women’s Movements and Women in Movements Approaching the Twentieth Century.” In *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women’s Social Movement Activism*, ed. Holly McCammon, Verta Taylor, Jo Reger,

- and Rachel Einwohner. Oxford University Press. Pp. 29-50.
- Dawn Langan Teele. 2018. "How the West Was Won: Competition, Mobilization, and Women's Enfranchisement in the United States." *Journal of Politics* 80(2): 442-461.
- Megan Ming Francis. 2019. "The Price of Civil Rights: Black Lives, White Funding, and Movement Capture." *Law & Society Review* 53(1): 275-309.

Discussion questions:

- Are organized interest groups effective/responsible representatives of public opinion?
- What are political constraints on, or resources for, effectiveness of social movements?

November 12: Intergovernmental Dynamics

- Paul Peterson. 1981. *City Limits*, University of Chicago Press. Chs. 4, 8, 9.
- Ira Katznelson. 2013. *Fear Itself*. Norton. Chs 4, 5.
- Paul Frymer. 2014. "A Rush and a Push and the Land Is Ours": Territorial Expansion, Land Policy, and US State Formation." *Perspectives on Politics*. 12(1): 119-144.
- Eric Schickler. 2016. *Racial Realignment*. Princeton University Press, Chs. 7-9.
- Dan Hopkins. 2018. *The Increasingly United States*, University of Chicago Press, Chs. 4, 5.
- Robyn Hollander and Haig Patapany. 2016. "Morality Policy and Federalism: Innovation, Diffusion and Limits" *Publius*. 47(1): 1-26.
- Brian Soucek. 2018. "Marriage, Morality, and Federalism: The USA and Europe Compared." *International Journal of Constitutional Law*.

Discussion questions:

- How does the US federal structure shape political incentives, resources, and outcomes?
- What are outcomes of devolution downward or upward of political power?

November 19: State and Local Governance

- Robert Dahl. 2005 [1961]. *Who Governs?* Yale University Press, Chs. 7, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 27, 28.
- Elisabeth Gerber. 1996. "Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives," *AJPS*, 40(1): 99-128.
- Douglas Rae. 2005. *City: Urbanism and Its End*. Yale University Press, Chs. 8, 11, 12.
- Charles Shipan and Craig Volden. 2008. "The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion," *AJPS* 52(4): 840
- Jessica Trounstine. 2016. "Segregation and Inequality in Public Goods," *AJPS*, 60(3): 709-725.
- Jonathan Rodden. 2019. *Why Cities Lose*. Basic Books, Chs. 5-7.

Discussion questions:

- Are federal, state, and local governments fractal or distinct kinds of political entities?

- Do political actors behave differently in political units of different sizes?

November 26: University holiday (no class)

December 3: Judicial Politics

Tracey George and Lee Epstein. 1992. "On the Nature of Supreme Court Decision Making." *APSR* 86(2): 323-337.

Gregory Caldeira and James Gibson. 1992. "The Etiology of Public Support for the US Supreme Court." *AJPS* 36(3): 635-664.

Jeffrey Segal and Harold Spaeth. 2002. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. Cambridge University Press, Chs. 1, 2, and 3.

Howard Gillman. 2002. "How Political Parties Can Use the Courts to Advance their Agendas: Federal Courts in the United States, 1875-1891." *APSR* 96(3): 511-524.

Keith Whittington. 2005. "'Interpose Your Friendly Hand': Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court." *APSR* 99 (4): 583-596.

Tom Clark. 2009. "The Separation of Powers, Court Curbing, and Judicial Legitimacy." *AJPS* 53(4): 971-989.

Ryan Black and Christina Boyd. 2012. "US Supreme Court Agenda Setting and the Role of Litigant Status." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 28(2): 286-312.

Discussion questions:

- Are judges/justices "politicians in robes"?
- What are the sources of/what are constraints on judicial power?