

POSC 803: Proseminar in American Politics

Monday 2.00-5.00, Smith 341

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Office hours:
Mondays 10.30-11.30; Wednesdays 1.30-3.00
Smith 302

This graduate class provides a whistle-stop introduction to the vast political science literature on American politics. Although this type of seminar inevitably sacrifices depth for breadth, we will encounter several themes running throughout the course, among them: how American democracy is supposed to work and how it does; how interests are expressed by citizens and represented in government; and how power is distributed across groups and institutions in society. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with many of the classic works in the subfield, understand the different research designs that scholars use to analyze American politics, and be conversant with some of the major debates that animate our discipline.

Required materials

In an effort to reduce the cost of the course, I have mostly assigned journal articles and excerpts from books. You will need to obtain copies of four books that we will be reading the majority of (used and old editions should be fine):

- (1) Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- (2) Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- (3) Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- (4) Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

We will also be reading several chapters from the following. The assigned chapters are available online, but the book is a classic, and I recommend you buy a copy if possible.

- (1) Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Your responsibilities

The course is designed as a seminar, with active discussion being the primary mode of learning. To get the most out of this class, you must come to every meeting having read the assigned texts and be ready to discuss them. You will want to bring the texts and your notes to class to aid your memory.

To help get our discussion started, each week one student will prepare a 10-15 minute oral presentation of one or two of the assigned readings. This should mimic the kind of presentation the author(s) might have given at a conference, and outline the major questions that the research poses, the evidence it provides, and the conclusions it reaches. The aim here is not to critique the research, but rather present it as the author(s) might have to a knowledgeable audience.

Over the course of the semester, you will write four brief response papers analyzing and critiquing (not summarizing) the readings for that week. It is up to you which weeks you choose to write on. These must be no longer than four pages, double-spaced, in 12pt font and with 1 inch margins. They should be uploaded to the Canvas site by 5pm on the evening before our seminar (see “Assignments”). I will post them to that week’s page on Canvas; everyone should read them before our class.

Finally, you will produce an original paper on a topic in American politics of your choosing. This should take the form of the “front end” of a journal article: I expect to see a clear question, well-synthesized literature review, and detailed research design. You do not have to actually do the empirical research, although I encourage you to work on it further in the future. To help develop your professional academic skills, you will submit a conference-style proposal for your paper (due April 23) and will give a conference presentation on it to the rest of the class (on May 20).

We will discuss all of these assignments in more detail throughout the semester.

Grading

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Response papers (4 total)	30%
Class participation, including presentation of material	25%
Research paper	35%
Conference proposal	5%
Conference presentation	5%

Academic honesty

I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty of any kind. Please familiarize yourself with UD’s policies in this regard. To falsify the results of one’s research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, to re-submit the same assignment for different classes, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to do their own work and neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. Complete details of the university’s academic integrity policies and procedures can be found at <http://www1.udel.edu/studentconduct/policyref.html> Office of Student Conduct, 218 Hullahen Hall, (302) 831-2117. E-mail: student-conduct@udel.edu.

Harassment and discrimination

The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights, resources and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at www.udel.edu/oei. You can report any concerns to the University's Office of Equity & Inclusion, at 305 Hullahen Hall, (302) 831-8063 or you can report anonymously through UD Police (302) 831-2222 or the EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline at www1.udel.edu/compliance. You can also report any violation of UD policy on harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any person at this site: sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/.

Disclosure of instances of sexual misconduct

If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated to inform the university's Title IX Coordinator. The university needs to know information about such incidents in order to offer resources to victims and to ensure a safe campus environment for everyone. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy — I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator. For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and how to report information, please refer to www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct. At UD, we provide 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. Contact 302-831-1001, UD Helpline 24/7/365, to get in touch with a sexual offense support advocate.

For more information on sexual misconduct policies, where to get help, and reporting information, please refer to www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Inclusion of diverse learning needs

Any student who thinks they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) office as soon as possible. The DSS office is located at 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall Suite 130, Phone: 302-831-4643, fax: 302-831-3261, DSS website (www.udel.edu/DSS/). You may contact DSS at dssoffice@udel.edu.

Discrimination

The University of Delaware does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, religion, age, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in its employment, educational programs and activities, admissions policies, and scholarship and loan programs as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies. The University of Delaware also prohibits unlawful harassment including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

For inquiries or complaints related to non-discrimination policies, please contact: Interim Director, Institutional Equity & Title IX Coordinator - Fatimah Stone titleixcoordinator@udel.edu, 305 Hullahen Hall Newark, DE 19716, (302) 831-8063.

For complaints related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact: Director, Office of Disability Support Services, Anne L. Jannarone, M.Ed., Ed.S. - ajannaro@udel.edu Alison Hall, Suite 130, Newark, DE 19716 (302) 831-4643 OR contact the U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights (wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm)

Course schedule and readings

For each week's topic, I have selected a handful of what I view as the most significant and path-defining works. I have tried to include both classic and more contemporary readings, from a range of methodological and theoretical perspectives. But, to be clear: this is one person's selection, and only a tiny fraction of what we could have covered if we only had unlimited time. So, please think of this *not* as an encyclopedia of the subfield, but rather like a playlist that features some (but not all) of the greatest hits, curated to flow nicely and give a sense of a larger genre. The "recommended" reading on Canvas includes some of the many other books and articles that could have easily been on this list, and I encourage you to look through those pages for topics that pique your interest.

Our schedule is not set in stone. It is possible that there may be some changes, but you can expect these to be announced in class and via email with adequate notice. Finally, readings marked with a [C] in the list below are available on Canvas. If you cannot find a reading, ask me for help.

Feb. 18: Organizational meeting

Note that there are some non-technical guides to (a) quantitative methods, and (b) writing papers in political science on the Canvas page, for those of you who want a refresher or advice on the basics.

Feb. 18: Frameworks for analyzing American politics

- (1) *Federalist* #1, 10, 39, 47-9, & 51. <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers>
- (2) Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chs 1, 7-8, 12, 19-28 (skim the rest).
- (3) Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- (4) Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper and Row. Chs 1-2. [C]

Feb. 25: Public opinion

- (1) Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics". In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter. New York, NY: Free Press pp. 206–261. [C]
- (2) Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chs 2-3, 6-9 (skim Chs 4-5 for a response to Converse).
- (3) Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Preface, Chs 1 & 3. [C]

Mar. 4: Political participation

- (1) Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):271–294.
- (2) Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan. Ch 6. [C]
- (3) Barreto, Matt A. 2007. "¡Si Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters." *American Political Science Review* 101(3):425–441.
- (4) Gerber, Alan S., 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(1):33–48.
- (5) Valentino, Nicholas A., Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorowicz and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. "Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 73(1):156–170.

Mar. 11: Voting

- (1) Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper and Row. Ch 3. [C]
- (2) Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch 6. [C]
- (3) Bartels, Larry M. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(1):35–50.
- (4) Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chs 1-2. [C]
- (5) Achen, Christopher H. and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch 5. [C]
- (6) Mutz, Diana C. 2018. "Status Threat, not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(19):E4330–E4339.

Mar. 18: Candidates and campaigns

- (1) Huber, Gregory A. and Kevin Arceneaux. 2007. "Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4):957–977.
- (2) Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- (3) Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of House Elections, 1946-86." *American Political Science Review* 83:773–793.
- (4) Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2004. "Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2):264–280.

Mar. 25: The media

- (1) Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chs 2, 3, & 7. [C]
- (2) Lenz, Gabriel S. 2009. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4):821–837.
- (3) Prior, Markus. 2005. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3):577–592.
- (4) Gilens, Martin, Lynn Vavreck and Martin Cohen. 2007. "The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000." *Journal of Politics* 69(4):1160–1175.
- (5) Hayes, Danny and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2018. "The Decline of Local News and Its Effects: New Evidence from Longitudinal Data." *Journal of Politics* 80(1):332–336.

Apr. 8: Congress

- (1) Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch 1. [C]
- (2) Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chs 2-3. [C]
- (3) Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chs 1-3, 5. [C]
- (4) Lee, Frances E. 2009. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chs 1, 4. [C]

Apr. 15: The presidency

- (1) *Federalist* #70. <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers>
- (2) Neustadt, Richard E. 1960. *Presidential Power*. New York, NY: Wiley. Chs 1, 3. <https://heinonline-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Contents?handle=hein.presidents/prdtpwr0001>
- (3) Kernell, Samuel. 2007. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. Chs 1, 2, & 4. [C]
- (4) Howell, William G. 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chs 1, 2, & 4. <https://www-jstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/j.ctt15hvxnf>

Apr. 22: The courts

- (1) *Federalist* #78. <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers>
- (2) Segal, Jeffrey A., Lee Epstein, Charles M. Cameron and Harold J. Spaeth. 1995. "Ideological Values and the Votes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices Revisited." *Journal of Politics* 57(3):812–823.
- (3) Segal, Jeffrey A. and Harold J. Spaeth. 1996. "The Influence of *Stare Decisis* on the Votes of United States Supreme Court Justices." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(4):971–1003.
- (4) Epstein, Lee and Jack Knight. 1998. *The Choices Justices Make*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Chs 1 & 3. [C]
- (5) Bartels, Brandon L. 2009. "The Constraining Capacity of Legal Doctrine on the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review* 103(3):474–495.

Apr. 23: Conference proposals due at 5pm on Canvas**Apr. 29: Parties**

- (1) Revisit your notes on *Federalist* #10 from Feb. 18.
- (2) Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chs 1 & 2. [C]
- (3) Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper and Row. Chs 7 & 8. [C]
- (4) Bawn, Kathleen, 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(3):571–597.
- (5) Mason, Liliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chs 3-5 & Appendix. [C]

May 6: Interest groups

- (1) Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chs 1 & 6. [C]
- (2) Hansen, John Mark. 1985. "The Political Economy of Group Membership." *American Political Science Review* 79(1):79–96.
- (3) Strolovitch, Dara Z. 2006. "Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender." *Journal of Politics* 68(4):894–910.
- (4) Hall, Richard L. and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *American Political Science Review* 84(3): 797–820.

May 13: Representation and responsiveness

- (1) Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89:543–564.
- (2) Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3):564–581.
- (3) Griffin, John D. and Brian Newman. 2007. "The Unequal Representation of Latinos and Whites." *Journal of Politics* 69(4):1032–1046.
- (4) Broockman, David E. and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review* 112(3):542–563.

May 20: Research presentations