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**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Government**  
**American Politics Field Seminar – Gov. 2305**  
**Fall 2010**  
**Monday, 2-4 p.m., Room k107, CGIS**

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**NOTE reading assignment for first class session: September 1, 2010**

This seminar is designed to acquaint students with classic, recent, and current research approaches in American politics. The goal is to acquaint students with various lines of substantive inquiry in political science regarding American politics, as well as the many frameworks and methods used to study American political activity, institutions, and governance. In one semester, the seminar cannot provide a complete survey of the field. Students planning to be examined in American politics should read other books and articles on their own, and review additional materials included in versions of this seminar offered in the past few years as well as reading lists of peer universities. Other courses in American politics are also, of course, essential for learning the field. This course is also designed to begin your transition from a consumer to a producer of knowledge.

**Requirements**

We expect everyone to read and reflect on the required reading prior to class. All materials not available on JSTOR or some other electronic source will be available on the course website. The books with longer assignments are available in the Textbook section of the Coop, and many are available as used copies in on-line sources such as Amazon.com, Alibris.com, Abebooks.com, or Barnes and Nobles.

**Books on Order at Coop**

Bruce Ackerman, *We the People: Transformations*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

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

Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*. Russel Sage and Princeton University Press, 2008.

Daniel Carpenter, *Reputation and Power*. Princeton University Press 2010.

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. Yale University Press, 2004.

James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, *Federalist Papers*. Any complete edition

Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*. Princeton University Press 2001.

Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*. University Press of Kansas, 2008.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Any complete edition.

Lynn Vavrick, *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality*. Harvard University Press, 1995

Keith Whittington, *Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

John Zaller, *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

### **Memos**

Each student will also be responsible, for 9 of the 12 weeks, for a one-page memo to be turned in by midnight on Sunday (i.e. the day before the class). We will set up a drop box on the course website, so students can read each others' memos. Each memo will begin with a key question that you would use if you were to run that day's discussion; it should also include observations about why the question is important, what points you would hope to elicit during the discussion, and how the question is connected with that week's (and possibly previous weeks') readings.

At the end of each class session, be prepared to state orally what you would do if you were to develop a research project on the topic of that week's readings and discussion.

### **Final Paper**

A longer paper, approximately 20 pages, is due by December 21, 2010. Its purpose is to identify a research question and propose a research design that will address the question. The paper should identify some aspect of American politics or government which you would like to investigate, justify its importance and interest to readers, review and interpret the relevant literature, and develop a significant hypothesis related to your topic. You should indicate the kind of data and evidence you would use, even if you cannot specify it exactly. *Your paper should then include two research designs*: the first would be undertaken by a researcher with unlimited financial resources (but staying within the bounds

of ethical research); the second is a practicable design that could be undertaken by a graduate student with the usual limited financial resources. *The emphasis of this paper should not be the literature review but should instead be the research designs.*

If you are writing a research paper for another course, you may combine the assignment with this one if you first clear the plan with us and the professor in the other course. If you combine the assignments, you will ordinarily be expected to actually carry out the research project. You should plan to submit a preliminary memo about your paper to both instructors by December 6, 2010. Late submissions of proposals and final papers are not permitted.

### **Evaluation**

Memos, contributions to class discussion, and the final research paper will be given equal weight in your grade for this seminar.

### **Syllabus**

#### **September 1: Constitutional design and structure**

*Federalist Papers*, Nos. 11, 23, 30, 39, 51, 84.

Ackerman, *We the People: Transformations*. chaps. 1, 2, 4, 10.

#### **September 13: Civic participation: individuals in society**

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 9, "How the Enlightenment, Habits..."

Vol. II, part 2, chaps. 1, 2, 8

Vol. II, part 4, chaps. 2, 6

Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, *Voice and Equality*, chaps. 12, 13, 14, 16.

V.O. Key, 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Knopf. chaps. 1, 15, 24.

Daniel Hopkins. 2010. "Politicized Places: Explaining Where and When Immigrants Provoke Local Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 104 (01): 40-60.

#### **September 20: Civic participation: groups and organized interests**

*Federalist*, No. 10.

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 4

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 6, "Activity Prevailing..."

Vol. II, part 2, chaps. 5, 7

Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler, 2009. *Connected*, Little, Brown & Co., chap. 6.

Robert Dahl, 1961. *Who Governs*, Yale University Press, chaps. 8, 12, 16, 24, 27, 28.

Andrea Campbell, 2003. *How Policies Make Citizens*, Princeton University Press, chaps. 6, 7.

Martin Gilens, 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69 (5): 778-796.

### **September 27: Public opinion and media**

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*,

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 5, "The People's Choice..." "Elements Which May Provide..."

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 7, "Tyranny of the Majority," "The Power Exercised by the Majority..." "The Greatest Danger to..."

Zaller, *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, chap. 1-5, 9.

Markus Prior 2005. "News v. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (3): 594-609.

Matthew Baum 2002. "Sex, Lies, and War..." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 91-109.

Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1987. "Networks in Context: The Social Flow of Political Information." *American Political Science Review* 81(4): 1197-1216.

### **October 4: The role of identity in politics**

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*,

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 10, "Situation of the Black Race"

Helen Marrow 2009. "Immigrant Bureaucratic Incorporation: The Dual Roles of Professional Missions and Government Policies." *American Sociological Review* 74(5): 756-76.

Paul Frymer 2003. "Acting When Elected Officials Won't: Federal Courts and Civil Rights Enforcement in U.S. Labor Unions, 1935-85." *American Political Science Review* 97(03): 483-499.

Michael Tesler and David Sears. forthcoming 2010. *Obama's Race*. University of Chicago Press, chaps. 3 and 4.

Jane Mansbridge, 1986. *Why We Lost the E.R. A.*, University of Chicago Press, chaps. 10 and 11.

Melissa Miller et al. 2010, "Testing the Saturday Night Live Hypothesis: Fairness and Bias in Newspaper Coverage of Hillary Clinton's Presidential Campaign," *Politics and Gender*. 6: 169-198.

### **October 18: Political parties**

Anthony Downs, 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Harper and Row, chaps. 1, 7, 8, 12, 14.

Aldrich. *Why Parties?* chaps. 1 and 2.

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. University of Chicago Press. chaps 2 and 5.

Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 1991. "Patterns of Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (1): 228-278.

### **October 25: Congressional lawmaking**

*Federalist* # 52, 54, 62, 63.

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*,

Vol. I, part 1, chap. 8, "Legislative Powers,"

Vol. I, part 2, chap. 6, "The General Tendency of Laws..."

David Mayhew, 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, Yale University Press, chap. 1.

Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*, chaps. 1, 6, Epilogue.

Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins, 1993. *Legislative Leviathan*, University of California Press, chaps. 5 and 7.

Keith Krehbiel, 1998. *Pivotal Politics*, University of Chicago Press, chaps. 2 and 4.

### **November 1: The role of the president**

Skowronek, 2008. *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*, chaps. 1, 2, 3.

Richard Neustadt, 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, Free Press, chaps. 1, 3, 4, 5, 13.

William Howell, 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton University Press. chaps: 1, 4, 5.

**November 8: Bureaucracy and agencies**

Carpenter, *Reputation and Power*, Introduction, chaps. 1, 4, 7, 10.

James Q. Wilson, 1991, *Bureaucracy*, Basic Books, chaps. 2, 6, 9, 10, 17.

Terry Moe, 1989. "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure" in *Can the Government Govern?* John Chubb and Paul Peterson, eds. Brookings Institution Press.

**November 15: Courts and separation of powers**

*Federalist*, No.78.

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*,

Vol. I, part 1, chap. 6

Vol. 1, part 1, chap. 8, "The Federal Courts" and "High Standing of the Supreme Court..."

Whittington, *Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy*, chaps. 1, 5, 6.

Jeffrey Segal, 1997. "Separation-of-Powers Games in the Positive Theory of Congress and Courts." *American Political Science Review* 91(1): 28-44.

**November 22: Partisanship and ideology**

Angus Campbell et al. 1960. *The American Voter*. Wiley, chaps: 6-8, 10.

Phillip Converse. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter. Free Press.

Jennifer Hochschild. 1981. *What's Fair: American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Harvard University Press, chaps: 6 and 7.

Green, Palmquist, Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, chaps: 1-5.

**November 29: Elections and voting behavior**

*Federalist*, No. 14.

Tocqueville, *Democracy...*,  
Vol. I, part 1, chap. 8, "Election of the President"  
Vol. I, part 2, chap. 5, "'Influence of American Democracy...'"  
Vol. I, part 2, chap. 6, "Activity Prevailing in All Parts..."

Richard Fenno, 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*, Little, Brown, chaps. 4 and 5.

Vavreck. *The Message Matters*, chaps: 1-3, 6.

Samuel Popkin, 1993. "Information Shortcuts and the Reasoning Voter," in Bernard Grofman, ed. *Information, Participation, and Choice*, University of Michigan Press.

Larry Bartels, 2008. *Unequal Democracy*, Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton University Press, chaps. 2, 4, 6.