

V3  
9/02/21

Harvard University  
Department of Government  
Government 2335: Power in (Mostly) American Society  
Fall 2021

Jennifer Hochschild  
Tuesday, 9:45 to 11:45  
CGIS, Room XX

[hochschild@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:hochschild@gov.harvard.edu)

K 412, CGIS

Office hours: Monday, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; sign up on

<https://appoint.ly/s/JenniferHochschild/Conversation>

**NOTE reading assignment for first class, Tuesday, September 7**

#### PURPOSES

The concept of “power” is central to the discipline of political science and the practice of governance, but its meaning, measurement, causes, and effects are all elusive. The seminar’s goal is to give students clearer ways of thinking about power, preparatory to doing research throughout your careers that will in one way or another revolve around making sense of and using the concept.

To this end, we will pursue three more specific purposes. One is *empirical* – to examine how and when power is exercised, by whom, to what effect. The works focus mainly although not exclusively on the United States, and consider the power inscribed in institutions and rules, individual actors or groups, ideas or cultures, or emotions or preferences.

A second purpose is *analytic* – to compare definitions of power, ways to measure it, theories about its origins and effects, and methodological choices for studying it. The first half of the course follows in roughly chronological order the ways in which political scientists have developed analyses of power; the second half addresses various contemporary research programs.

A third purpose is *normative* – to explore the virtues and flaws of particular theories of power, structures or modes of exercising it, and distributions of power resources. The goal here is to develop arguments about desirable (and feasible?) changes in creating, distributing, and using power, and to consider how changes might be studied, challenged, implemented, and improved.

#### TASKS

*Active reading:* Participants read and discuss the equivalent of one substantial book or five articles per week. Readings are listed below.

*Defender of the Text:* Each student has this role for one or two sessions (depending on the number of participants). There is no initial presentation; instead, throughout the class session, the Defender makes the best case possible for the assigned readings. This role does not preclude criticism--authors are usually their own best critic--but it does imply that criticism should be "internal" rather than "external."

The purpose of this role is to encourage you to escape the classic graduate student dilemma of honing critical skills to a razor-sharp edge while leaving constructive skills dull and unpolished. (I will assign dates for each student's Defender role, so you don't get to defend the texts or arguments you like best.)

*Discussion questions:* For 3 of the 12 class weeks, each student submits one discussion question to the Canvas website, with (only) one or two sentences about why you want to class to address that issue. That submission will be due by Sunday at 6 p.m, before each Tuesday class.

For an additional (separate) 3 weeks, each student responds with one or two sentences to one of the questions submitted for that week – with the intent to start the ensuing class discussion. So it could be a return question, an initial answer, an observation about a relevant reading, etc. The response will be due by Monday at 6 p.m., before each Tuesday class. The purpose here is to foster the transition from student to teacher.

*Instant research project:* In the final 10 minutes of each class period, a small group of (i.e. 2) students gives a three-minute (or 2-slide) statement of a research project that could grow out of the readings and discussion for that session. The purpose here is to foster the transition from consumer to producer of scholarship on power.

*Final project:* Each student also either 1) writes a seminar paper (no more than 8000 words), 2) designs a course outline, including a semi-complete syllabus and introductory lecture (with slides), for a course on Power, or 3) prepares written testimony (with appropriate graphical displays) for a Congressional hearing on a topic growing out of the course readings and discussions.

For the paper, once you have chosen a specific, well-bounded issue or topic, you should ask and answer questions such as: How does power work in this circumstance? Who or what exercises it? How do I know that? To what effect? Should the power exercised in this case be maintained, strengthened, resisted, abolished, or otherwise changed? Under what conditions do my answers to the previous questions hold? What is this a case of? How does this case lead us to conceive of power more generally?

For the course outline, you will need to 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. – all of which are built around some framework that includes the word "Power." You might also develop pedagogical and/or technological innovations. The course outline should explain the reasons for your course structure, particular topics, and crucial readings and assignments. The introductory lecture (and accompanying slides) is intended to persuade students to take this course, give them a

sense of why it is important and what they will learn, and how they will study and deploy the concept of power.

For the testimony, you will be trying to persuade members of a Congressional committee -- people who by definition exert a certain kind of political power -- to pass a piece of legislation, take a position on an important issue, not take action or a position, or otherwise exercise their power as legislators. Your goal will be a particular substantive outcome, but you will need to take into account the electoral, partisan, institutional, and personal considerations that will contribute to each committee member's reaction to your testimony. The media will be interested in your testimony, so you also need to consider public persuasion and the public reaction.

### **GRADES**

The paper, syllabus and lecture, or testimony and visual display count for roughly one-half of the final grade; class participation (a combination of discussion questions and response, effectiveness as Defender of the Text, instant research proposals, and engagement with discussions) determine the other half of the grade. You must complete all of the work in each component to pass the course.

I reserve the right *not* to grade in accord with an absolutely strict arithmetic average, so that I can take into account such things as extra effort, trajectory during the semester, unusual circumstances that affect performance, and so on. Ongoing and persistent class participation probably weighs more heavily in my evaluation than the final product, if there is a discrepancy between the two indicators.

### **BOOKS AND ARTICLES**

To some degree, this is a "great books" course. We do not read all of any book, but we read several chapters in many. I list here the books in which we read 3 or more chapters (or major Parts); I do *not* expect you to buy them all, or even any – but if you want to build up your political science library, these might well belong in it. You can find used copies of many on Amazon.com or other online book sellers.

Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. *Democracy for Realists* (Princeton U. Press, 2016)

Caro, Robert. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate* (Vintage Books, 2003)

Carpenter, Daniel. *Reputation and Power* (Princeton U. Press, 2010)

Dahl, Robert. *Who Governs?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Yale U. Press, 2005)

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage Books, 1995)

Gaventa, John. *Power and Powerlessness* (U. of Illinois Press, 1982)

Gerstle, Gary. *Liberty and Coercion* (Princeton U. Press, 2015)

Gilens, Martin. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America* (Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton U. Press, 2012)

Hirschman, Albert. *The Rhetoric of Reaction* (Harvard U Press, 1991)

Huntington, Samuel. *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*. (Harvard U. Press, 1981)

Kim, Claire Jean. *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (Yale U. Press, 2003)

Levinson, Sanford and Jack Balkin, *Democracy and Dysfunction* (U. of Chicago Press, 2019)

Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (Crown, 2018)

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract* (Cornell U. Press, 1997)

Morgan, Edmund. *American Slavery, American Freedom* (Norton, 2003)

McCarty, Nolan et al., *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (MIT Press, 2016)

Pierson, Paul. *Politics in Time* (Princeton U. Press, 2005)

Rae, Douglas. *City: Urbanism and Its End* (Yale U. Press, 2003)

Rodden, Jonathan. *Why Cities Lose* (Basic Books, 2019)

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (Harvard U. Press, 1992)

Skowronick, Stephen. (Harvard U. Press, 1993 [or 1997 ed.]

Whittington, Keith. *Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy* (Princeton U. Press, 2007)

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas* (various publishers, e.g. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966)

More generally, articles and book sections will be available through links in the syllabus, on the Canvas website, on JSTOR, or directly online.

## TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

### September 7, 2021: Introduction, and the Power of Idea

Albert Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction*, chs. 2, 3, 4

Thomas Rochon, *Culture Moves* (Princeton U. Press, 1998), chs. 1, 2, 3

Robert Darnton, "Blogging, Now and Then" *New York Review of Books*, March 18, 2010  
<https://www.nybooks-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/daily/2010/03/18/blogging-now-and-then/>

### September 14: First and Second Faces of Power

Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science*, 2 (3): 201-215.

Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* chs. 1, 7, 8, 12, 15-19, 24, 27-28.

Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* 1962. 56 (4): 947-952.

If time: Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework," *APSR* 1963. 57 (3): 632-642.

### September 21: Third and Fourth Faces of Power

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, Preface, chs. 1, 6, 7, 8, 10.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: ch. 1 of Part 1; ch. 1 of Part 2; Parts 3, 4.

### **September 28: The Power of Structures I**

Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*: Introduction, Chs. 2, 5, 9, Conclusion.

Terry Moe, "Power and Political Institutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, 2005. 3(2): 215-233.

Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion*, Introduction, Part I, Part IV, Conclusion.

### **October 5: The Power of Structures II**

Arthur Lupia, "Busy Voters, Agenda Control, and the Power of Information," *APSR*, 1992. 86 (2): 390-403.

Sean Gallimard and Jeffrey Jenkins, "Negative Agenda Control in the Senate and House: Fingerprints of Majority Party Power," *Journal of Politics* 2007. 69 (3): 689-700.

Thomas Dietz, Elinor Ostrom, and Paul Stern, "The Struggle to Govern the Commons," *Science* Dec. 12, 2003. 302 (5652): 1907-1912.

Elinor Ostrom, "A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems," *Science*, July 24, 2009. 325 (5939): 419-422.

Daniel Carpenter, *Reputation and Power*, chs. 1, 5, 12.

### **October 8**

Submit to me, electronically, 2 or 3 topics for possible final project – one paragraph each, with Big Question, initial idea of how to study it, possible source of evidence, and speculation about what you might find. Also, make an appointment on Appoint.ly for my office hours over the next 2 weeks to discuss these ideas.

### **October 12: The Power of Time**

Samuel Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*, chs. 1, 3 (pp. 31-41), 4.

Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, chs. 1-3

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time*, Introduction, chs. 1, 2, 3.

Keith Whittington, *Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy*, chs. 5, 6.

### **October 19: The Power of Space**

Douglas Rae, *City*, chs. 1, 2, 3, 8, 11

Katherine Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*, chs. 5, 6.

Jennifer Hochschild, "Why Now? What Next? Constitutional Crisis in American Politics," in Mark Tushnet, Sanford Levinson, and Mark Graber, eds. *Constitutional Democracy in Crisis?* (Oxford U. Press, 2018), pp. 85-102.

Jonathan Rodden, *Why Cities Lose*, chs. 1, 6, 7.

Bonus reading: Raj Chetty et al., [The Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility](#) NBER Working Paper No. 25147 | October 2018.

### October 22

Submit, on Canvas, one paragraph and one graphic of your plan (or at most, 2 possible plans) for the final project -- with your classmates as the intended audience. We will break into small groups (2 or 3 in each) on October 26 for ~ ½ hour for you to discuss these plans with each other.

### October 26: The Power of Contingency and Personality

Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt (U. of Chicago Press, 1968), chs. 5, 6.

Robert Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate*, chaps. 37-41.

Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi, eds. *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen* (NYU Press, 2007):

- a) David Mayhew, "Events as Causes: The Case of American Politics," ch. 4, pp. 99-137.
- b) Susan Stokes, "Region, Contingency, and Democratization," ch. 6, pp. 171-201.

### November 2: Power and Gender

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (be sure to read notes as well as text)

Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," *Signs*, 1982. 7 (3): 515-544.

Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, 1991.43( 6), 1241-1299. Parts I, II, and Conclusion..

Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005," *APSR* 2012. 106 (3): 548-569.

### November 9: Power and Race or Ethnicity

Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, chaps. 1, 3, 11-18.

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, ch. 1 **CHECK**

Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City*, chs. 1, 2, 4 **(CHECK)**.

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

Ismail White et al., "Selling Out? The Politics of Negotiating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-interest," *APSR* 2014. 108 (4): 783-800.

### **November 16: Power, and Wealth or Class**

Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848. (NOTE: you can skip section on “Socialist and Communist Literature”)

Nolan McCarty, et al., *Polarized America 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, chs. 2, 3, and 6.

Martin Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*, chs. 2, 3, 4.

Peter Enns and Christopher Wlezien, eds. *Who Gets Represented?* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2011):

- a) Wesley Hussey and John Zaller, “Who Do Parties Represent?” ch. 11, pp. 311-344;
- b) James Stimson, “The Issues in Representation,” ch. 12, pp. 347-360.

### **November 19**

Submit to me a one-page update of your plan for the final project: what progress have you made? Where are you stuck or puzzled? What can I, or peers, or experts, or librarians, or statistical consultants, or other faculty, or . . . help you with, in order to make further progress on the project?

### **November 23: The Power of Identity, Connection, and Context**

Dora Costa and Matthew Kahn, “Health, Wartime Stress, and Unit Cohesion: Evidence from Union Army Veterans,” *Demography* 2010. 47 (1): 45-66.

Andrew Gelman, et al., “Rich State, Poor State, Red State, Blue State: What’s the Matter with Connecticut?” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2007. 2 (4): 345–367.

Chris Achen and Larry Bartels, *Democracy for Realists*, chs. 8-11.

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

### **November 30: Power to the people?**

David Dorn et al., “Importing Political Polarization? The Electoral Consequences of Rising Trade Exposure,” *American Economic Review*, 2020. 110 (10): 3139-3183.

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, chs. 4, 5, 6 **CHECK**

Shanto Iyengar and Douglas Massey, “Scientific Communication in a Post-truth Society,” *PNAS*, 2019. 116 (16): 7656-7661.

Sanford Levinson and Jack Balkin, *Democracy and Dysfunction*, sections 3, 4, 6.

### **December 8, by 5 p.m**

Final project due – submitted electronically to me, preferably as Word (not PDF) document, unless there are issues of formatting or display.