American Political Institutions and Behavior

This course provides an introduction to the evolution and current state of the academic literature on American Politics. The course emphasizes breadth over depth (although time constraints prevent us from examining all areas of American politics). The first part of the course focuses on political behavior, while the second part emphasizes political institutions. The class meets on Tuesdays from 2:00-4:50 in Scott Hall 319.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss, in detail, all of the assigned readings. Students may be asked to present assigned readings without prior notice. In so doing, students should be prepared to discuss main themes, contributions, problems, and unanswered questions. Additionally, each week, one (or more) student(s) will be assigned the task of writing a brief discussion paper about a specific reading (or a few specific readings). The paper should summarize the reading(s) and identify weaknesses and unresolved questions (no more than 2 pages double spaced, with references, page numbers, and name/date). Papers should be e-mailed to all class members by Sunday, 3:00PM. Late papers will not be accepted for credit by the Professor. There will be a final examination with questions similar to those asked on the comprehensive exam. The course grade will be determined as follows: class participation (30%), the short papers (20%), and the final exam (50%). (We will discuss the date of the final exam which will be a take-home exam, although tentatively plan on Wednesday, December 12th.)

Many of the assigned books are available at Norris Bookstore (or can be bought on-line). Most articles are available at JSTOR or other sources accessible via the Northwestern library. Books and articles that are difficult to obtain will be made available from the Professor the week before the class in which they will be discussed.

Prior to the first class, students are expected to complete the below readings, which will be very briefly discussed in class. Students also are expected to complete the below assignment.


Examine the organized sections of the APSA at: https://www.apsanet.org/sections. We will discuss political economy, political psychology, political sociology, political history, political philosophy, and other multi-disciplinary relationships.


**Assignment:** Each student should choose one article from the *American Political Science Review*'s November 2006 issue on the Evolution of Political Science. The student will write a 1 page, double spaced, overview of it. Submit papers to all class participants by 3:00PM on September 30, and come ready to very briefly discuss.

**Class 1, October 2. American Political Institutions and Culture**

The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution

*The Federalist Papers*, Numbers 10, 51, 70, and 78

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Part I, Sections 2, 3, and 5; Part II, Sections 3-9 (all from Volume 1)

Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), Chapter 1


**Class 2, October 9. Political Participation**

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), Chapter 14


Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy* (1993), Chapters 1-2, 8


**Class 3, October 16. Public Opinion.**


Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder, *News That Matters* (1987), Chapters 1-3, 7, 12


**Class 4, October 23. Voting Behavior**

Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (1954), Chapters 1, 6-7, 11-12, 14

Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, *The American Voter* (1960), Chapters 1-4, 6-7, 19-20

Morris Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981), Chapters 1, 5, 9, 10


**Class 5, October 30. Political Parties**


Matthew Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort* (2009), Chapters 2, 3, 7

**Class 6, November 6. Interest Groups**


E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People* (1960), Chapters 1, 2, 5


Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), Chapters 1, 2

Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism*, 2nd ed (1979), Chapters 3, 10


Dara Z. Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy* (2007), Chapters 1, 2, 4


**Class 7, November 13. Congress (and Public Policy)**


**Class 8, November 20. The Presidency and the Bureaucracy (part 1)**


Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, “Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?” *APSR* 93 (1999): 99-114


**Class 9, November 27. Bureaucracy (Party 2) and the Courts**


Class 10, December 4. Reading Week. Will meet if needed.