

SYLLABUS

17.20: Introduction to American Politics

Spring 2016

Professor: Devin Caughey
Lecture: TuTh 4–5pm, Room 4-237
<https://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/sp16/17.20>

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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the academic study of American politics and to the discipline of political science more generally. We will cover a range of substantive topics, including the cultural and constitutional foundations of American politics; its institutional structures, such as Congress and the presidency; the activities of strategic political elites; the political behavior of ordinary American citizens; and contemporary debates over such important issues as money in politics, partisan polarization, racism, and immigration. These topics will be examined using a variety of theoretical and empirical frameworks, with particular emphasis on the advantages and limitations of analyzing political actors as rational and strategic decision-makers.

This being a **communication-intensive** HASS subject, written assignments of various lengths are an integral part of the learning process, and we will be working closely with a writing advisor from Writing, Rhetoric and Professional Development (WRAP). Another important part of the course is the assigned readings, which consist primarily of selections from scholarly books and articles. There will be daily reading quizzes, but no midterm or final exams.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the essential formal and informal features of U.S. politics, including federalism, the three branches of government, political parties, and American political culture.
- Understand core theoretical concepts and analytical frameworks of political science, including the various manifestations of power; coordination and collective-action problems; and formal and informal institutions.
- Apply these theoretical frameworks to specific episodes and phenomena in American politics.
- Communicate to others their insights into American politics, by means of oral and written compositions of various styles and lengths.

Expectations

- Students are expected to **treat each other with respect**, listen attentively when others are speaking, and avoid personal attacks. At the same time, all students should feel comfortable expressing their opinions, political or otherwise, as long as they do so in an appropriate manner.
- **Laptops, phones, and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away** during lecture unless I ask you to take them out. This requirement may seem onerous or old-fashioned, but in my experience it is the best way to foster discussion and mutual engagement. If you have a particular need to use electronics, please come talk to me outside of class.
- **Plagiarism will not be tolerated** in this course. As a general rule, you should never take credit for words or ideas that are not your own, and you should give your readers enough information to evaluate the source and quality of your evidence. Self-plagiarism (reusing material you have written in another context) is also not allowed. For more information on plagiarism and academic integrity, consult <http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/index.html>.
- We will be using the Chicago author-date citation style in this course. For details on this style, consult <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.libproxy.mit.edu> (click [here](#) for an overview of the author-date system specifically).

Assessment

Grades in this course are based on six components: reading quizzes (20%), a long paper (30%), two shorter papers (30%), a news report (5%), a debate (5%), and recitation participation (10%).

1. **Reading quizzes (20%):** It is essential that you come to each class meeting having carefully read *all* the assigned texts. To incentivize you to do so, I will administer a short closed-book reading quiz at the beginning of each class. The quizzes are designed to be easy for those who have done the reading but difficult for those who have not. Simply taking the quiz gets you half credit; students who miss the quiz entirely will receive no credit. Unless an unforeseeable disaster befalls you, I will excuse absences only if you ask more than 24 hours ahead of time.
2. **Long Paper (15% draft, 15% final):** The course culminates in a longish (3,000–3,500 words) paper, a draft of which will be submitted about a month before the final version is due.
3. **Two Short Papers (15% each):** The short papers are designed to prepare students to write the long paper. They will be between 1,000 and 1,500 words in length (4–6 double-spaced pages).

4. **News Report (5%):** Once over the course of the semester, students will identify a recent news story that relates to the lecture readings and make a brief report on the story before the class.
5. **Debate (5%):** Students will participate in an in-class debate on a substantive issue.
6. **Recitation Attendance and Participation (10%):** Recitation attendance is mandatory, and students are expected to be active and productive contributors to discussion in recitation.

Assignment Dates

- February 28: Short paper #1 due
- March 20: Short paper #2 due
- April 24: Draft of long paper due
- May 12: Final version of long paper due

Written assignments must be uploaded as PDFs to the Homework section of the course Stellar site. **Assignments must be uploaded by 11:59PM** on the day that they are due. Assignments submitted after midnight will be immediately penalized one-third of a grade (e.g., A to A-), and each eight hours the penalty increases by a third of a grade (e.g., an A paper turned in at 8:00AM will be marked down to a B+).

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Coop and have been placed on reserve in the Dewey Library. **Make sure to get the correct edition of each book.**

- Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, eds. 2015. *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Robert A. Dahl. 2003. *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?* 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP.
- James A. Stimson. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP.

Writing Advisor

We are fortunate to be working with WRAP writing advisor Kim Vaeth, who will be actively involved in the writing aspects of the course and will be making several visits to recitations. Students must **meet with the writing advisor at least once before spring break**, though many of you may find it useful to meet more than once. To spread out the workload, half the students in the class will be assigned to meet with the writing advisor before the first paper, and half before the second paper.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course is divided into four parts: Foundations, Institutions, Mass Opinion & Behavior, and Debates. The course schedule below lists the readings required for each class session, followed by a few questions to consider as you work through the readings. For some of the earlier sessions, I have also included an introductory paragraph to help orient you. Readings posted on the course Stellar site are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Part I: Foundations

1 Course Introduction (Tuesday, February 2, 2016)

Readings (19 pages):

- * Hans Noel. 2010. "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't." *The Forum* 8 (3).

2 Analytic Foundations (Thursday, February 4, 2016)

The readings for this lecture introduce some of the core analytic and theoretical foundations of political science. Garrett Hardin provides a classic perspective on one of the fundamental problems of political life, the *problem of collective action*, and discusses the role of coercion in solving it. John Gaventa discusses three alternative views of *power*, a concept so central to political science that some have suggested that the discipline be defined as the study of power. Finally, Paul Pierson explores another core concept, *institutions*, focusing on the mechanisms by which political institutions arise, persist, and develop.

Readings (46 pages):

- * Garrett Hardin. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 (3859): 1243–1248.
- * John Gaventa. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press, pages 3–25.
- * Paul Pierson. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 251–267.

Reading Questions:

- Why does cooperation often unravel, even when everyone would be better off by cooperating?
- How do institutions help overcome collective-action problems?
- Why is it often so difficult to change institutions once they are in place?
- How do institutions reflect and reinforce the power relations in place at their creation?

3 Democracy and Liberalism (Tuesday, February 9, 2016)

The readings for this weeks introduce two central concepts in political theory: democracy and liberalism. Both the definition of democracy and justifications for its superiority over alternative forms of

government are discussed in the assigned selections by Robert Dahl. The next two thinkers, Alexis de Tocqueville and Louis Hartz, offer complementary interpretations of the specific form that democracy takes in the United States. Tocqueville, writing in the 1840s, argues that the most important fact about the United States was the “equality of conditions” that prevailed there. Hartz, building on Tocqueville, argues that a lack of peasants and aristocrats truncated the range of political conflict in the United States and led to the hegemony of liberalism, a political ideology associated with the middle classes that emphasizes individual freedom, legal equality, and limited government.

Readings (39 pages):

- * Robert A. Dahl. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. Chapters 4 (“What Is Democracy?”) and 5 (“Why Democracy?”), pages 35–61.
- * Alexis de Tocqueville. 2004. “Democracy in America.” Chap. 7 in *American Social and Political Thought: A Reader*, edited by Andreas Hess, 33–38. New York: New York University Press.
- * Louis Hartz. 2011. “Excerpt from *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution*.” In *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, edited by David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, 3–8. New York: W. W. Norton.

Reading Questions:

- To what extent do democracy, equality, and liberty depend on each other? To what extent are they incompatible?
- How do contemporary policy debates, such as those over gay marriage and the Affordable Care Act, implicate trade-offs between these values?
- How does American political culture influence the set of policy options up for serious debate in the United States? What policy options are kept off the table?

4 Tensions in American Political Culture (Thursday, February 11, 2016)

Readings (40 pages):

- * Herbert McClosky and John Zaller. 1984. *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, pages 1–12 and 161–88.
- * Rogers M. Smith. 2011. “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America.” In *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, edited by David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, 17–27. New York: W. W. Norton.

Reading Questions:

- How are citizens’ attitudes towards a given policy—say, welfare or affirmative action—influenced by the political values they use to evaluate it?

Tuesday, February 16, 2016: NO CLASS (Monday Schedule)

Part II: Institutions

5 The U.S. Constitution I (Thursday, February 18, 2016)

The U.S. Constitution ([on the web here](#)) establishes the basic institutional framework of American politics. The Constitution was designed to solve particular problems, but, like most institutions, once in place it had important consequences not foreseen by its creators. It has proved to be highly resilient and resistant to change, yet over the years it has also been altered in a number of respects, both formally and informally. The first reading for this lecture is an early critique of the proposed constitution, leveled by the pseudonymous “Brutus.” The next two pieces are from *The Federalist*, in which future president James Madison rebuts critics like Brutus in an effort to sway public opinion in favor of ratifying the proposed Constitution. In *The Federalist* No. 10, Madison defends the Constitution’s creation of a stronger central government as a safeguard against “factions.” In No. 51, he argues that the Constitution’s system of checks and balances protects against tyranny by preventing the over-concentration of power. By contrast, Robert Dahl argues that the Constitution falls short of democratic standards and that our respect for its framers should not inhibit Americans from reforming it.

Readings (51 pages):

- Brutus. 2015. “Anti-Federalist No. 3.” Chap. 2-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 18–21. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- James Madison. 2015a. “Federalist No. 10.” Chap. 2-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 22–26. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- James Madison. 2015b. “Federalist No. 51.” Chap. 2-3 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 27–28. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Robert A. Dahl. 2003. *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?* 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. **Chapters 1–2 (pages 1–40).**

Reading Questions:

- To what extent does the design of the U.S. Constitution embody a consistent set of political principles, and to what extent is it merely a reflection of pragmatic political considerations?
- How should our interpretation of *The Federalist* be influenced by the fact that it was written to with the goal of persuading Americans to support the Constitution?
- How do Robert Dahl and “Brutus” differ in their critiques of the Constitution?

6 The U.S. Constitution II (Tuesday, February 23, 2016)

Readings (68 pages):

- Robert A. Dahl. 2003. *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?* 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. **Chapters 4–6 (pages 73–140).**

Reading Questions:

- How would Madison and the other Founding Fathers respond to Dahl’s criticisms of the Constitution? Should we even care what they would think?

7 Federalism (Thursday, February 25, 2016)

Perhaps the most fundamental structural feature of the U.S. Constitution is its division of authority between the national government and the (now 50) states. Known as “federalism,” this institutional arrangement has fundamentally shaped the character of U.S. politics, foreclosing certain political options while opening up others. Some scholars, such as James Buchanan (the [economist](#), not the [president](#)), argue that governmental competition fostered by federalism promotes efficient policies and provides a beneficial check on excessive government control. Others, such as David Brian Robertson, stress the ways that federalism has allowed states, especially in the American South, to oppress local minorities and avoid intervention from the national government. At the same time, Donald Kettl explains, the balance of power between the national and state governments has evolved over time, and to this day remains subject to contestation and renegotiation.

Readings (47 pages):

- Donald F. Kettl. 2015. “Federalism: Sorting Out Who Does What.” Chap. 3-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 47–64. Washington, DC: CQ Press
- * James M. Buchanan. 1995. “Federalism as an Ideal Political Order and an Objective for Constitutional Reform.” *Publius* 25 (2): 19–27.
- * David Brian Robertson. 2012. “Federalism and Race.” Chap. 4 in *Federalism and the Making of America*, 57–73. New York: Routledge.

Reading Questions:

- How has the federal structure of the United States influenced American political development?
- To what extent are state and local politics just miniature versions of national politics?
- How does competition with other cities affect local policymaking?
- How (and to whom) is federalism beneficial? What are its drawbacks?

Sunday, February 28, 2016: Paper #1 Due

8 Political Parties (Tuesday, March 1, 2016)

The readings for today describe the origins and operation of political parties. In doing so, they draw upon concepts and analytic frameworks that reappear throughout the course. John Aldrich’s *Why Parties?* is an influential explanation for the existence of parties that focuses on the ways that parties solve various problems that politicians face. These problems—coordination, collective action, and social choice—appear repeatedly in this course. Aldrich treats parties as “endogenous” institutions—that is, as products of the political process. By contrast, Anthony Downs takes parties as given (“exogenous”), developing a theoretical model for how, under certain conditions, parties should compete electorally with one another. The spatial model of voting used by Downs also reappears multiple times in this course (e.g., in Keith Krehbiel’s *Pivotal Politics*).

Readings (29 pages):

- John H. Aldrich. 2015. “From *Why Parties?*” Chap. 12-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 362–370. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- * Anthony Downs. 1957. “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy.” *Journal of Political Economy* 65 (2): 135–150.

Reading Questions:

- In different ways, both Aldrich and Downs present winning elections as politicians’ and parties’ primary goal. What alternative motivations does this emphasis on winning leave out? How would considering alternative goals change our perspective on parties and electoral competition?

9 Congress I: Incentives and Behavior (Thursday, March 3, 2016)

Congress is composed of individual members (MCs), each with their own interests distinct from those of Congress (or the nation) as a whole. David Mayhew’s *Electoral Connection* argues that much of MCs’ behavior in Congress can be explained by their overriding goal of reelection. MCs’ individual desires to please their constituents, however, can lead to aggregate outcomes disliked by the public as a whole—a classic example of a collective action problem. Richard Fenno focuses not on MCs’ behavior in Congress, but on their perceptions of and interactions with their constituents. Mayhew and Fenno thus provide different perspectives on the relationship between MCs and their constituents.

Readings (99 pages):

- * David R. Mayhew. 2004[1974]. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pages 13–77.
- * Richard F. Fenno Jr. 1977. “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration.” *American Political Science Review* 71 (3): 883–917. **You can skim pages 891–7, but read the rest.**

Reading Questions:

- To what degree is Mayhew’s portrait of MCs as single-minded reelection seekers consistent with the Framers’ expectations about Congress?
- How does Mayhew’s account differ from that of Downs, who also focuses on electoral motivations?
- Fenno’s account, published in 1977, presumes that MCs are able to carve out an identity for themselves separate from their party. Is this assumption still plausible in today’s more partisan environment?

10 Congress II: Internal Organization and Roll-Call Voting (Tuesday, March 8, 2016)

Whereas Lecture 9 examines the incentives and behavior of individual MCs, today’s readings consider the internal organization and voting structure of Congress. Aldrich and Rohde examine the interaction between Congress’s two main organizational features: committees and parties. Poole and Rosenthal

describe how much of congressional voting behavior can be explained by a single main dimension of conflict, along which the two parties have increasingly polarized.

Readings (44 pages):

- John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde. 2015. “Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan Era.” Chap. 6-3 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 161–176. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- * Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 2007. *Ideology & Congress*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, pages 1–8, 12–31.

Reading Questions:

- How does the institutional organization of Congress affect the nature of the policymaking process?

11 Congress III: Lawmaking (Thursday, March 10, 2016)

Readings (39 pages):

- * Keith Krehbiel. 1998. “A Theory.” Chap. 2 in *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*, 20–48. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sarah A. Binder. 2015. “The Politics of Legislative Stalemate.” Chap. 6-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 151–160. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Reading Questions:

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of Krehbiel’s simplified model of congressional politics, which ignores committees, parties, and other details?

12 The Presidency (Tuesday, March 15, 2016)

Readings (52 pages):

- Richard E. Neustadt. 2015. “From *Presidential Power*.” Chap. 7-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 177–191. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Samuel Kernell. 2015. “From *Going Public*.” Chap. 7-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 192–204. Washington, DC: CQ Press
- * Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell. 1999. “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (4): 850–873.

Reading Questions:

- What are the constitutional bases of presidential power?
- How has political and technological change increased presidential power over time?
- To what extent can the president act unilaterally?
- How does presidential power differ across policy domains?

13 The Bureaucracy (Thursday, March 17, 2016)

Readings (63 pages):

- * James Q. Wilson. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books, chapter 7 (pp. 113–136).
- Terry M. Moe. 2015. “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure.” Chap. 8-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 205–215. Washington, DC: CQ Press
- David E. Lewis. 2015. “From *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*.” Chap. 8-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 216–232. Washington, DC: CQ Press

Reading Questions:

- What do elected officials gain by delegating decision-making authority to bureaucrats?
- What challenges do the president and Congress face in controlling the bureaucracy, and what strategies do they use to overcome these challenges?
- Why are bureaucracies sometimes unresponsive or inefficient?
- In what ways and circumstances does the bureaucracy not just implement policy but actually make it?

Sunday, March 20, 2016: Paper #2 Due

Tuesday, March 22, 2016: NO CLASS (Spring Vacation)

Thursday, March 24, 2016: NO CLASS (Spring Vacation)

14 The Judiciary (Tuesday, March 29, 2016)

Like the bureaucracy, the judiciary has a peculiar and contested role in a democratic system. Most judges are not elected, so the reelection motive so central to analyses of Congress doesn't apply. So what does motivate judges? Epstein and Knight take up this question in their piece, emphasizing the strategic considerations that shape judges' decisions. Gerald Rosenberg instead focuses on the implementation and political consequences of judicial decisions.

Readings (41 pages):

- * Lee Epstein and Jack Knight. 1998. “A Strategic Account of Judicial Decisions.” In *The Choices Justices Make*, 1–21. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- * Gerald N. Rosenberg. 2015. “The Real World of Constitutional Rights: The Supreme Court and the Implementation of the Abortion Decisions.” Chap. 5-3 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 117–137. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Reading Questions:

- What role should unelected judges play in an electoral democracy?

- What motivates judges' decisions? Are judges simply "politicians in black robes"?
- How much power do courts have? What happens when other government officials oppose their decisions?

Part III: Mass Opinion and Behavior

15 Citizens and Attitudes (Thursday, March 31, 2016)

Readings (41 pages):

- * Philip E. Converse. 2004. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Political Psychology Key Readings*, edited by John T. Jost and Jim Sidanius, 181–199. Abridged version of 1964 original. New York: Psychology Press.
- James A. Stimson. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP. **Chapter 1 (pages 1–22)**.

Reading Questions:

- How do the political attitudes and behavior of ordinary citizens differ from those of politicians, bureaucrats, and political activists?
- Are ordinary citizens equipped to participate in democratic politics? If so, how?

16 Party Identification (Tuesday, April 5, 2016)

Readings (52 pages):

- * Samuel L. Popkin. 1993. "Information Shortcuts and the Reasoning Voter." In *Information, Participation, and Choice*, edited by Bernard Grofman, 17–35. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- * Larry M. Bartels. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24 (2): 117–150.

Reading Questions:

- How is our understanding of the costs and benefits of partisanship influenced by whether we view it as an information shortcut (as Popkin does) or as a social identity (as Bartels does)?

17 Aggregate Opinion (Thursday, April 7, 2016)

Readings (73 pages):

- James A. Stimson. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP. **Chapters 2–3 (pp. 23–95)**.

Reading Questions:

- Does public opinion in the aggregate differ in important ways from individual-level opinion?

18 Citizens, Elites, and the Media (Tuesday, April 12, 2016)

Readings (44 pages):

- James T. Hamilton. 2015. “The Market and the Media.” Chap. 14-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 431–443. Washington, DC: CQ Press
- * Christopher Bosso. 1989. “Setting the Agenda: Mass Media and the Discovery of Famine in Ethiopia.” In *Manipulating Public Opinion: Essays on Public Opinion as a Dependent Variable*, edited by Michael Margolis and Gary A. Mauser, 153–174. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- * Adam J. Berinsky. 2007. “Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict.” *Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 975–997.

Reading Questions:

- To what degree, in what respects, and under what conditions can the media influence public opinion?
- Can citizens learn the information they need by following the cues provided by political elites?

19 Participation and Choice (Thursday, April 14, 2016)

Readings (48 pages):

- * Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 1999. “Civic Participation and the Equality Problem.” Chap. 12 in *Civic Engagement and American Democracy*, edited by Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, 427–459. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press / Russell Sage Foundation.
- * William G. Jacoby. 2010. “The American Voter.” Chap. 15 in *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*, 262–277. New York: Oxford UP.

Reading Questions:

- Is it “irrational” to vote? What factors make people more or less likely to do so?
- How does variation in political participation across different social groups affect the kinds of voices and concerns that get “heard” in American politics?

Tuesday, April 19, 2016: NO CLASS (Patriots Day)

20 Nominations and Campaigns (Thursday, April 21, 2016)

Readings (71 pages):

- * Marty Cohen et al. 2008. “Political Parties in Rough Weather.” *The Forum* 5 (4).
- * John Sides and Jake Haselswerdt. 2012. “Campaigns and Elections.” Chap. 11 in *New Directions in Public Opinion*, edited by Adam J. Berinsky, 241–257. New York: Routledge.
- James A. Stimson. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP. **Chapter 4 (pp. 96–136).**

Reading Questions:

- Do campaigns matter? If so, how, and how much? If not, why is so much money spent on them?

Sunday, April 24, 2016: Draft of Long Paper Due

21 Elections (Tuesday, April 26, 2016)

Readings (54 pages):

- * Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder Jr., and Charles Stewart III. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 136–159.
- * Larry M. Bartels. 2013. "Political Effects of the Great Recession." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 650 (1): 47–76.

Reading Questions:

- To what extent are the empirical findings of Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart inconsistent with the theoretical arguments of Downs? What might explain these discrepancies?

22 Representation (Thursday, April 28, 2016)

Readings (41 pages):

- * Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57 (1): 45–56.
- * Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3): 564–581.
- * James A. Stimson. 2015. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP, **chapter 6 (pages 146–57)**.

Reading Questions:

- To what extent do election results reflect the "will of the people"?
- Does winning an election give a party a "mandate" to carry out its policy platform?
- What do you think would have happened, politically and policy-wise, had a Democrat rather than a Republican been president when the financial crisis hit in 2008?

Part IV: Debates

23 Race and Gender (Tuesday, May 3, 2016)

Readings (83 pages):

- * Michael Tesler and David O. Sears. 2011. *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, **pages 11–21, 29–51, and 115–126**.

- * Jane Mansbridge. 1999. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes’.” *Journal of Politics* 61 (3): 628–657.

Reading Questions:

- What does Obama’s election as president tell us about the role of race in contemporary American society? Is racism dead? Has it changed form? What about sexism?
- Under what conditions (if any) is it morally permissible to take the race or gender of political candidates into account?

24 Immigration and Multiculturalism (Thursday, May 5, 2016)

Readings (49 pages):

- * Susan Moller Okin. 1997. “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” *Boston Review* October/November.
- * Samuel P. Huntington. 2004. “The Hispanic Challenge.” *Foreign Policy*, March 1.
- * Jack Citrin et al. 2007. “Testing Huntington: Is Hispanic Immigration a Threat to American Identity?” *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (1): 31–48.

Reading Questions:

- Does it matter whether the residents of a nation share the same language, culture, or values?
- How should nations decide who is allowed to immigrate and become a citizen? Should there be any immigration barriers at all?
- Should the government give ethnic and religious groups be given special recognition or protection? Is there a trade-off between recognizing cultural differences and protecting individual rights?

25 Money and Organized Interests (Tuesday, May 10, 2016)

Readings (57 pages):

- E. E. Schattschneider. 2015. “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System.” Chap. 13-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 391–397. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Mancur Olson Jr. 2015. “From *The Logic of Collective Action*.” Chap. 1-1 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 1–8. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- * Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. “Why is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (1): 105–130.
- Richard L. Hall and Richard Anderson. 2015. “Advertising and Legislative Advocacy in Health Politics.” Chap. 13-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 398–413. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Reading Questions:

- What barriers inhibit groups of citizens from organizing to defend their common interests? Why are some groups better able to organize politically than others?

- Other than voters, what kinds of political resources can individuals and groups offer politicians? How does politicians' need for such resources influence who is elected and how they behave in office?
- In a democratic regime, how does the unequal distribution of material resources affect which citizens actually govern?

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Readings (39 pages):

- Morris P. Fiorina. 2015. "From *The Myth of a Polarized America*." Chap. 10-3 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 308–315. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Gary C. Jacobson. 2015. "No Compromise: The Electoral Origins of Legislative Gridlock." Chap. 11-2 in *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed., edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, 330–350. Washington, DC: CQ Press
- * Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein. 2013. "Finding the Common Good in an Era of Dysfunctional Governance." *Daedalus* 142 (2): 15–24.

Reading Questions:

- Are citizens polarized or just politicians?
- Is partisan polarization bad? Why? What can be done about it?

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