

POLITICAL SCIENCE 260B

Proseminar in American Political Institutions **Spring 2003**

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Course

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Office Hours: Monday, 9-11 a.m., and by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce graduate students to some of the important concepts, research questions, and analytic approaches in the contemporary study of American political institutions. Materials have been selected with several objectives in mind. First, and most conventionally, I have selected readings to cover most of the institutional venues that might typically be said to comprise the core of the American political system. Students of American politics should possess some minimal exposure to contemporary research on interest group organization and social movements, political parties, Congress and the presidency, and administrative politics, along with their several points of institutional interface. Second, where possible, I have selected writings that highlight the current “institutionalist” turn in contemporary political science, works that offer points of entry into the different ways in which formal rules and procedures, organizational roles, and informal norms and expectations structure fields of action within the various domains of political life. While most of the literature found in the syllabus has been authored by “Americanists,” I have occasionally turned to comparativists where such literature promises to help frame questions and guide discussion in potentially fruitful ways. Third, I have selected a subset of readings that focus explicitly on the temporal dimension in institutional politics, literatures that raise questions about the dynamics of change over time, or, more broadly, the patterns of American political development. Finally, I have also tried to give representation in the syllabus to the diverse modes of analysis that characterize contemporary research in American politics: quantitative analysis, formal theory, and different modes of qualitative and historical analysis. Many of the formalist pieces have been selected in conjunction with Kathy Bawn, to create explicit points of contact between this class and PS 209 (“Modeling Lab in American Institutions”). As far as division of labor goes, this class will focus on the substance of these formal arguments; Kathy will handle the technical issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for this course are as follows: First, the reading load for a typical week is relatively heavy (between 300 and 400 pages.) Students are expected to come to seminar having completed the week's readings and ready to participate actively in seminar discussions. Seminar participation will account for 25% of your final grade. Second, students will submit a brief one-page, single-spaced paper on each week's readings, identifying and developing some theme, question, concept, or line of criticism, that you believe most warrants class consideration. These papers will be due at my office (or by e-mail) by Tuesday 5 p.m., the afternoon before seminar meets. In the aggregate, these papers will determine 20% of your final grade. Third, each week two students will be assigned the duties

of seminar leader. Each seminar leader will also submit a 3-5 page paper on that week's readings, subject to the same rules specified above. The object here is to encourage seminar leaders to think more deeply about the materials for a given week. Students can expect to assume in-class leadership responsibilities at least twice during the quarter, with each associated paper (and seminar performance) accounting for 15% of your final grade. Finally, each student will be asked to submit a 15-20 page critical review essay that builds upon a line of research originating in the class readings and supplemented with the student's own bibliographic search. The idea is to demonstrate command of the terms of debate within a particular research community, frame an original research question that engages that community, and advance debate along some particular line of thought. Successful essays will accomplish several tasks: they will 1) characterize the structure and evolution of argumentation within a research area, 2) assess its theoretical, conceptual, and methodological contributions and limitations, 3) identify those aspects of the debate most ripe for scholarly advancement, 4) frame a research question that pushes that debate forward, and 5) map out a strategy of inquiry to guide researchers interested in further pursuing your line of thought. Critical review essays will be worth 30% of your final grade and are due on the last day of finals week (no exceptions).

REQUIRED BOOKS FOR PURCHASE †

- Elizabeth R. Gerber, *The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation* (Princeton University Press, 1999).
- Doug McAdam, *Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970 America* (University of Chicago Press, 1982).
- John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).
- Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (University of California Press, 1993).
- Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking America* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- Douglas Dion, *Taming the Legislative Thumbscrew: Minority Rights and Procedural Change in Legislative Politics* (University of Michigan Press, 1997).
- Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism* (Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Charles Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton* (Harvard University Press, 1996).
- Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

† Note: All required books are also on reserve for 1-day checkout at the Graduate Reserve Room on the second floor of the YRL.

All articles and book chapters designated with (*) are available from the professor; articles designated with (+) are available on the website "list of links" for this course. (You must be a registered student in this seminar to access successfully the website materials).

SYLLABUS

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Week 1: No Readings Assigned

II. ORGANIZING CITIZENS FOR POLITICAL ACTION

Week 2: Mobilization and Influence in Interest Group Politics

(*) Ken Kollman, *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Gerber, *The Populist Paradox*

(+) Marie Hojnacki and David C. Kimball, "Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress." *American Political Science Review* vol. 92, no. 4 (Dec. 1998): 527-545.

(*) Theda Skocpol, et al., "'A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Volunteerism in the United States,'" *American Political Science Review* vol. 94, no. 3 (Sep. 2000): 527-546.

Week 3: Social Movements and the Structures of Political Opportunity

(*) Doug McAdam, et al., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), Introduction and chs. 1-2, 6, 9-11, 13, and 15.

McAdam, *Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*

III. PARTIES IN POLITICAL LIFE

Week 4: Parties and the Organization of Political Conflict

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

(+) Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, "Party Aggregation and the Number of Parties in India and the United States." *American Political Science Review* vol. 92, no. 2 (June 1998): 329-342.

(+) Edward G. Carmine and James A. Stimson, "On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution." *American Political Science Review* vol. 80, no. 3 (Sept. 1986): 901-920.

Week 5: Parties and Governance: Institutional Performance and the Problem of Gridlock

Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*.

(+) Sarah Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock." *American Political Science Review* vol. 93, no. 3 (Sep. 1999): 519-533.

(+) John J. Coleman, "Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness." *American Political Science Review* vol. 93, no. 4 (Dec. 1999): 821-835.

IV. CONGRESS AS AN INSTITUTION

Week 6: The Organization of the U.S. Congress: Do Parties Matter?

(*) Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast, eds. *Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995)

Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*, Introduction, chs. 4-5, 7-10.

Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*, chs. 1-6, 8-9.

Week 7: Congressional Development: Rules, Rights, and Institutional Reform

(+) Sarah A. Binder, "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990." *American Political Science Review* vol. 90, no. 1 (March 1996): 8-20.

Dion, *Turning the Legislative Thumbscrew*, chs. 1-6.

Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*, chs. 1-2, 5-6.

(*) Eric Schickler, "Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1986: A Test of Partisan and Median Voter Models" *American Political Science Review* vol. 94, no. 2 (March 2000): 269-288.

V. CONCEPTUALIZING THE PRESIDENCY IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Week 8: The President as Bargainer, Communicator, and Regime Builder

Cameron, *Veto Bargaining*, chs. 1-2, 4-6.

(*) Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*, 3d ed. (Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997), chs. 1-2.

Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, chs. 1-3, 5, 7, and Afterward.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE POLITICS

Week 9: Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship and Legislative Control

(+) Randall L. Calvert, et al., "A Theory of Political Control and Agency Discretion." *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 33, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 588-611.

(+) John D. Huber, et al., "Legislatures and Statutory Control of Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 45, no. 2 (Apr. 2001): 330-345.

(+) Samuel Kernell and Michael P. McDonald, "Congress and America's Political Development: The Transformation of the Post Office from Patronage to Service." *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 45, no. 2 (Jul. 1999): 792-811.

Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, Introduction, chs. 1-5, Conclusion.

(+) Samuel Kernell, "Rural Free Delivery as a Critical Test of Alternative Models of American Political Development." *Studies in American Political Development* vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 103-112.

(+) Daniel P. Carpenter, "The Political Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy: A Response to Kernell." *Ibid*: 113-122.

VII. HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Week 10: Path Dependence, Multiple Orders, and American State Development

(*) Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science." In Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), pp. 693-721.

(*) Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, "The Study of American Political Development." In *Ibid*, pp. 722-754.

Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State*, read all.

(+) Robert C. Lieberman, Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order." *American Political Science Review* vol. 96, no. 4 (December 2002): 697-712.