Winter Term 2002
POLITICAL SCIENCE 688
Topics in American Political Institutions: American Political Development

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Office Hrs.: Tuesday, 4-5 pm and Wednesday, 3-5 pm.

The purpose of this course is to provide graduate students with an introduction to the study of American political development. Classic and contemporary APD readings will be employed to introduce concepts, analytic orientations, and theoretical debates central to the historical study of American political institutions and the politics of institutional change. The course is loosely organized into three parts. Part I is devoted to conceptual tool building. Here we explore foundational concepts like “development,” “institutional analysis,” and “temporality.” Part II is organized to provide exposure to competing frameworks and paradigms in the APD literature. Finally, part III introduces students to representative work in the APD subfield, drawing on both canonical works and on recent scholarship by second-generation APD scholars. Among the topics we will consider in this section are multiple orders analysis and the politics of American state building (the cornerstone of the APD subfield).

Required Books

Suzanne Mettler, Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy, Cornell University Press.
Karen Orren, Belated Feudalism: Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States, Cambridge University Press.

Optional Book

Scott C. James, Presidents, Parties, and the State: A Party System Perspective on Democratic Regulatory Choice, 1884-1936. (For those of you who aren’t independently wealthy, a considerably cheaper xeroxed copy will be made available for reproduction).
Additional Readings

A course reader will also be available for purchase at the copying service located in the 611 Church Street complex (I forget the name).

Grading

Forty percent of your final grade will be based on contributions to class discussion. It is imperative, therefore, that students come to seminar having thought about the week’s readings. The remaining 60 percent will derive from a 15 to 20-page paper, one that critically addresses some substantive, theoretical, or methodological concern prompted by the course readings. The focus of this paper should be on the identification of fresh problems, confusions, and limitations – critical readings that stimulate a line of thought and lay a foundation for the development of an original idea and a fresh line of analysis. In other words, this is not a research paper, but it should prepare some of the groundwork for one if, subsequently, you are so inclined.

PART I: THINKING HISTORICALLY AND DEVELOPMENTALLY: ANALYTIC ISSUES

January 8: No readings assigned

January 15: Institutions and Development

Douglass North, Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, pp. 3-104.

January 22: History and Temporality: Context, Contingency, and Sequence


PART II: PERIODIZATION SCHEMES AND AMERICAN POLITICAL HISTORY

January 29: Periodization I

Normal and Extraordinary Politics (I): The Realignment Synthesis

David R. Mayhew, American Electoral Realignments: A Critique of the Genre (ms.)

February 5: Periodization II

Normal Politics and Extraordinary Politics (II)

Samuel Huntington, American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony, chs. 1-3, 5.
Bruce Ackerman, We the People: Foundations, chs. 1, 3-6, 9-10.

February 12: Periodization III

The Organizational Synthesis


The Political Economy Framework


Pitfalls of Periodization


PART III: MULTIPLE ORDERS

February 19: A Feudal Remnant: Capital, Labor, and the Law of Master-Servant

Karen Orren, Belated Feudalism: Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States

February 26: No Class (Spring Break)

March 5: Political Time: Recurrent and Emergent Structures of Presidential Authority

Stephen Skowronek, The Politics that Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton

March 12: Institutional Layering: Multiple Interests, Path Dependence, and the Development of Congress

Eric Schickler, Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress
PART IV: AMERICAN STATE BUILDING

March 19: The State-Building Problematic: Classic Statements

“A State of Courts and Parties”

Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, chs. 1-2; Intro to Part II, chs. 3, 5; Intro to Part III, chs. 6, 8; Epilogue.

Administrative Capacity and Bureaucratic Autonomy


March 26: Political Party Leadership and State-Building Politics: the American Regulatory State

Scott C. James, *Presidents, Parties and the State: A Party System Perspective on Democratic Regulatory Choice, 1884-1936*

April 2: Legislative Dominance or Bureaucratic Autonomy? State-Building Politics and the American Service State


Exchange


April 9: Women’s Organizations and the Maternal Welfare State

Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*

April 16: Gender and State Structure: State-Building Politics and the New Deal Welfare State

Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy*