

PS 2200: American Government and Politics, Fall 2015  
Thursdays, 4pm – 6pm, 4801 Posvar Hall

Sharece Thrower  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Political Science  
4810 Posvar Hall  
[sthrower@pitt.edu](mailto:sthrower@pitt.edu)

Office Hours:

Thursdays, 2pm – 3:30pm and Fridays, 10:30am – noon or by appointment

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to offer students an introduction into the study of American politics at the graduate level. A primary goal is to cultivate an understanding of the important classical and contemporary works of American politics and to teach students how to critically analyze the theory, methodology, and contributions of advanced readings. Though this course is only a survey of important works and thus cannot cover everything, it is designed to lay the foundation of useful skills in engaging academic research. A secondary goal is to prepare students for their comprehensive exams in American politics by reading much of the material on the American reading list.

Grades:

Class Participation: 10%  
Leading Class Discussion: 10%  
Response Papers: 20%  
Extended Literature Review: 25%  
Research Design: 35%

*Class Participation*

This is primarily a discussion-based course. As such, each student is required to actively participate in every class discussion. This requires students to read each assigned reading, think about questions and comments ahead of time, and come to every class prepared to discuss the readings. Students should think about the big questions of the readings, the theory, the testing of the arguments, the implications, and how the readings connect to one another.

*Leading Class Discussion*

Each student is required to lead 1 class session over the course of the semester. Students are expected to facilitate discussion and are permitted to format the class in any manner they choose. The student leader should email out discussion questions to the class ahead of time, by Wednesday at noon. I expect students to come prepared to discuss these questions. I may send the student leader feedback before class and he or she should incorporate the feedback.

### *Response Papers*

Students are required to write 5 response papers over the course of the semester on the weekly readings of any 5 topics of their choosing. These papers are designed to allow the students to summarize the readings, analyze the arguments and execution, offer critical assessments, and discuss it in a larger framework. Students can choose to select to focus on one or more of the readings in that selected week. Papers should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font, and include proper citations. Response papers are **due by noon on the Wednesday before** that week's class.

### *Extended Literature Review*

Students must select one classical work in American politics and describe all of the subsequent questions and literature that it has spawned. Analyze how these works tie together, how they build off of each other, the different approaches they take, how they move the field forward, and any unanswered questions left in this area. Students should also clearly argue why this work is a classic and how relevant it is still today in American politics research. Have we advanced past this and by how much? This paper should be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font, and include citations. Students must talk to me about **approval** for their topic **by Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**. Papers are **due by Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

### *Research Design*

As a final paper, students are required to write a research design. This allows students to select a new research question or expand upon an existing one and develop a theory that advances the exploration of that question, while engaging or building off the relevant literature existing in the field. Papers must then develop hypotheses from that theory and outline a plan on how to empirically test these hypotheses. Students must think about how to go about testing the theory, the data they would need to collect, the empirical models they would run or the qualitative work required, and discuss how feasible it would be to implement. I do not expect students to actually provide any analysis in this paper. Finally, students should describe what they expect to find and how those findings would contribute to the field. This paper should be around 20-25 pages, double-space, 12pt font, with a bibliography. Students must talk to me for topic **approval by Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**. Final Papers are **due by Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**.

### Academic Policies:

I do not accept late papers. I do not give any extensions. If there is an extreme circumstance, please contact me before the assignment is due. I may ask for official documentation. I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Any such violations will be referred to the University authorities and may result in severe consequences such as expulsion.

### Required Books:

Arnold, Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Bailey, Michael and Forrest Maltzman. 2011. *The Constrained Court*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Campbell et al. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Cameron, Charles. 2000. *Veto Bargaining*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dahl, Robert. 2006. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.  
Erikson et al. 2002. *The Marco Polity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.  
Green et al. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. New Haven: Yale University Press.  
Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.  
McCarty et al. 2006. *Polarized America*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Course Schedule (\* indicates text books you are required to purchase):

September 3<sup>rd</sup>: NO CLASS, APSA

### **September 10<sup>th</sup>: Introduction and the Study of American Politics**

Required Readings:

\*Dahl, Robert. 2006. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Optional Readings:

Fenno, Richard F. Jr. 1986. "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 80(1): 3 – 15.

Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner, eds. 2002. *Political Science: State of the Discipline*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Druckman et al. 2006. "The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627 – 635.

Green, Donald and Ian Shapiro. 1996. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shepsle, Kenneth. 1989. "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1(2): 131 – 147.

Simon, Herbert. 1985. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 293 – 204.

### **September 17<sup>th</sup>: Ideology**

Required Readings:

\*Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 1 (pp. 3 – 14), 3, 7, and 8 (pp. 114 – 127)

Canes-Wrone, Brandice and Kenneth W. Shotts. 2007. "When Do Elections Encourage Ideological Rigidity?" *American Political Science Review* 101(2): 273 – 288.

Jessee, Stephen A. 2009. "Spatial Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election," *American Political Science Review* 103(1): 69 – 81.

## September 25<sup>th</sup>: The Formation of Public Opinion

### Required Readings:

- \*Campbell et al. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.  
Chapters 6 and 7.
- Converse, Phillip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In Apter, David E. *Ideology and Discontent*. Glencoe: The Free Press of Glencoe. (Read pp. 1 – 38, skim the rest)
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Page, Benjamin and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Read chapter 1 and skim 2
- \*Erikson et al. 2002. *The Marco Polity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Chapter 6 : "Public Opinion".

### Optional Readings:

- Achen, Christopher. 1975. "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response," *American Political Science Review* 1218 – 1231.
- Sears, David and Carolyn Funk. 1990. "Self-Interest in Americans' Political Opinions." In J Mansbridge (ed) *Beyond Self-Interest*.
- Feldman, Stanley. 1995. "Answering Survey Questions: The Measurement and Meaning of Public Opinion." In M. Lodge and K. McGraw (eds.), *Political Judgment: Structure and Process*
- Carsey, Thomas and Geoffrey Layman. 2006. "Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate," *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 464 – 477.

## October 1<sup>st</sup>: Participation

### Required Readings:

- Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
Chapter 1.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Tuning In, Turning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 28: 664 – 683.
- Brady et al. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation," *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271 – 294.
- Nickerson. 2008. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments," *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 49 – 57.
- Malhotra, et al. 2011. "Text Messages as Mobilization Tools: The Conditional Effect of Habitual Voting and Election Salience," *American Politics Research* 39(4): 664 – 681.

### Optional Readings:

- Burns et al. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gerber, Alan and Donald Green. 2000. "The Effect of a Nonpartisan Get-Out-the Vote Drive: An Experimental Study of Leafletting," *Journal of Politics* 62(3) 846 – 857.

Verba et al. 1995. *Voice and Equality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
Wolfinger and Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press.  
Riker, William H. and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1970. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting,"  
*American Political Science Review* 25 – 42.

### **October 8<sup>th</sup>: Voting Behavior and Elections**

Required Readings:

Fiorina. 1981. *Retrospective Voting*. New Haven: Yale University Press.  
Chapters 1 – 3.  
Tomz, Michael and Robert P. Van Houweling. 2008. "Candidate Positioning and Voter Choice,"  
*American Political Science Review* 83(1): 93 – 121.  
\*Erikson et al. 2002. *The Marco Polity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Chapter 7: "Elections"  
Lau et al. 1999. "The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-Analytic  
Assessment," *The American Political Science Review* 93(4): 851 – 875.

### **October 15<sup>th</sup>: Parties and Partisanship**

Required Readings:

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: Chicago University Press.  
Chapters 1 and 2.  
\*Green et al. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. New Haven: Yale University Press.  
Chapters 2, 3 (read pp. 52 – 53 and pp. 73 – 84), and 5.  
Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization,"  
*American Political Science Review* 95(3): 619 – 631.  
Bartels. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions," *Political  
Behavior* 24(2): 117 – 150.

### **October 22<sup>nd</sup>: NO CLASS**

### **October 29<sup>th</sup>: The Media**

Required Readings:

Prior, Markus. 2005. "News v. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in  
Political Knowledge and Turnout," *AJPS* 49(3): 577 – 592.  
Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that Matters*. U.Chicago Press. Ch. 3 and 7.  
Berinsky and Kinder. 2006. "Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the  
Kosovo Crisis," *Journal of Politics* 68: 640 – 56.  
\*Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3, 5, 6.

## November 5<sup>th</sup>: Congress

### Required Readings:

- \*Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Binder, Sarah. 1999. "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock," *The American Political Science Review* 93(3): 519 – 533.
- \*Arnold, Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 4 and 6.
- Woon, Jonathan. 2009. "Issue Attention and Legislative Proposals in the US Senate," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(1): 29 – 54.

### Optional Readings:

- Mayhew, David. 1991. *Divided We Govern*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F, Jr. 1977. "US House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration," *The American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883 – 917.
- Cox, Gary and Matthew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, Gary and Matthew McCubbins. 2004. *Setting the Agenda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## November 12<sup>th</sup>: The Executive Branch

### Required Readings:

- Neustadt, Richard. 1960. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*. New York: The Free Press. Chapter 3.
- Canes-Wrone et al. 2006. *Who Leads Whom?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Skowronek. 1993. *The Politics Presidents Make*. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Moe, Terry. 1985. "The Politicized Presidency," in *New Directions in American Politics*. Ed Chubb and Peterson.
- Lewis, David. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Read chapter 3 and skim chapter 5.

### Optional Readings:

- Lewis, David. 2003. *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Carpenter, Daniel. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## **November 19<sup>th</sup>: Courts**

### Required Readings:

- \*Bailey and Maltzman. 2011. *The Constrained Court*. Princeton University Press.
- Songer et al. 1994. "The Hierarchy of Justice: Testing a Principal-Agent Model on Supreme Court-Circuit Court Interactions," *American Journal of Political Science* 38: 673 – 696.
- Bonneau et al. 2007. "Agenda Control, the Median Justice, and the Majority Opinion on the U.S. Supreme Court," *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 890-905.

### Optional Readings:

- Bartels, Brandon L. 2009. "The Constraining Capacity of Legal Doctrine on the US Supreme Court," *American Political Science Review* 103: 474 – 495.

November 26<sup>th</sup>: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

## **December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Interbranch Relations and Policymaking**

### Required Readings:

- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 2 – 3.
- \*Cameron, Charles. 2000. *Veto Bargaining*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 4, 6, and 7.
- Howell, William. 2003. *Power without Persuasion*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 2 and 4.
- Moraski, Bryon J. and Charles R. Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations," *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 1069 – 1095.

### Optional Readings:

- Segal et al. 2011. "Congress, the Supreme Court, and Judicial Review: Testing the Constitutional Separation of Powers Model," *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 89 – 104.
- Ferejohn, John and Shipan, Charles. 1990. "Congressional Influence on Bureaucracy," *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization* 6:1 – 20.

## **December 10<sup>th</sup>: Gender, Race, and Politics**

### Required Readings:

- Valentino et al. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns," *American Political Science Review* 96: 75 – 90.
- Peffley, M and J Hurwitz. 2007. "Persuasion and Resistance: Race and Death Penalty in America," *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 996 – 1012.
- Mendelberg, Tali. 1997. "Executing Hortons," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61: 134 – 157.
- Kanthak, Kristen and George Krause. 2010. "Valuing Diversity in Political Organizations," *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 839 – 854.

- Glynn, Adam and Maya Sen. 2014. "Identifying Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues?" *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Branton, et al. 2011. "All Along the Watchtower: Acculturation Fear, Anti-Latino Affect, and Immigration," *The Journal of Politics* 73(3): 664 – 679.

Optional Readings:

- Sen, Maya. Working Paper. "Is Justice Really Blind? Race and Appellate Review in U.S. Courts"
- Campbell, David and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents," *The Journal of Politics* 68: 233 – 247.
- Segura and Valenzuela. 2010. "Hope, Tropes, and Dopes: Hispanic and White Racial Animus in the 2008 Election," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40(3): 497 – 514.

### **December 17<sup>th</sup>: Polarization and Inequality**

Required Readings:

- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 3 and 7.
- \*McCarty et al. 2006. *Polarized America*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapters 2, 4, and 5.
- Bartels, Larry . 2008. *Unequal Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 2 and 4.

Optional Readings:

- Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson. 2010. "Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States." *Politics & Society* 38(2): 152 – 204.
- Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson. 2011. *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer – and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*.