PLAP 7500
Special Topics: Contemporary Research in American Politics

Spring 2011
3:30 – 5:45 W
New Cabell Hall 430

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Office hours: Th 1:00 – 3:00, or by appointment

General Synopsis:
This course is a survey of recent research in the field of American Politics. A variety of topics will be covered, including representation, partisanship, and congressional-presidential relations. The course will begin with works that focus on connections (or disconnections) between citizens and elites, before moving on to works that focus on interactions between different types of elites.

Course Requirements:
I only have one basic course requirement: you must come to class prepared, which means that you have done the week’s readings in advance. You are also expected to participate in class discussion. Participation is what makes a seminar a useful learning experience – you learn as much from the in-class discussion as you do from the readings themselves.

A final assignment will be due at the end of the semester. This assignment will take the form of a take-home final exam. We will talk about parameters (how much time will be allotted, how many questions will need to be answered, etc.) for the exam in the early weeks of the semester.

Course Grades:
Participation and Quality of Discussion Leadership will make up 50% of the grade, while the final assignment (final-exam essay) will also be worth 50%.

If you do the readings and participate in a thoughtful way in class, you will do fine. The most important thing is that you endeavor to learn – do not be afraid to make mistakes. If you show me that you are a serious student, you will be rewarded.

We will a number of books (or portions of books) in class. All are available at the UVA Bookstore:

Week 4 – 2/9


Week 5 – 2/16


Week 6 – 2/23


Week 7 – 3/2


Week 8 – 3/9

Spring Break. No class.

Week 9 – 3/16


Beckmann, *Pushing the Agenda*. All.

Week 10 – 3/23

Lee, *Beyond Ideology*. All.

Week 11 – 3/30

Koger, *Filibustering*. All.

Week 12 – 4/6


Week 13 – 4/13


Week 14 – 4/20

Kriner. *After the Rubicon*.

Week 15 – 4/27

Binder and Maltzman. *Advice & Dissent*. All.