

PLAP 7500
Special Topics: Contemporary Research in American Politics

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

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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:

- (1) Morris P. Fiorina. 2011. *Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America*, Third Edition. Longman. ISBN: 978-0-205-77988-8
- (2) Matthew Levendusky. 2009. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0-226-47365-9

- (3) Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2009. *Authoritarianism & Polarization in American Politics*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-71124-1
- (4) Morris P. Fiorina. 2009. *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. University of Oklahoma Press. ISBN: 978-0-8061-4074-2
- (5) David R. Mayhew. 2011. *Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0691144658
- (6) Barry C. Burden. 2007. *Personal Roots of Representation*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0-691-13459-8
- (7) David Karol. 2009. *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-73819-4
- (8) Daniel J. Galvin. 2010. *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0-691-13693-6
- (9) Matthew N. Beckmann. 2010. *Pushing the Agenda: Presidential Leadership in U.S. Lawmaking, 1953-2004*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-16291-3
- (10) Frances E. Lee. 2009. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0-226-47076-4
- (11) Gregory Koger. 2010. *Filibustering: A Political History of Obstruction in the House and Senate*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0-226-44965-4
- (12) Tom S. Clark. 2011. *The Limits of Judicial Independence*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-13505-4
- (13) William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2007. *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0-691-13462-8
- (14) Douglas L. Kriner. 2010. *After the Rubicon: Congress, Presidents, and the Politics of Waging War*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0-226-45356-9
- (15) Sarah A. Binder and Forrest Maltzman. 2009. *Advice & Dissent: The Struggle to Shape the Federal Judiciary*. Brookings Institution Press. ISBN: 978-0-8157-0340-2

Week 1 – 1/19

Introduction. Discuss syllabus.

Week 2 – 1/26

Fiorina, *Culture War?*, All.

Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. “Is Polarization a Myth?” *The Journal of Politics* 70: 542-55.

Week 3 – 2/2

Levendusky, *The Partisan Sort*. All.

Hetherington and Weiler, *Authoritarianism & Polarization*, selections.

Week 4 – 2/9

Fiorina, *Disconnect*, Chapters 6-8.

Mayhew, *Partisan Balance*, All.

Week 5 – 2/16

Burden, *Personal Roots of Representation*. All.

Ebonya L. Washington. 2008. “Female Socialization: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers’ Voting on Women’s Issues.” *American Economic Review* 98: 311-32.

Week 6 – 2/23

Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*. All.

Keith T. Poole. 2007. “Changing Minds? Not in Congress!” *Public Choice* 131: 435-51.

Week 7 – 3/2

Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*. All.

Sidney M. Milkis and Jesse H. Rhodes. 2007. “George W. Bush, the Republican Party, and the ‘New’ American Party System.” *Perspectives on Politics* 5: 461-88.

Week 8 – 3/9

Spring Break. No class.

Week 9 – 3/16

Keith Krehbiel. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*, Chapters 2 and 7.

Beckmann, *Pushing the Agenda*. All.

Week 10 – 3/23

Lee, *Beyond Ideology*. All.

Week 11 – 3/30

Koger, *Filibustering*. All.

David R. Mayhew. 2010. “Legislative Obstruction.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8: 1145-54.

Week 12 – 4/6

Clark. *The Limits of Judicial Independence*. All.

William G. Howell. 2003. *Power Without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*, Chapter 5.

Week 13 – 4/13

Howell and Pevehouse. *While Dangers Gather*. All.

Week 14 – 4/20

Kriner. *After the Rubicon*.

Week 15 – 4/27

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

Keith Krehbiel. 2007. “Supreme Court Appointments as a Move-the-Median Game.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 231-40.