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PSC 523: American Politics Field Seminar

Seminar Fall 2013: T 120-3:15 (Harkness 112)

Course Description

This seminar will introduce you to classic as well as contemporary research in American politics. We will discuss the literature both in political institutions (e.g., Congress) and in political behavior (e.g., voting). By covering an array of topics in these areas, the seminar will provide a foundation for developing a comprehensive understanding of the field and the various directions in which it is now moving.

Requirements

You should do all the readings for each week's assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class. Grades will be based on two critical essays on the readings (5-10 pages), in-class presentations, and general class discussion. Student responsibilities include leading discussion of one of the readings in each seminar, drawing the class into describing and comparing the readings substantively and methodologically. (There will be some flexibility about this depending on the size of the class and the readings for the week.) A one-two page layout of notes should be provided. The specific assignments will be detailed in class.

Readings

Most articles are available online. Any that are not will be available through course reserves (either online or as a physical book) or in a box in the Political Science Lounge, Harkness 314. Please be sure to return these quickly, so that others can read them.

Course Schedule

Latest version available on the course web site:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/faculty/mperess/apfs2013.html>

September 2 – Introduction

No Reading

September 9 – Voting Behavior, Part 1

- [1] Downs, Anthony (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy* New York: HarperCollins, Chapters 1, 7-8, and 12
- [2] Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (1966). *American Voter* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chapters 6-7

- [3] Converse, Philip E. (1964). "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *Public Opinion and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter. New York: Free Press, Pages 206-231
- [4] Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden, and James M. Snyder (2008). [Length of Issues: Using Multiple Measures to Gauge Preference Stability, Ideological Constraint, and Issue Voting](#) *American Political Science Review* 102:215-232.

September 16 – Voting Behavior, Part 2

- [1] Alesina, Alberto, and Howard Rosenthal (1995). *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy* Chapter 3, 6, and 7
- [2] Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk (1997). [Voting Correctly](#) *American Political Science Review* 91: 585-98.
- [3] McKuen, Michael B., Robert SErikson, James A. Stimson (1992). [Peasants or Bankers? The](#)

[4] Gerber, Alan (1998) [Estimating the Effect of Campaign Spending on Senate Election using Instrumental Variables](#) American Political Science Review 92:401-411.

October 21 – Congress, Part 1

[1] Binder, Sarah (1996) [The Partisan Basis of Procedural Control: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1994](#) American Political Science Review 90:8-20.

November 19 – Courts

- [1] Segal, Jeffrey A. and Harold J. Spaeth (1996). [The Influence of Stare Decisis on the Votes of United States Supreme Court Justices](#) American Journal of Political Science 49:971-1003.
- [2] Gordon, Sanford C. and Gregory A. Huber (2007). [The Effect of Electoral Competitiveness on Incumbent Behavior](#) Quarterly Journal of Political Science 2:107-138.
- [3] Bailey, Michael and Forest Maltzman (2008). [Does Legal Doctrine Matter? Unpacking Law and Policy Preference on the U.S. Supreme Court](#) American Political Science Review 102:369-384.
- [4] Clark, Tom S., and Benjamin Lauderdale (2010). [Locating Supreme Court Opinions in Doctrine Space](#) American Journal of Political Science 54:871-890.

November 26 – Bureaucracy

- [1] Lewis, David E. (2007). [Testing Pendleton's Premise: Do Political Appointees Make Worse Bureaucrats?](#) Journal of Politics 69:1073-1088,
- [2] Ting, Michael M. (2008). [Whistleblowing](#) American Political Science Review 102:249-267.
- [3] Gordon, Sanford C. (2009). [Assessing Partisan Bias in Federal Public Corruption Prosecutions](#) American Political Science Review 103:534:554