American Politics Field Seminar 1  
Poli Sci 260A  
UCLA  
Fall 2016  

Wednesdays 10:00-12:50  
Bunche 4357  

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Political Science 260A-B is a two-quarter survey of American Politics, designed for first and second year Ph.D. students. The course has two goals: to help you understand what the discipline has learned about some of the most important questions in American Politics, and to help you begin the transition from consumers to producers of social science research. In 260A, we will focus mainly on the political behavior of ordinary people. In 260B, we will focus on the choices and incentives of elected officials and political professionals. Issues of representation -- how well the choices of those in positions of power reflect the values and interests of the masses -- will be a common theme in both quarters.

**Expectations**

We expect you to read all assigned work, attend each seminar meeting, and fully participate in the discussion. If you don't talk, we can't assess whether you are engaging the material in a productive way. It is your responsibility to make sure that you contribute, listen and react thoughtfully and constructively throughout each discussion.

Class attendance is critical. If you have to miss class because of illness or personal emergency, email us ahead of time. But you should do everything you can to attend every class meeting.
**Grading**
Grades will be calculated as follows:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
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<td>Research Proposal</td>
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**Weekly Page**
Beginning in Week 2, you will need to turn in a one-page summary of each week’s reading. The weekly page consists of two parts, a reading distillation and cocktail party statements.

*Reading Distillation: For one of the week’s assigned readings, give brief responses to each of the following questions*

1. What is the puzzle or question under investigation?
2. What is the main argument?
3. How does the evidence and/or reasoning support the argument?
4. How could the work be made better?

*Cocktail Party Statements: For each assigned reading, give a single sentence summary of the main takeaway point. That is, in 15 years when someone mentions Converse 1964 at a cocktail party, what will you remember as the main point? The answer to question 2 from the reading distillation is often a good cocktail party statement. We will ask some of you to share your cocktail party statements and/or reading distillations in the course of class discussions.*

Ideally, the reading distillation and cocktail party statements together will fit on a single page. Of course, you are encouraged to take more elaborate notes for your own use (in studying for the preliminary exam offered later this year, and beyond.) The point of the weekly page, however, is for you to think about the reading enough to distill it down to its essential components.

Weekly pages should be submitted on the course website by 5pm the day before class. Grading for each week’s assignment is simple: 2 points if it is fine, 1 point if major improvement is needed, 0 points if you did not turn it in on time.

**Literature Review**
For the literature review project, we ask you to study scientific progress on a major research question over time by reviewing at least one paper from each decade, beginning in 1950. The question must relate to aspects of American Politics covered in this class. It must be framed broadly enough so that you can find work on it in every decade, beginning with the 1950’s, continuing up to the 2010’s. Starting in 1950 (Volume 44) and moving forward in time, look through the articles until you find one that addresses your question. You may have to look well into the decade to
find one article about your question. When you find an article, write a paragraph or
two about it: What is the main question? What is the theory? What is the
argument? What data are used? What methods are employed? What previous work
do they mention? What are the main conclusions? Continue on to the 1960’s and
begin looking for an article from that decade, repeating the process through the
2010’s.

The paragraphs you write about each article form the core of your literature review
eyessay, which should make explain how our understanding of your question has
progressed over time. Has there been steady incremental progress? Were there big
moments in which new methods or theoretical frames changed understanding in
significant ways? Have ongoing debates structured the research agenda? What has
been learned in the last 60-odd years? What questions remain?

There is no set length for this assignment, though we expect most essays will be 8
to 10 pages. Your literature review essay is due via the course website on
November 28.

Research Proposal

The research proposal is a five-page paper using the guidelines posted on the
course website (derived from our Week 1 readings) to propose a research project
on a question related to work that we have read this quarter. Your research
proposal is due December 9 at noon.

Books

You should purchase the following books

- *An Economic Theory of Democracy* by Anthony Downs
- *Partisan Hearts and Minds* by Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler
- *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout, 2nd Edition* by Donald P. Green, Alan S. Gerber
- *The Craft of Political Research* by W. Phillips Shively

Other readings are available through JSTOR or the course website.
Preliminary Schedule of Topic

**Week 1 Sept 28 Practicing Social Science (KB/JL/CT)**

Kramer, Gerald H. “Political Science as Science.” (1986)


*The American Voter*, Campbell et al (chapters 6, 10)

*Partisan Hearts and Minds*, Green, Palmquist and Schickler (2002)

**Week 3 Oct 12 Voting Behavior, Part 2: Preferences and Performance (CT/KB)**
*An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Anthony Downs


**Week 4 Oct 19 Public Opinion (CT/KB)**
*Nature and Origins of Public Opinion*, John Zaller

([http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=01909320%28199003%2912%3A1%3C41%3AOPICET%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=01909320%28199003%2912%3A1%3C41%3AOPICET%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U))


**Week 5 Oct 26 Voter Ideology (JL/KB)**

“Approaches to Studying Policy Representation” David Broockman *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 2016.


**Week 6 Nov 2 Polarization (KB/JL)**
*Culture War?* Morris Fiorina

*The Disappearing Center*. Alan Abramowitz.
Week 6 Nov 9 Turnout (KB/JL)
Get out the Vote! Donald Green and Alan Gerber

Timing and Turnout. Sarah Anzia

Week 9 Nov 16 Representation (JL/CT)


Week 9 Nov 23 NO CLASS

Week 10 Nov 30 Inequality (CT/JL)
Bartels, Larry. 2010. Unequal Democracy. Ch. 9

Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches. Ch. 2 and 3.


Olson, Mancur. The Logic of Collective Action, Ch 1-2.
Draft schedule for PS 260B WINTER

**Week 1 Electoral Incentives  CT/JL**
*The Electoral Connection,* David Mayhew


*The Logic of Congressional Action,* R. Douglas Arnold, CH. 1-4


**Week 2 Coalitions, Majority Rule and Legislative Decision-Making. KB/CT**


**Week 3 Ideology and Dimensionality in Congress. JL/CT**

Krehbiel, Keith. 1991. Information and Legislative Organization, Ch. 3-5.


**Week 4 Dynamics of Gridlock  CT/KB**


**Week 5 Parties in Congress CT/KB**


Cox, Gary and Mathew McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda.* (chapters TBA)

**Week 6 The Presidency  JL/KB**
Cameron, Charles, 2000. *Veto Bargaining,* Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5.


**Week 7 Bureaucracy and Policy Implementation KB/JL**


**Week 8 Parties KB/JL**

Aldrich *Why Parties?* Ch 1-2


**Week 9 State and Local Government JL/CT**

*Readings TBD*

**Week 10 Manipulation or Accountability? KB/JL/CT**

