

## **GOVT 711: Proseminar in American Politics**

Professor Elizabeth Suhay

[suhay@american.edu](mailto:suhay@american.edu)

American University, Fall 2025

Monday, 5:30-8:00, Spring Valley Bldg 506

Office hours: Monday 4:00-5:00 (Kerwin 212) & by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course will introduce you to the field of U.S. politics, covering canonical works with an eye toward recent developments. While focused on the politics of just one nation, the field of U.S. politics has been an incubator of novel theorizing and methodologies, many of which have been taken up by scholars across the field of Political Science. Thus, you should understand this course not only as offering a deep understanding of U.S. government and politics but also as providing insight into the broader field. We will cover a wide range of topics in the study of U.S. politics. We begin with American political culture and traditions, major political institutions, and state and local politics; we then cover political parties, interest groups, and elections; we end with the study of public opinion, political communication, social groups, and representation. Finally, this course will also help you to develop your scholarly writing skills and ability to identify ways in which you might meaningfully contribute to the field.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Assess theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses of research studies in American politics.
- Understand debates in the field and discuss how they might be resolved.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the limitations of, and voids in, extant scholarship.
- Identify and synthesize the research literature on a specific topic.
- Design an original research study that builds on the American politics literature.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are required to follow the University's Academic Integrity Code. *Plagiarism, which includes the unacknowledged submission of AI generated text in assignments, is a violation of academic integrity.* If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the standards and requirements of the University's Academic Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and will be reported appropriately. You can find more information about the University's Academic Integrity Code here: <https://www.american.edu/policies/students/upload/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

## **Course Assignments and Expectations**

### *Participation – 15%*

The success of this seminar depends on your preparation. Please read assigned readings in their entirety before each class and record notes on authors' main arguments, methods and evidence, and analysis. Consider each publication's strengths, weaknesses, implications, and any questions you have about it. Students' participation will be graded according to quantity and quality of participation, with quality reflecting preparation and constructive engagement with readings, classmates' ideas, and activities. Unexcused absences and/or repeatedly arriving late will negatively affect the participation grade. Students may have one unexcused absence without penalty.

### *In-class Reflections – 15%*

Students will complete an in-class, written reflection each week. (Students can miss one reflection without penalty.) These are graded pass/fail, with the final grade calculated as a percentage of the total number of required reflections. For example, passing 11 of 12 reflections results in a grade of 92% (A-).

### *Exams – 40%*

- Mid-term exam (2.5 hours) – 20% – Monday, October 13, 5:30-8
- Final exam (2.5 hours) – 20% – Monday, December 8, 5:30-8

### *Research Design – 30%*

Students will complete a research design that describes an original research project, motivating it with an extensive literature review. This design will include: title page with abstract, introduction, literature review, research questions or hypotheses, methodology (including data collection and analysis), and references. Students in American Politics should describe a project that contributes to the AP literature. Students in Comparative Politics and Methodology may describe a project that builds on the AP literature but contributes to the CP or Methods literatures. Approximate length: 20 double-spaced pages. All students must discuss their topic with the instructor ahead of time and work with two partners to (a) develop their ideas, and (b) read and critique a draft of the others' design.

Final design due Friday, November 21 (by midnight)

## **Course Readings**

All course readings will be made available via Canvas or will be on reserve at the library. Note that only the initial list of readings each week are required. Recommended readings are intended as a supplement for students studying for the U.S. politics field exam or interested in reading more deeply on a given topic.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS

### Week 1 – INTRODUCTION & U.S. POLITICAL CULTURE

#### Monday, August 25

Louis Hartz. 1955. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. Harcourt Brace. Chapter 1

Richard Hofstadter. 1964. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." *Harper's Magazine*, November.

Jennifer Hochschild. 1981. *What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Harvard University Press. Chapter 3, 5, 6

Rogers Smith. 1993. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America." *American Political Science Review* 87: 549-566.

Robert Putnam. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1).

#### *Recommended reading*

James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. 1787-88. *The Federalist Papers*, Nos. 10, 51, 52, 53, 62, 63, 78. [Online here](#)

Alexis de Tocqueville. 1835 / 1840. *Democracy in America*.

Gunnar Myrdal. 1944. *An American Dilemma*. McGraw-Hill. Introduction, Chapter 1

Richard Hofstadter. 1963. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Knopf.

Robert Dahl. 1977. "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States." *Political Science Quarterly* 92(1): 1-20.

Seymour Martin Lipset. 1996. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. W.W. Norton. Chapter 1-3

Alex Zakaras. 2022. *The Roots of American Individualism: Political Myth in the Age of Jackson*. Princeton University Press.

## Week 2 – CONGRESS

### Monday, September 8

Richard Fenno. 1977. "U.S. House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.

Douglas Arnold. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. Yale University Press. Chapter 1, 4

Erick Schickler. 2001. *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1

Frances E. Lee. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2, 3

#### *Recommended reading*

Nelson W. Polsby. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62(March): 144-68.

David Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press. Part 1

Keith Krehbiel. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. University of Michigan Press.

Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal. 1991. "Patterns of Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 35(1): 228-278.

Gary Cox and Matthew McCubbins. 2007 [1993]. *Legislative Leviathan*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 4, 5

Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry Weingast. 1994. "Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19: 149-79.

Carol M. Swain. 1995. *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress*. Harvard University Press.

Timothy Groseclose and James Snyder, Jr. 1996. "Buying Supermajorities." *American Political Science Review* 90(2): 303-315.

David King. 1997. *Turf Wars*. University of Chicago Press.

Keith Krehbiel. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

Barbara Sinclair. 2016. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress, Fifth Edition*. Sage.

Alexander Bolton and Sharece Thrower. 2021. *Checks in the Balance: Legislative Capacity and the Dynamics of Executive Power*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, 2

James R. Jones. 2024. *The Last Plantation: Racism and Resistance in the Halls of Congress*. Princeton University Press.

### **Week 3 – PRESIDENCY**

#### **Monday, September 15**

Richard Neustadt. 1990 [1960]. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. Free Press. Chapter 1, 3, 4

Stephen Skowronek. 1984. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." In Michael C. Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*. CQ Press.

Terry Moe. 1985. "The Politicized Presidency." In *The New Direction in American Politics*, ed. John Chubb and Paul Peterson. Brookings Institution Press. Pp. 235-271.

Charles Cameron and Nolan McCarty. 2004. "Models of Vetoes and Veto Bargaining." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 409-35.

Kenneth Lowande and Jon C. Rogowski. 2021. "Presidential Unilateral Power." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 21-43.

#### *Recommended reading*

John Mueller. 1973. *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*. Wiley.

James D. Barber. 1992. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall.

Samuel Kernell. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 3rd ed. Congressional Quarterly Press.

Tim Groseclose and Nolan McCarty. 2001. "The Politics of Blame: Bargaining Before an Audience." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 100-119.

Brandice Canes-Wrone and Scott De Marchi. 2003. "Presidential Approval and Legislative Success." *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 491-509.

Fred I. Greenstein. 2004. *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to George W. Bush*. Princeton University Press.

William Howell. 2009. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton University Press.

Mariah Zeisberg, 2013. *War Powers: The Politics of Constitutional Authority*. Princeton University Press.

Paul Pierson. 2017. American Hybrid: Donald Trump and the Strange Merger of Populism and Plutocracy. *The British Journal of Sociology* 68(S1): 105-119.

Aaron R. Kaufman and Jon C. Rogowski. 2023. "Divided Government, Strategic Substitution, and Presidential Unilateralism." *American Journal of Political Science*.

## **Week 4 – JUDICIARY**

### **Monday, September 22**

Robert Dahl. 1957. "Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as National Policy Maker." *Journal of Public Law* 6: 279-295.

Gerald Rosenberg. 2008. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring about Social Change? Second Edition*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1 (begin p. 30), 2

Jeffrey R. Lax and Kelly T. Rader. 2010. "Legal Constraints on Supreme Court Decision Making: Do Jurisprudential Regimes Exist?" *The Journal of Politics* 72(2).

James Gibson and Michael J. Nelson. 2021. *Judging Inequality: State Supreme Courts and the Inequality Crisis*. Russell Sage Foundation Press. Chapter 1, 8

Charles M. Cameron and Jonathan P. Kastellec. 2023. *Making the Supreme Court: The Politics of Appointments, 1930-2020*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1

### *Recommended reading*

Jeffrey Segal and Albert Cover. 1989. "Ideological Values and the Votes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices." *American Political Science Review* 83(2): 557-566.

Forrest Maltzman, James Spriggs, and Paul Wahlbeck. 1999. "Strategy and Judicial Choice: New Institutional Approaches to Supreme Court Decision Making." In C. Clayton and H. Gillman's *Supreme Court Decision-Making: New Institutional Approaches*. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 43-63.

Charles Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations: A Theory of Institutional Constraints and Choices." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 1069-1095.

Keith Whittington. 2005. "Interpose Your Friendly Hand: Political Support for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review* 99(4): 583-96.

Gregory Huber and Sanford Gordon. 2006. "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind When It Runs for Office?" *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 247-263.

Mark Graber. 2008. *Dred Scott and the Problem of Constitutional Evil*. Cambridge University Press.

Brandon Bartels. 2009. "The Constraining Capacity of Legal Doctrine on the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 474-95.

Benjamin Lauderdale and Tom Clark. 2012. "The Supreme Court's Many Median Justices." *American Political Science Review* 106(4): 847-866.

Adam Bonica and Maya Sen. 2021. "Estimating Judicial Ideology." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35(1): 97-118.

## **Week 5 – BUREAUCRACY and ADMINISTRATIVE POWER**

### **Monday, September 29**

Michael Lipsky. 1969. "Toward a Theory of Street-Level Bureaucracy." Paper prepared for presentation at the American Political Science Association annual conference. [Article version of *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*. 1980. Russell Sage Foundation]

Stephen Skowronek. 1982. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1

Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-179.

Rachel Augustine Potter. 2019. *Bending the Rules: Procedural Politicking in the Bureaucracy*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2, 3

Russell Muirhead and Nancy L. Rosenblum. 2024. *Ungoverning: The Attack on the Administrative State and the Politics of Chaos*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1-4

*Recommended reading*

Charles Lindblom. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review*: 79-98.

Mathew D. McCubbins, Roger Noll, and Barry Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organizations* 3(2): 243-77.

James Q. Wilson. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. Basic Books. Chapter 2, 20

John Brehm and Scott Gates. 1997. *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage: Bureaucratic Response to a Democratic Public*. University of Michigan Press.

David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers*. Cambridge University Press.

Daniel Carpenter. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, 4

John D. Huber and Charles R. Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press.

David E. Lewis. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control of Bureaucratic Performance*. Princeton University Press.

Kenneth Lowande. 2018. "Who Polices the Administrative State?" *American Political Science Review* 112(4): 874-890.



## Week 6 – STATE and LOCAL POLITICS

### Monday, October 6

Charles Tiebout. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *The Journal of Political Economy* 64(5): 416-424.

Treisman, Daniel. 2007. *The Architecture of Government: Rethinking Political Decentralization*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Excerpt TBD

Chris Tausanovitch and Christopher Warshaw. 2014. "Representation in Municipal Government." *American Political Science Review* 108(3): 605–41.

Jessica Trounstein. 2021. "The Production of Local Inequality: Race, Class, and Land Use in American Cities." From *The American Political Economy: Politics, Markets, and Power*, edited by Jacob S. Hacker, Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Paul Pierson, and Kathleen Thelen. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 158-80

Sarah F. Anzia. 2021. "Party and Ideology in American Local Government: An Appraisal." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 133-50.

Jake Grumbach. 2022. *Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

### *Recommended reading*

V. O. Key, Jr. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Knopf.

Paul Peterson. 1981. *City Limits*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3, 4

Nancy Burns. 1994. *The Formation of American Local Governments: Private Values in Public Institutions*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1, 4, 5

Elisabeth Gerber. 1996. "Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(1): 99-128.

Charles Shipan and Craig Volden. 2008. "The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 840-857.

Christopher Berry. 2009. *Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments*. Cambridge University Press.

Ira Katznelson. 2013. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*. W.W. Norton.

Jamila Michener. 2018. *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. 2019. *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Business, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation*. Oxford University Press.

Devin Caughey and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. *Dynamic Democracy: Public Opinion, Elections, and Policymaking in the American States*. University of Chicago Press.

Daniel J. Hopkins, Eric Schickler, and David L. Azizi. 2022. "From Many Divides, One? The Polarization and Nationalization of American State Party Platforms, 1918-2017." *Studies in American Political Development* 36: 1-20.

## **Week 7 – MID-TERM EXAM**

**Monday October 13**

## **Week 8**

### **POLITICAL PARTIES and POLARIZATION**

**Monday, October 20**

Matthew Levendusky. 2009. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpt TBD

John Aldrich. 2011. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1, 2

Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Maskett, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Political Demands, and Nominations in American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571-597.

Matt Grossmann and David A. Hopkins. 2024. *Polarized by Degrees: How the Diploma Divide and the Culture War Transformed American Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Excerpt TBD

Katherine Krimmel. 2024. *Divergent Democracy: How Policy Positions Came to Dominate Party Competition*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld. 2024. *The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

### *Recommended reading*

APSA Committee on Political Parties. 1950. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." *American Political Science Review* 44(3): 1-96.

Michael B. MacKuen, Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1991. "Macropartisanship." *American Political Science Review* 83(4): 1125-1142.

William Riker. 1992. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.

John Gerring. 1998. *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996*. Cambridge University Press.

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identity of Voters*. Yale University Press. Chapter 1, 2

Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 10(1): 786-802.

Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams. 2008. "Political Polarization in the American Public." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 563-588.

Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *The Journal of Politics* 70(2): 542-555.

Hans Noel. 2012. "The Coalition Merchants: The Ideological Roots of the Civil Rights Realignment." *The Journal of Politics* 74(1): 156-173.

Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aaroe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 1-17.

Matt Grossmann and David A. Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats*. Oxford. Chapter 2, 3

Lilliana Mason. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press.

Sam Rosenfeld. 2018. *The Polarizers: Postwar Architects of Our Partisan Era*. Chicago University Press.

Shanto Iyengar, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129-46.

Andrew B. Hall. 2019. *Who Wants to Run? How the Devaluing of Political Office Drives Polarization*. University of Chicago Press.

Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields. 2019. *The Long Southern Strategy: How Chasing White Voters in the South Changed American Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Shana Kushner Gadarian, Sara Wallace Goodman, and Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2022. *Pandemic Politics: The Deadly Toll of Partisanship in the Age of COVID*. Princeton University Press.

Jacob S. Hacker, Amelia Malpas, Paul Pierson, and Sam Zacher. 2023. "Bridging the Blue Divide: The Democrats' New Metro Coalition and the Unexpected Prominence of Redistribution." *Perspectives on Politics*.

Frances Lee and Stephen Macedo. 2025. *In Covid's Wake: How Our Politics Failed Us*. Princeton University Press.

## **Week 9 – INTEREST and ADVOCACY GROUPS**

### **Monday, October 27**

E. E. Schattschneider. 1960. *The Semisovereign People*. Dryden. Excerpt TBD

Mancur Olson. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press. Excerpt TBD

Theda Skocpol, Marshall Ganz, and Ziad Munson. 2000. "A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 94: 527-546.

Richard Hall and Alan Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review* 100(1): 69-84.

Key Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2018. *Unequal and Unrepresented: Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

E.J. Fagan. 2024. *The Thinkers: The Rise of Partisan Think Tanks and the Polarization of American Politics*. Oxford University Press. Excerpt TBD

### *Recommended reading*

Albert Hirschman. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Harvard University Press. Chapter 1, 9

James Q. Wilson. 1973. *Political Organizations*. Basic Books.

John Mark Hansen. 1985. "The Political Economy of Group Membership." *American Political Science Review* 79: 79-96.

Jack Walker. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. University of Michigan Press. Chapter 2, 3

Jeffrey Berry. 1999. *The New Liberalism: The Rising Power of Citizen Groups*. Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 1, 2, 4

Dara Strolovitch. 2006. "Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender." *Journal of Politics* 68(4): 893-908.

Susan Webb Yackee. 2006. "Sweet-Talking the Fourth Branch: The Influence of Interest Group Comments on Federal Agency Rulemaking." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16(1): 103-124.

Jason Webb Yackee and Susan Webb Yackee. 2006. "Group Influence on the U.S. Bureaucracy." *The Journal of Politics* 68(1): 128-139.

Adam Bonica. 2013. "Ideology and Interests in the Political Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 294-311.

Hahrie Han. 2016. "The Organizational Roots of Political Activism: Field Experiments on Creating a Relational Context." *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 296-307.

Leah Cardamore Stokes. 2020. *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States*. Oxford University Press.

Brian Lipgobor and Daniel Carpenter. 2024. "Lawyers as Lobbyists: Regulatory Advocacy in American Finance." *Perspectives on Politics* 22(4).

## **Week 10 – CLASSICS on ELECTIONS and VOTING**

### **Monday, November 3**

Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee. 1954. *Voting: Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpt TBD

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row. Excerpt TBD

Angus Campbell, Phillip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. University of Michigan Press. Excerpt TBD

William Riker and Peter Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 25-42.

Morris Fiorina. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. Yale University Press. Excerpt TBD

Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

*Recommended reading*

V.O. Key, Jr. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Knopf.

V.O. Key. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960*. Vintage.

Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Macmillan Publishing. Chapter 5, 6, 7

Samuel L. Popkin. 1994. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago University Press.

Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271-94.

Larry M. Bartels. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(1): 35-50.

David R. Mayhew. 2002. *Critical Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*. Yale University Press.

Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk. 2006. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing during Election Campaigns*. Cambridge University Press.

D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd G. Shields. 2008. *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Elections*. Princeton University Press.

Jan E. Leighley and Jonathan Nagler. 2014. *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, 4-6

Bernard Fraga. 2016. "Candidates or Districts? Reevaluating the Role of Race in Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 97-122.

Joshua L. Kalla and David E. Broockman. 2018. "The Minimal Persuasive Effects of Campaign Contact in General Elections: Evidence from 49 Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 112(1): 148-166.

Gary C. Jacobson and Jamie L. Carson. 2019. *The Politics of Congressional Elections, Tenth Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

## Week 11 – PUBLIC OPINION

### Monday, November 10

Phillip Converse. 2006 [1964]. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* 18: 1-74.

John Zaller and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 579-616.

Taeku Lee. 2002. *Mobilizing Public Opinion*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpt TBD

Eric Schickler. 2013. "New Deal Liberalism and Racial Liberalism in the Mass Public, 1937-1968." *Perspectives on Politics* 11(1): 75-98.

Jonathan Rodden. 2019. *Why Cities Lose: The Deep Roots of the Urban-Rural Political Divide*. Basic Books. Excerpt TBD

Leor Zmigrod. 2025. *The Ideological Brain: The Radical Science of Flexible Thinking*. Henry Holt. Excerpt TBD

### Recommended reading

Walter Lippmann. 1922. *Public Opinion: How People Decide; The Role of News, Propaganda and Manufactured Consent in Modern Democracy and Political Elections*. Chapter 1, 6

Seymour Martin Lipset. 1960. *Political Man*. Anchor Books.

V.O. Key. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. Knopf.

Robert Lane. 1962. *Political Ideology: Why the American Common Man Believes What He Does*. Free Press.

Donald R. Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. "Sociotropic Politics: The American Case." *British Journal of Political Science* 11(2): 129-161.

Pamela Johnson Conover. 1984. "The Influence of Group Identifications on Political Perception and Evaluation." *Journal of Politics* 46: 760-784.

Edward Carmines and James Stimson. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. University of Chicago Press.

John Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press.

Katherine Cramer. 2012. "Putting Inequality in its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Politics of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 517-532.

Christopher Ellis and James A. Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America*. Cambridge University Press.

John Zaller. 2012. "What Nature and Origins Leaves Out." *Critical Review* 24(4): 569-642.

Diana C. Mutz. 2021. *Winners and Losers: The Psychology of Foreign Trade*. Princeton University Press.

Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan. 2022. *The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

## **Week 12 – MEDIA and POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

### **Monday, November 17**

Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103–26.

Gabriel S. Lenz. 2009. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 821-837.

James M. Snyder and David Strömberg. 2010. "Press Coverage and Political Accountability." *The Journal of Political Economy* 118(2): 355-408.

D.J. Flynn, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2017. "The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs About Politics." *Advances in Political Psychology* 38(1): 127-150.

Alexander Coppock. 2022. *Persuasion in Parallel: How Information Changes Minds about Politics*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpt TBD

Eunji Kim. 2025. *The American Mirage: How Reality TV Upholds the Myth of Meritocracy*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD



### *Recommended reading*

Elihu Katz and Paul Felix Lazarsfeld. 1966. *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*. Transaction Publishers.

Shanto Iyengar, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 76(4): 848-858.

Stephen Ansolabehere, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829-838.

Diana C. Mutz. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. Cambridge University Press.

David Barker and Kathleen Knight. 2000. "Political Talk Radio and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64(2): 149-170.

Ted Brader. 2005. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1, 4, 5

Markus Prior. 2005. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.

Diana Mutz. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Kevin Arceneaux and Martin Johnson. 2013. *Changing Minds or Changing Channels?: Partisan News in an Age of Choice*. University of Chicago Press.

Matthew S. Levendusky. 2013. "Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 611-623.

David E. Broockman and Daniel M. Butler. 2017. "The Causal Effects of Elite Position-Taking on Voter Attitudes: Field Experiments with Elite Communication." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1): 208-221.

Pablo Barberá, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2019. "Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data." *American Political Science Review* 113(4): 883-901.

Jaime E. Settle. 2019. *Frenemies: How Social Media Polarizes America*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2-4

Thomas Wood and Ethan Porter. 2019. "The Elusive Backfire Effect: Mass Attitudes' Steadfast Factual Adherence." *Political Behavior* 41: 135-163.

Adam J. Berinsky. 2023. *Political Rumors: Why We Accept Misinformation and How to Fight It*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, 4-6

Kevin Arceneaux, Johanna Dunaway, Martin Johnson, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2025. *The House That Fox News Built? Representation, Political Accountability, and the Rise of Partisan News*. Cambridge University Press.

## **Week 13 – THE POLITICS OF RACE and SEX**

### **Monday, November 24**

Jane Mansbridge. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpt TBD

Michael Dawson. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 3

Donald R. Kinder and Lynn Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago University Press. Chapter 5

Sarah F. Anzia and Christopher R. Berry. 2011. “The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?” *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 478–93.

Maya Sen and Omar Wasow. 2016. “Race as a ‘Bundle of Sticks’: Designs that Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 499-522.

Daniel Q. Gillion. 2020. *The Loud Minority: Why Protests Matter in American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Excerpt TBD

### *Recommended reading*

Kristin Luker. 1985. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. University of California Press.

Michael Jones-Correa. 1998. *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City*. Cornell University Press.

Cathy Cohen. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

Martin Gilens. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1-3

Tali Mendelberg. 2001. *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*. Princeton University Press.

Vesla M. Weaver and Amy E. Lerman. 2010. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 817-833.

Christopher F. Karpowitz, Tali Mendelberg, and Lee Shaker. 2012. "Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 533-547.

Michael Tesler. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Race and Racial Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 690-704.

Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless. 2014. "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition." *American Political Science Review*.

Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2016. "The Political Legacy of American Slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78(3): 621-641.

Michael Dawson and Megan Ming Francis. 2016. "Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order." *Public Culture* 28(1): 23-62.

Eric Schickler. 2016. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1964*. Princeton University Press.

Ismail K. White and Chryl N. Laird. 2020. *Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior*. Princeton University Press. Outline of book; Chapter 1, 2

## **Week 14 – REPRESENTATION and DEMOCRATIC RESPONSIVENESS**

### **Monday December 1**

Robert Dahl. 1961. *Who Governs?* Yale University Press. Chapter 1, 7, 8, 12, 15, 19

Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56: 947-952.

Jane Mansbridge. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 515-528.

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson. 2014. "After the 'Master Theory': Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 643-662.

Joshua L. Kalla and David E. Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558.

Matt Grossmann, Zuhair Mahmood, and William Isaac. 2021. "Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Unequal Class Influence in American Policy." *The Journal of Politics* 83(4): 1706-1720.

### *Recommended reading*

Hanna Pitkin. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press.

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

James Stimson, Michael Mackuen, and Robert Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543-565.

Jane Mansbridge. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'." *Journal of Politics* 61: 628-657.

Katherine Tate. 2003. *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representation in the U.S. Congress*. Princeton University Press.

Christopher Wlezien. 2004. "Patterns of Representation: Dynamics of Public Preferences and Policy," *Journal of Politics* 66(1): 1-24.

Jeffrey Lax and Justin Phillips. 2009. "Gay Rights in the States: Public Opinion and Policy Responsiveness." *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 367-386.

Nicholas Carnes. 2013. *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making*. University of Chicago Press.

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564-581.

Larry Bartels. 2018. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press.

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2023. *Tyranny of the Minority: Why American Democracy Reached the Breaking Point*. Crown.

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS POLICIES & SUPPORT

### Academic Support and Access Center

The Academic Support and Access Center supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to providing access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community.

- Location: Butler Pavilion 300, 202-885-3360, [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu)
- Hours: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm
- Website: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>

### Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively "Protected Bases") in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the:

- Assistant Vice President for Equity and Title IX Officer, Office of Equity and Title IX
- Phone: 202-885-8080
- Email: [TitleIX@american.edu](mailto:TitleIX@american.edu) for complaints and reports for sexual misconduct; and [equityoffice@american.edu](mailto:equityoffice@american.edu) for complaints and reports for other discrimination.

Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff – with the exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, staff in the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center – who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.

For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact contact AU's [Wellbeing Center](#).

### Emergencies

In an emergency, AU will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the

traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail or Canvas, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (<http://www.american.edu/emergency/>) and the AU information line at 202-885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.