This seminar is designed to introduce students to the scholarly study of American politics. The aim is to serve students with a variety of needs, including those who intend to specialize in American politics and those who want to acquire a basic understanding of American politics without further specialization. Although the seminar is intended to survey the field of American politics, it is not comprehensive. No one-semester course could possibly include all approaches or all subfields in American politics. The first half of the course focuses more on mass political behavior; the second half is oriented more toward institutions.

Please Note: Seminar participants are asked to read one short book before the first seminar on September 19.

A. Weekly Schedule

1. Political Culture and Participation        September 19
2. Public Opinion I                         September 26
3. Public Opinion II                        October 3
4. Mass Media                              October 10
5. Elections                               October 17
6. Political Parties                       October 24

FALL BREAK

7. Institutional Theories                   November 7
8. Congress                                November 14
9. Presidency                              November 21
10. Bureaucracy                            November 28
11. Inequality in American Politics        December 5
12. American Democracy                     December 12
B. **Course Requirements**

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of required reading is reasonable (averaging 215 pages per week). Each student is expected to do the assigned reading before each seminar and come to class prepared for discussion.

2. **Discussion.** The main event each week is a structured discussion of the week's reading, focusing on the value of a scholar's theory, the appropriateness of the methods used, the adequacy of the evidence offered, and the contributions of each work to an understanding of American politics.

3. **Alternative Writing Requirements.** Students can choose to take the seminar as either a reading course or a research seminar.
   
   a. **Reading Course.** Students who choose the first option write *four* short papers that focus on the week’s readings and one medium-length paper (maximum ten pages) that focuses on some theme that cuts across two or more weeks of reading.

   Students select the weeks they would like to write their four short papers, subject to the constraint that they write two papers before fall break and two papers after fall break. The medium-length paper is due on Friday, January 19.

   b. **Research Course.** Students who choose the second option write *two* short papers that focus on the week’s readings and one research paper (maximum 25 pages).

   Students select the weeks they would like to write their two short papers, subject to the constraint that they write one paper before fall break and one paper after fall break. The research paper is due on Friday, January 19.

4. **Short Papers (all students).** The short papers are opportunities for you to discuss the week’s required reading, unprompted by the instructor or your fellow students. Your papers should be typed, double-spaced, and a maximum of five pages. They are due at the start of the seminar in which their subjects are scheduled for discussion. I will return each of the short papers with my comments a week after they are due.

   The key to a good paper is to pose an interesting question and then answer it. You might focus on the value of a scholar’s theory, examining its logical rigor, the plausibility of the arguments, or its relation to other theories. You might focus on the adequacy of the empirical evidence, asking whether the scholar used appropriate methods, whether the evidence really supports the hypotheses, or whether other evidence contradicts it. Alternatively, you might address the question of how well a piece of scholarship helps to illuminate other happenings in the real world. Does a book help to explain why government makes the decisions it does? Under what conditions does it appear useful? These papers are not an opportunity to summarize the week’s readings. You should assume that anyone who reads your paper has also done the week’s reading.
These papers should be well organized and well written. A paper that fails to develop an argument until the last paragraph is called a first draft. A paper that fails to anticipate potential counter arguments, is written in the passive voice, or is filled with grammatical, spelling, or typing errors, is called a second draft. A paper that you would be proud to read to the class is called a final draft.

5. **Final Paper** *(for reading course).* Each student who chooses the first option writes one medium-length paper (maximum ten pages) that is due on Friday, January 19. Much like the shorter papers, this paper is an opportunity to analyze a subject discussed in the assigned readings. For the final paper, however, the emphasis is on examining a theme that cuts across two or more weeks of readings.

6. **Research Paper** *(for research course).* Each student who chooses the second option writes an original research paper (maximum 25 pages). The exact subject is chosen in consultation with the instructor. You should select a topic by Tuesday, November 7 and submit a one-page description. The research paper is due on Friday, January 19.

7. **Grades.** Grades reflect effort and performance in seminar discussion and in written work.

C. **Availability of Readings**

1. **Reserve Readings.** There is at least one copy of each required book on reserve in the Politics Graduate Study Room at Firestone Library.

2. **Additional Free Copies.** Many of the books for this course are also used in other Princeton courses and may be found in the appropriate libraries. You may find copies either in the Reserve Collection, located on A Floor of Firestone Library, or in the Donald E. Stokes Library in Wallace Hall. Check the University’s online catalogue for details.

3. **Books Available for Purchase.** I have asked the Princeton University Store to order ten books that are used most intensively (Fiorina; Zaller; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson; Mayhew; Krehbiel; Cox and McCubbins; Arnold; Howell; Wilson; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal). Please note that the Fiorina and Mayhew books are second editions.

4. **Electronic Course Reserves.** Published articles are available as part of the library’s electronic course reserves (marked ECR on the syllabus). Unpublished work is available in the Course Materials section of Blackboard (marked BB on the syllabus).

5. **Suggested Readings.** The suggested readings are places you might turn if you want to learn more about a given subject. Although these works are available somewhere in the Princeton University library system, I have not placed them on reserve for this course. For additional suggested readings, please refer to the Department’s “Reading List for the Ph.D. General Examination in The Politics of the United States” (Spring 2005).

D. Times and Places

1. Seminar Meetings
   Tuesday, 1:30-4:20  Corwin Hall, Room 126

2. Office Hours
   By appointment  Robertson Hall, Room 310
   Phone: 258-4855  arnold@princeton.edu

I am readily available by appointment. Please send me an e-mail that includes all the times that are impossible for you over the coming week. I will respond with an appointment that works for both of us.

Weekly Readings

1. Political Culture and Participation (September 19)

   Please read the following book and article before the first seminar and come to class prepared for discussion. Both are easy reads.

   a. Required (178 pages)


   b. Suggested

      Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, Who Votes? (1980).

      Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America (1993).


2. Public Opinion I (September 26)

a. Required (332 pages)


b. Suggested


3. Public Opinion II (October 3)

a. Required (206 pages)

Chapter 2, “Presidential Approval,” pp. 29-75.
Chapter 4, “Macropartisanship,” pp. 109-149.


b. Suggested


4. **Mass Media (October 10)**

a. **Required** (246 pages)

- Chapter 1 (2005), pp. 1-16.
- Chapters 2 through 8 (1999), pp. 6-162.


b. **Suggested**


5. **Elections (October 17)**

   a. **Required** (173 pages)

   **Parties and Elections**


   **Macro Models**


**Congressional Elections**


b. **Suggested**


6. Political Parties (October 24)

a. Required (230 pages)


b. Suggested

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


7. Institutional Theories (November 7)

a. Required (253 pages)


b. Suggested


8. Congress (November 14)

a. Required (205 pages)


b. Suggested


9. **Presidency (November 21)**

   a. **Required** (157 pages)


   b. **Suggested**


10. **Bureaucracy (November 28)**

a. *Required* (202 pages)


   
   Chapter 9, “Compliance,” pp. 154-175.


b. *Suggested*


11. **Inequality in American Politics (December 5)**

a. *Required* (203 pages)


b. *Suggested Recent Works*


**12. American Democracy (December 12)**

b. **Required (208 pages)**

*Assessing the American System*


Morris P. Fiorina, “How Did It Come to This and Where Do We Go from Here?” in his *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 2nd ed. (2006), pp. 187-228

*Campaign Contributions and Their Effects*


b. **Suggested**


