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 February 3. * * * * * * *

A. Weekly Schedule

1. The Constitution February 3
2. Public Opinion February 10
3. Mass Media February 17
4. Race and Politics February 24
5. Elections March 3
6. Parties in the Electorate March 10
7. Parties in Government March 24
8. Political Institutions March 31
9. Congress April 7
10. Bureaucracy April 14
11. Macro Politics April 21
12. Political Accountability April 28
B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of required reading is reasonable (averaging 250 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 *five* 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 five short papers, subject to the constraint that they write at least two papers before spring break and at least two papers after spring break. The medium-length paper is due on Friday, May 6.

   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 spring break and one paper after spring break. The research paper is due on Friday, May 20.

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, May 6. 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 Thursday, March 10 and submit a one-page description. The research paper is due on Friday, May 20.

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 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 copies of ten books that are used most intensively (Dahl; Zaller; Iyengar and Kinder; Mendelberg; Fiorina; Mayhew; Krebsiel; Arnold; Carpenter; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson).

4. **Electronic Course Reserves.** Articles are available as part of the library’s electronic course reserves (marked ECR 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” (Fall 2003). http://web.princeton.edu/sites/politics/grad/AmericanReadList.pdf
D. Times and Places

1. Seminar Meetings. Thursday, 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. The Constitution (February 3)

   Please read the following book before the first meeting and come to class prepared for discussion.

   a. Required (157 pages)


   b. Suggested

      The Federalist Papers (1787-1788).

   c. Suggested Review Essay on Dahl


2. Public Opinion (February 10)

   a. Required (309 pages)


   b. Suggested Review Essays


c. **Suggested**


3. **Mass Media (February 17)**

a. **Required** (233 pages)


b. **Suggested Review Essay**


c. **Suggested**


4. Race and Politics (February 24)

a. Required (273 pages)


b. Suggested


David T. Cannon, Race, Redistricting, and Representation: The Unintended Consequences of Black Majority Districts (1999).
5. Elections (March 3)

a. Required (230 pages)


b. Suggested


6. **Parties in the Electorate (March 10)**

   a. **Required** (168 pages)


   b. **Suggested**

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


7. **Parties in Government** (March 24)

   a. *Required* (292 pages)


   b. *Suggested*


**8. Political Institutions (March 31)**

a. **Required (234 pages)**


b. **Suggested**


9. Congress (April 7)

a. Required (257 pages)


b. Suggested Review Essay


c. Suggested


10. Bureaucracy (April 14)

a. **Required** (367 pages)


b. **Suggested**


11. Macropolitics (April 21)

a. Required (373 pages)


12. Political Accountability (April 28)

a. Required (123 pages)


http://www.princeton.edu/~bartels/chairs.pdf


b. Suggested


