

Congressional Representation: Junior Workshop 2

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Monday
10-11:50am
Corwin 023
Spring 2003

This workshop aims to introduce participants to research in the many areas associated with representation in the U.S. Congress. This is a broad, but very important topic, with many interesting questions and opportunities for research. Although my personal expertise is in the use of quantitative methods, many research strategies for addressing research questions will be entertained, including: quantitative methods, normative and game theoretic approaches, and qualitative methods. In this workshop we will strive to produce research in which the question addressed either develops or is informed by theoretical understandings. In so doing, we will explore how to move from a broad area of interest to a specific question, as well as how to make and present an argument.

Some very broad questions that could yield interesting research questions include:

- What do we mean by “representation” and how do we assess it?
- Is direct democracy different/better than representative democracy?
- To whom are representatives responsive to (if anyone)?
- How safe are incumbents and what does that imply?
- Why do representatives vote as they do?
- How do representatives behave with respect to their district and why?
- How much do voters know about their representative and should we care?
- How much do representatives know about their district and should we care?
- Do Senators and House members differ in how they relate to their district?
- What role do political parties play?
- Are females and minorities under-represented?
- How does (racial) gerrymandering affect representation?
- How do campaign finance laws/primary elections/term limits affect congressional elections / how representatives relate to their district?
- How does public opinion affect congressional elections?
- How does public opinion affect congressional policy?

Since the topic area is very diverse, you have a lot of freedom to choose a topic and research question of personal interest. The downside is that you have to do most of the legwork to get yourself acquainted with the literature (hence the “Independent” aspect of the work). A (woefully) incomplete bibliography of some of the topics is attached to get you started and I will of course provide advice and guidance where possible.

The introductory lecture on 9/23 will serve to get you started in thinking about the questions others have asked. It will provide only a bare-bones outline of what goes on between Congress and constituents. In so doing it is hoped that it will illuminate the many possible areas that you can explore in your independent work.

Outline of Our Meetings:

9/23 **Meet** at Corwin 023 for Introduction and a brief overview of Congressional Elections and Representation.

9/30 **Meet** at Corwin 023 for “How to Write a (Good) Paper” and discuss/brainstorm paper topics and approaches.

10/7 **Meet** in lobby at Firestone for Library Skills/Data Analysis session.

10/11 **DUE**: A one-page description of proposed topic, research question and research design. Include a bibliography. Either email to me in *.doc or *.pdf format or leave a hard copy in my mailbox in the department office of Corwin.

10/14 **Meet** individually (for 10 minutes or so) at Corwin 036 to discuss topic/approach.

11/26 **DUE**: Draft

12/1 **Meet** individually (for 10 minutes or so) at Corwin 036 to discuss draft.

1/8 (5pm) **DUE**: Final Paper. Papers must be submitted directly to the **Department Office, 130 Corwin Hall**. This is the Dean's deadline for Junior Independent Work.

Grading:

10 % Attendance/Participation and Topic Summary

15 % Initial Draft

75 % Final Paper

(A selection of) Useful and Important Departmental Times/Places

Wednesday, October 10, 7:30 p.m. USING SURVEYS IN YOUR INDEPENDENT WORK.
Edward Freeland, Associate Director, Princeton Survey
Research Center. Location McCosh 28

October 16, 7:30 p.m. PRODUCING THE DRAFT: Workshop on writing and
organizing the JP. Workshops # 2, 11, 13. Will meet in
Friends Center 008.

To get you thinking, here are a few references that come to my mind in thinking about the various topics. Anything written by Morris Fiorina (e.g., *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment, Continuity and Change in House Elections, Divided Government, Home Style and Washington Work: Studies of Congressional Politics, Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence and Representatives, Roll Calls and Constituencies* to name a few) is very engaging and exceptionally written.

The journals *Public Opinion Quarterly* and *Legislative Studies Quarterly* may also contain material of interest.

Overview of Congress and U.S. Political System

Stewart, Charles III. 2001. *Analyzing Congress*. Norton:NY. Chapters 4-6.

Fiorina, Morris P., Paul E. Peterson, and D. Stephen Voss. 2002. *America's New Democracy*. New York: Longman

Constituents and Representatives

Miller, Warren E. and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress," in *The American Political Science Review*.57:1, pp. 45-56.

Erikson, Robert S. and Gerald C. Wright. 1993. "Voters, Candidates and Issues in Congressional Election" in *Congress Reconsidered 5th Ed.*. ed. Dodd, Lawrence C. and Bruce I. Oppenheimer CQ Press: Washington DC.

What do Representatives Care About?

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press.

How do Representatives Know Their District?

Fenno, Richard J. Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* Vol 71, # 3 883-917.

Fenno, Richard J. Jr. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their District*. Addison-Wesley:NY.

Political Parties

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties?* University of Chicago Press:IL.

Donald E. Stokes, Warren E. Miller. 1962. "Party Government and the Saliency of Congress," in *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26:4, pp. 531-546.

Minority Representation:

Guinier, Lani. 1994. *The Tyranny of the Majority*. Free Press: NY.

Swain, Carol M. 1993. *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress*. Harvard University Press:MA.

Gerrymandering/Redistricting

Tufte, Edward R. 1973. "The relationship between seats and votes in two-party systems," in *American Political Science Review*, 67, pp540-54.

Writing Reference

Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. 1979. *The Elements of Style*. MacMillan:NY.

Portion Online: <http://sut1.sut.ac.th/strunk/>