

Teaching Portfolio | Carlos Algara

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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

“For the mind does not require filling like a bottle, but rather, like wood, it only requires kindling to create in it an impulse to think independently and an ardent desire for the truth.” -Plutarch, De Auditu

Plutarch’s eternal acumen in the essay *De Auditu* articulates my conceptual approach to teaching. In the essay *De Auditu (On Listening to Lectures)*, Plutarch argues that the key to “an ardent desire for truth” is not a filled mind but rather an independent mind with the skills needed to foster intellectual curiosity and a passion for truth. As a social scientist, I have the responsibility to teach students the ability to think skeptically about the social world around them and to develop competence in understanding and critiquing theoretical explanations explaining social phenomena. I achieve this using a collaborative and multi-method approach to foster dynamic active learning in a diverse classroom setting. Through the use of methods stressing data literacy and qualitative narratives, this collaborative approach not only helps with the endeavor of teaching a diverse student population how to think like social scientists, it also makes me a stronger teacher scholar. I also strongly believe that my experience on Capitol Hill as an *APSA Congressional Fellow* will strongly provide the essential narratives to connect real-world political examples about the legislative process and democratic representation to my students’ social scientific understanding of the political world.

I begin every course I teach by setting the stage for robust intellectual inquiry and clear expectations of learning outcomes. Doing so requires close attention to two key components. First, I must design a course that answers the critical “so what” question. Second, I must set the parameters of course discussion that fosters active learning and presents opportunities for informal evaluation. With respect to the first component, I begin each class and course component by asking students to articulate the implications of the course material to our understanding of political processes in the real world. For example, I ask students to discuss the potential implications of information costs to the quality of legislative representation in the United States. Highlighting the finding that citizens with higher education and incomes are more likely to participate in the political process, I ask students to discuss the implications of these findings with respect to legislative responsiveness to constituent policy preferences. In another example, I will lean on my qualitative insights as an *APSA Congressional Fellow* to ask students why legislators may be cross-pressured between contributing to their party’s effort to provide for a strong collective electoral brand or providing district-centered representation. In this discussion I hope to invoke the dilemma of representation faced by cross-pressured legislators, such as U.S. Sen Jon Tester (D-MT), and lean on qualitative insights into how legislators delicately navigate representation when district-centered and partisan-centered representation may suggest diverging roll-call representation. The hope of these exercises is to set up a Socratic dialogue, creating an active learning environment with students assessing social scientific arguments and their broader implications to the political world outside the classroom.

In my own experience as a first generation college graduate teaching at a majority-minority serving institution, such as the University of California, Davis and Sacramento State University, I am cognizant of the diversity that exists in my classroom. In undergraduate classes, many will be first-generation college students or speak English as a second language. This rich diversity guides the development of my teaching pedagogy and involvement in various teaching workshops and courses on campus. One critical component of my pedagogy, learned through this involvement, is creating an inclusive space to facilitate active learning and scholarly exchange. Recognizing the potential that classroom discussion may be a pressuring space, I incorporate online survey questions asking all students to share their thoughts in an anonymous platform. This student feedback, presented in real-time before the class, allows for the discussion of ideas from students that may be predisposed to not share before the entire class in a standard discussion format. I employ these interactive exercises at various points in lecture, to not only share the diverse opinions that exists in the class, but also to assess the

level of active learning and effectiveness of material presentation.

Through engaging in active learning, I strive to empower students with the skills needed to think critically about social processes in the political world and to communicate effectively. While skepticism comes naturally to many students, many barriers can prevent the cultivation of effective communication, especially in a diverse classroom. To assist students in developing effective communication skills, I employ multiple assessment instruments designed to encourage social scientific inquiry. In substantive courses, one such exercise is to evaluate a theoretical model explaining a form of political behavior discussed in the course.¹ This exercise helps foster the skills of effective communication by priming students to think through an argument and evaluate the argument in light of evidence or alternative arguments. In a research methods course, this exercise may involve asking students to evaluate the limitations of observational studies in making causal claims of a theoretical explanation. These exercises require that students not only communicate the material effectively but also think independently and develop clear argumentation. Many of these students relish these opportunities and, in assessment of these instruments, students state that this provides an outlet for creative thinking in a social scientific framework.

I view the task of a social scientist as one encompassing the teacher scholar model. I believe that scholarship is an indispensable component of active teaching and helping instill an ardent desire for truth. Cultivating an active research agenda helps convey the relevance of the discipline to the classroom and not only exposes students to salient debates, but also provides them with an opportunity to engage in these debates. This research agenda also fills my lesson plans with empirical evidence to convey thematic concepts. For example, my work on the changing nature of Senate elections provides an example for the growing salience of the partisan electoral model, with clear implications for partisan polarization and legislative policymaking. Incorporation of my empirical work provides students with exposure to various forms of data visualizations, and their insights on these research examples strengthens my research program.

I hope to extend this component of the teacher scholar model by focusing on developing data literacy as a key learning outcome in my curriculum. My methodological training guides my passion for data literacy and desire to give students the tools needed to critically evaluate empirical claims. In my experience as a methods lab instructor, I am attentive to the challenges of teaching applied data visualization and evaluation methods. I view this challenging task as an opportunity to thoughtfully teach students applied open-source coding that can prepare them for analytical opportunities beyond campus, such as positions in industry or the pursuit of a graduate degree. This emphasis on data literacy can facilitate the strengthening of empirical analytical skills essential for students to think like independent researchers in any scientific field. In my assessment, this exposure to data literacy will enrich and strengthen the education of every student on campus.

In my view, being an effective professor requires instilling Plutarch's assertion of creating "an impulse to think independently" for an "ardent desire for truth." My pedagogy as a social scientist is to provide students with the ability to think critically about the social world and to communicate effectively on the basis of sound argumentation. I hope to improve this pedagogy in the future by collaborating with students outside of the seminar context. I have a strong desire to engage with students on independent research projects and, in particular, to instill the passion for data-based inquiry. While I hope to make data visualization an explicit learning outcome for each of my courses, I hope to mentor students in independent research projects aimed at investigating interesting and relevant political phenomena we observe in the "real-world." I believe that collaborating with students at every step of social scientific inquiry will strengthen my own research and teaching agendas.

¹I present this exercise of describing and evaluating a theoretical model of political behavior in the sample evaluation materials of this teaching portfolio.

Statement of Diversity Equity

In my capacity as a social scientist of color, my goal is to use my own personal experiences with institutional barriers to increase the inclusion of diverse communities in both the discipline and the academy at-large. As the son of foreign born parents and a member of an under-represented racial group, my personal experience overcoming institutional barriers to higher education guides my passion for mentoring other underrepresented students navigating through an environment in which they may lack the social capital needed to realize their scholarly potential. In this diversity statement, I will touch on my awareness of institutional barriers that historically under-represented groups face in higher education. This awareness, profoundly shaped as a first generation citizen of color, guided my past efforts to mentor students from under-represented communities and shapes my future desire to use a faculty position to foster a more inclusive and diverse classroom environment.

Experience with Institutional Barriers

My awareness of institutional barriers to higher education is grounded in my story as the child of immigrant Guatemalan parents. Growing up, I watched the profound institutional obstacles faced by non-native individuals, particularly those such as my father, that learn English as a second language. In a university setting, many students face challenges as a result of their diverse identities and backgrounds. In my own experience, first generation students of color with socioeconomically underprivileged backgrounds have overcome tremendous obstacles to reach campus, and they continue to face obstacles once they arrive on campus. Many, such as myself, come from low-income schools which simply lack the resources to fund academic programs critical to fostering the achievement necessary to reach campus. This is especially pronounced when compared to students from greater socioeconomic means which are able to attend more affluent schools and have access to greater educational and extracurricular activities that strengthen their admissions applications. For example, students with socioeconomically underprivileged backgrounds may not have access to supplemental classes aimed at improving performance in standardized tests critical to college and post-graduate education. Moreover, in many cases, these students juggle employment and academic obligations which may continue when they arrive on campus.

When these students defy the odds and arrive on campus, they continue to face institutional barriers to academic success. I understand that arriving with a diverse set of backgrounds and identities can be a very isolating experience on a college campus. This experience strongly informs my desire to create an inclusive environment while also fostering equitable growth and recognizing individual identities. I observe that many of my students are the first in their family to be attending college and may lack the institutional knowledge to navigate their own path on campus. In my own experience, this meant difficulty possessing the institutional knowledge to navigate through campus resources, such as academic office hours or financial aid. Underrepresented students also face additional external pressures which may hinder equitable inclusion to the academic culture on campus. This includes substantial time commitments in nonacademic activities, such as employment and family obligations off-campus. This extra strain on the schedule of full-time students not only hinders time devoted to engaging classroom material, but also hinders the ability to engage in campus activities that can assist in strengthening career and graduate school prospects. For example, many students may be forced to forgo exciting internship or lab experience given economic or familial constraints. This lack of educational opportunity due to economic barriers manifested itself in my own undergraduate experience, making the task of securing research collaboration with faculty and devoting more time to course material more difficult. In my role as an associate instructor in my department, I have witnessed far too many constraints placed on my students that ultimately interfere with their ability to succeed in the classroom and pursue academic opportunities outside of the classroom.

Past Efforts & Plans for Diversity Inclusion

My personal experience with institutional barriers to higher education guides my past and future efforts for inclusion of underrepresented groups in the academy. As a graduate student instructor, I strive to make a contribution to diversity and equity on campus. To help facilitate student retention, I emphasize the importance of extra office hours for students facing potential course conflicts or in need of extra instruction. This extra course resource helps ensure that underrepresented students have access to the academic resources needed to succeed in my course. My focus on individual development has created mentorship opportunities outside of my courses. For example, I mentored a first-generation student that took my course on her senior thesis project by providing both substantive and methodological guidance. I also sought out additional training and certification through the UC Davis Center for Teaching Effectiveness designed to increase involvement of underrepresented students in the classroom instruction setting. This training provided strategies to facilitate discussion and deliver difficult course materials with students from various different educational backgrounds. In my capacity as a course instructor, I strive to provide an inclusive environment to accommodate the needs of underrepresented students and students from all identities and backgrounds.

In another role, I have taken a more activist approach to promoting inclusion of underrepresented groups on campus. As the legislative assistant for the Graduate Student Association at UC Davis, I was tasked with providing underrepresented students with more resources needed to ensure diversity inclusion on campus. I organized and implemented a lobby day at the state capitol in Sacramento to demand protections for undocumented students and more financial aid to low-income students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This lobby day, organized in conjunction with other activist teams in the University of California system, was a response to proposed budget cuts to low-income financial aid in the state budget and greater uncertainty surrounding the status of undocumented students from the federal level. I met with legislators, their staff, and state legislative committee staff to highlight the needs of underrepresented groups on campus and advocate for proposed policy solutions at the state level. Through this service as the legislative assistant for the Graduate Student Association, I continued to harness a strong passion for advocacy for the inclusion of underrepresented student communities on campus.

I will continue my effort to provide a more inclusive and diverse environment in the academy as a faculty member. I will continue my mentorship of students through student-faculty research collaboration opportunities. In particular, I have a passion for collaborating with undergraduate students on research projects, with the hopes of priming thoughts of continuing on to graduate school. As faculty, I will continue my involvement in providing a more inclusive environment campus-wide. I hope to serve on service committees designed to increase access to higher education opportunities to more first-generation and minority students from underprivileged backgrounds. One such committee I am interested in serving on is the Ronald E. McNair faculty mentor committee designed to support the academic achievement of underrepresented students. As a member of the faculty with an underprivileged background, I relish the opportunity to play a role in the academic development of underrepresented students and to foster inclusion of these groups in an environment in which they have been traditionally, and systematically, excluded from.

Summary of Class Evaluations

Full student evaluations and course materials can be found at <https://calgara.github.io/teaching.html>.

Lecturer of Record Class Evaluations Summary (CSU-Sacramento)

Course Perceptions: Global index of evaluation questions on a scale from low (1) to high (5).

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 56$ question responses): 4.64/5

Teaching evaluation questions are on the following five-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *neither agree nor disagree*, (4) *agree*, to (5) *strongly agree*. Summary teaching instruction ratings can be found below.

1. The course requirements are clearly stated.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.71/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (5/7)
2. The professor was prepared and organized in class.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.43/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (3/7)
3. The professor welcomed questions and comments from students.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 5/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (7/7)
4. Questions on the examinations were related to materials presented in class or in assigned readings.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.86/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (7/7)
5. The professor was responsive when contacted outside of class.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.71/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (6/7)
6. Tests, assignments, and papers were returned with comments and/or suggestions.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.57/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (5/7)
7. The professor emphasized improving my writing skills.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 3.86/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (3/7)
8. This course offered the opportunity to develop my skills of analysis.
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 7$): 4.57/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (5/7)

Associate Instructor of Record Class Evaluations Summary (UC Davis)

Course Perceptions: “Please indicate the overall education value of the course from (1) poor to (5) excellent.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 62$): 4.40/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (35/62)

Teaching effectiveness ratings are on the following five-point scale: (1) *poor*, (2) *fair*, (3) *good*, (4) *very good*, to (5) *excellent*. Summary teaching instruction ratings can be found below.

1. “Please indicate the overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor.”²

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.45/5
- Weighted department average: 4.1/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (39/62)

2. “Please indicate instructor’s knowledge and command of subject matter.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.74/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (49/62)

3. “Please indicate instructor’s openness to discussion and ability to stimulate it.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.56/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (41/62)

4. “Please indicate instructor’s availability for consultation.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 57$): 4.58/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (41/57)

5. “Please indicate instructor’s fairness & impartiality of grading.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.56/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (45/61)

6. “Please indicate instructional value of exams.”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.30/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (33/61)

7. “Please indicate instructional value of course assignments (term papers, project, etc).”

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.30/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (30/61)

8. “Please indicate clarity of course objectives and organization.”

²Note that the department mean is only available for this measure of teaching effectiveness.

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 60$): 4.23/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (33/60)

9. "Please indicate effectiveness of style & methods of class presentations."

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 61$): 4.13/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (30/61)

10. "Relevance and educational value of readings and WorldWideWeb resources."

- Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 57$): 4.16/5
- Overall Summary Mode: 5 (25/57)

Discussion Teaching Assistant Summary Evaluations (UC Davis)

The forthcoming descriptive summary of evaluations are from courses with a discussion section component. In contrast to a conventional course, these courses require one hour of graduate-student led discussion over course material in addition to standard office hour meetings. For substantive courses, discussion sections typically involve a blend of additional lecturing and active learning student exercises.

Teaching effectiveness ratings are on the following five-point scale: (1) *poor*, (2) *fair*, (3) *good*, (4) *very good*, to (5) *excellent*. Summary teaching instruction ratings can be found below.

1. "Please indicate the overall teaching effectiveness of the teaching assistant."³
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 180$): 4.11/5
 - Weighted department average: 4.01/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (69/180)
2. "Please rate: TA is responsive to questions and student requests."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 179$): 4.45/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (109/179)
3. "Please rate: TA demonstrates knowledge and command of the subject matter."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 180$): 4.38/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (93/179)
4. "Please rate: TA is well prepared for section."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 180$): 4.33/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (95/180)
5. "Please rate: TA encourages students to express opinions and respects divergent points of view."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 175$): 4.26/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (90/175)
6. "Please rate: TA explains and clarifies difficult material."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 179$): 4.20/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (85/179)
7. "Please rate: TA helps the student appreciate course topics."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 174$): 4.07/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (71/174)

³Note that the department mean is only available for this measure of teaching effectiveness.

8. "Please rate: TA is effective in encouraging student participation."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 180$): 4.04/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (90/180)
9. "Please rate: TA provides helpful comments on assignments."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 172$): 4.00/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (69/172)
10. "Please rate: TA clearly defines expectations of student."
 - Overall weighted course evaluation average ($N = 178$): 3.97/5
 - Overall Summary Mode: 5 (62/178)

Evidence of Associate Instructor Teaching Effectiveness _____

Qualitative Evaluations

Spring 2019 (Sacramento State University)

1. General Comments:

Carlos Algara is enthusiastic and interesting. I believe a little more clarity, requirements stated in this course would be beneficial.

Wish the class would've been promoted more so more students could enrolled. Great course nonetheless.

Great professor, very concise and detailed when asked a question. Quick reply to emails & extremely understanding of work and student load throughout the semester. Always a positive attitude and made me love politics more than I already do.

I enjoyed the course and the information, thank you!

Maybe could of made attendance/participation more mandatory to encourage students to engage. A little wordy on questions in tests, but mostly straightforward and very fair. Makes attempts to connected material to our lives and great lecture style. Interesting graphs and figures.

Summer 2017 (UC Davis)

1. Clarity of course objectives & design:

Extremely well organized.

Layout of what we would cover, including articles and chapters as well as objectives, was very helpful.

Discussion based course design seems more interesting and effective than typical design used here at UCD consisting only of lectures.

Great links to scholarly articles.

A lot of information to study in a short amount of time but overall good course.

There weren't term papers or projects, which was nice—it did not distract from the readings and from learning the material. This is especially important in short, quick-paced summer sessions.

2. Instructor Ability & Effectiveness:

Class presentations were almost always clear and interesting, the most difficult times were when we covered specific graphs (?) such as spatial model and the voting median filibuster model.

Carlos knows his stuff!

Instructor had a great deal of knowledge about the material. This, and his enthusiasm about the subject, made the material very accessible.

Carlos strongly encouraged discussions. It made the class more interesting. I dreaded taking this class, but I needed it for GE requirements. Carlos made this class really interesting and I learned a lot from him.

Fall 2017 (UC Davis)

1. Clarity of course objectives & design:

This course has been one of the most organized I have ever taken. The slide sets are labeled by date, meeting, and includes highlighted headings and subheadings on every slide. It was also very helpful that a full class outline with descriptions of each section was placed on the syllabus to follow along.

Grading policies are top notch. Even though I don't expect them to apply to me, such as the All is Forgiven policy or Amnesty Period for Quizzes, they are incredibly helpful to other students who care about their grade and need a second chance to work hard at it.

The essay was helpful in focusing in on one political model. The instructions were straightforward and made writing the essay comfortable.

Students do not sign their names on the blue books, they sign their student ID. This way, there is absolutely no bias when grading exams.

Thanks for an amazing quarter, you are the best professor I've had and I enjoyed your class very much!

I felt that the midterm was a very comprehensive exam of the material we had been taught in the class and I thought it was very straight-forward. While it was still difficult I did not feel that the instructor was trying to trick us in any way which happens a lot with other exams I take.

The midterm was challenging, which is, in my opinion, a great thing. Each part helped strengthen our writing, logical, and analytical skills. The comprehensive study guide was incredibly helpful, it helped me organize the sections in a logical manner that made sense to me and then I was able to remember the material better on test day.

Best exams I've had all quarter with a very fair grading system.

Carlos Algara was a great instructor but the one thing that I found difficult was that this course did not feel like an intro. I felt like a lot of the time he assumed that we knew what specific things meant, and a lot of the time that made me fall behind with the material. In other words, he used a lot of jargon, and as someone who's never taken a Political Science class before, that was difficult. Other than that, he was very enthusiastic about the material which was probably his best quality.

The articles assigned were interesting and relevant to everything we studied. The only downside to this was that when reading the longer articles, I didn't know exactly what to pay attention to. Maybe a few guiding points on which sections to pay attention to, or even questions to answer as we read might help the discussion of the articles in class. Nonetheless, I still felt the articles were important to the lecture material.

The readings are all exceptional troves of knowledge, but there is a lot of material to cover and it can often be a little daunting.

2. Instructor Ability & Effectiveness:

Lectures were very discussion based and students had the opportunity to participate in every step. It was engaging and I really enjoyed learning politics through empirical methods and data, rather than simply reading text. It makes me excited to learn how to actually code political data like that myself.

Carlos always has very well prepared slides and has graphs based on research that he has conducted himself as well as expert statistics. Learning from fresh research findings really makes me feel like I'm learning from someone in the heart of field.

As for this one, there were some points where he would put questions on the presentation and it was up in the air whether the answer would be put up next or not.

I thought the class was presented in a way that was organized/structured very well. Even though knowing that the slides alone would not have all the info I need are what got me to the class in the first place, I would have liked to see a little bit more information on the slides themselves when reviewing for the final.

Instructor is very willing to help and responsive to emails. I found this extremely helpful, thank you!

The instructor was always available after class and had accessible office hours for anyone who needed extra help.

Always available after lectures and during office hours. The average wait time on emails has been 15 minutes and I always receive thoughtful, substantive responses.

His response of emails is amazing! It is so helpful!

The instructor is very confident in the subject matter and is great at communicating it to students. Coming into the class I was not very interested in it, but the instructor made the material interesting and taught it in a way that was organized well. Thanks for a great class!

The instructor was able to explain complex material in a way that was simple to understand. I always felt I understood what was going on, and didn't feel left behind. He always made sure we understood every main point before moving on.

Excellent professor! 12/10

Phenomenal teacher! This class was by far the best political science class I have taken.

Deeply passionate about his subject matter.

Carlos seems tone very passionate about his work. His detailed explanations are very helpful, I only struggle because the statistical data and some of the models are complex.

One of the of the most non biased PoliSci professors I've had, this made for really good conversations.

The instructor would take the time to answer any questions and really push us to figure out the answers, not just simply hand out answers.

Engages the class throughout his lecture by asking questions and emphatically encourages people to speak their mind.

Carlos is always willing to answer questions and back track if a student needs. He is a great instructor!

I would definitely recommend Carlos for intro POL courses!

Descriptive Quantitative Summary of Associate Instructor of Record Teaching Evaluations, UC Davis

	Summer 2017						Fall 2017					
	Min	Max	SD	Mean \bar{x}	Mode	N	Min	Max	SD	Mean \bar{x}	Mode	N
Instructor's knowledge & command of subject matter	2	5	0.90	4.4	5 (14/23)	23	4	5	0.27	4.9	5 (35/38)	38
Overall teaching effectiveness of instructor	2	5	1.20	4.1	5 (13/23)	23	3	5	0.53	4.7	5 (26/38)	38
Instructor's openness to discussion & ability to stimulate it	2	5	0.93	4.3	5 (13/23)	23	3	5	0.52	4.7	5 (28/38)	38
Instructor's availability for consultation	2	5	0.92	4.4	5 (13/21)	21	3	5	0.62	4.7	5 (28/36)	36
Fairness & impartiality of grading	2	5	1.03	4.4	5 (16/23)	23	2	5	0.71	4.7	5 (29/38)	38
Instructional value of examinations	1	5	1.22	3.9	5 (9/23)	23	3	5	0.65	4.6	5 (24/38)	38
Instructional value of course assignments	1	5	1.33	4.0	5 (9/18)	18	3	5	0.69	4.4	5 (21/38)	38
Clarity of course objectives & organization	2	5	1.24	3.9	5 (11/23)	23	3	5	0.73	4.4	5 (21/37)	37
Effectiveness of style & methods of class presentations	1	5	1.34	3.8	5 (11/23)	23	2	5	0.81	4.3	5 (19/38)	38
Relevance & educational value of readings & internet resources	2	5	1.02	3.9	5 (8/22)	22	2	5	0.80	4.3	5 (17/35)	35

Note: The "overall teaching effectiveness" is originally measured on a 5-point scale from *poor* (1) to *excellent* (5). This measure is recoded to convey a numerical 5 point scale for comparison with other evaluation measures. Proportions below mode category shows proportion of measure sample providing modal response.

Research Methods Teaching Lab Evaluations

Overview of the Course Lab Component

In addition to teaching substantive political science courses, I have also served as a lab teaching assistant for the required undergraduate methods course. This context differs from a substantive lecture, in that I plan and execute lab sections designed to facilitate student comprehension of research design and theory-testing methods of empirical analysis of data. In the lab, I teach the basic theory underlying applied empirical analysis in political science and the coding conventions of R, the open source software environment for statistical computing data analysis and graphics. In addition to this formal lab component, I created a tutorial in advanced data visualization for interested undergraduate and graduate students. This comprehensive tutorial (containing sample data, code, and corresponding output graphics) in advanced data visualization, using the `ggplot` package in the R software environment, can be found on my website here https://calgara.github.io/UCD_PS_ggplot_tutorial.html. This tutorial was also taught to graduate students in the UC Davis political science department as a component of the *Programming & Methods Resources Workshop*.

Teaching this course can be challenging given the variation in student familiarity of social science research design, probability and statistical inference theory, and applied computing data analysis skills. In this section, I provide evidence of teaching effectiveness in a lab setting where students apply the properties of research design in a simulated applied research setting.

Research Methods Teaching Lab Evaluations Summary

Teaching effectiveness ratings are on the following five-point scale: (1) *poor*, (2) *fair*, (3) *good*, (4) *very good*, to (5) *excellent*. Summary teaching instruction ratings can be found below.

1. "Please indicate the overall teaching effectiveness of the teaching assistant."⁴
 - Overall course evaluation average ($N = 30$): 4.60/5
 - Weighted department average: 4.1/5
 - Mode: 5 (21/30)
2. "Please rate: TA is responsive to questions and student requests."
 - Overall course evaluation average ($N = 29$): 4.62/5
 - Mode: 5 (21/29)
3. "Please rate: TA demonstrates knowledge and command of the subject matter."
 - Overall course evaluation average ($N = 30$): 4.60/5
 - Mode: 5 (20/30)
4. "Please rate: TA is well prepared for section."
 - Overall course evaluation average ($N = 30$): 4.43/5
 - Mode: 5 (21/30)

⁴Note that the department mean is only available for this measure of teaching effectiveness.

5. "Please rate: TA encourages students to express opinions and respects divergent points of view."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 27$): 4.59/5
- Mode: 5 (20/27)

6. "Please rate: TA explains and clarifies difficult material."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 29$): 4.59/5
- Mode: 5 (21/29)

7. "Please rate: TA helps the student appreciate course topics."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 28$): 4.64/5
- Mode: 5 (22/28)

8. "Please rate: TA is effective in encouraging student participation."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 30$): 4.57/5
- Mode: 5 (22/30)

9. "Please rate: TA provides helpful comments on assignments."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 29$): 4.41/5
- Mode: 5 (19/29)

10. "Please rate: TA clearly defines expectations of student."

- Overall course evaluation average ($N = 29$): 4.38/5
- Mode: 5 (18/29)

Research Methods Teaching Lab Qualitative Evaluations

"Very upbeat and always very friendly when asked a question."

"Excellent at helping me understand the material, both in discussion and over email."

"Follows up with emails till they are complete."

AMAZING TA!!!



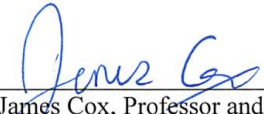
SACRAMENTO
STATE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Performance Evaluation
Carlos Algara
2018-2019

The Political Science Department's evaluation procedures require that both the Part-Time Committee and department chair evaluate part-time faculty without three-year appointments every year. The RTP document states that evaluations are based on student evaluations; statements or related evidence submitted by faculty, staff, and/or students respecting relevant performance and behavior; course syllabi; reports of classroom visitation; teaching aids; and other material as appropriate. We rate the teaching performance of part-time faculty as either satisfactory or not satisfactory.

Professor Algara taught POLS 157, Politics, Opinion and Participation in Spring 2019. He agreed to teach the course in August when the Professor originally scheduled to teach it was granted release time. Even though he had little time to put the course together, he was able to put together a coherent and organized course. The course was also under enrolled and he had to adapt some of his assignments to a much smaller class than he anticipated. His syllabus has clear expectations and challenging assignments. As the Part-Time Committee discusses, his course evaluations were strong. I appreciate that Professor Algara taking this assignment and doing such a good job. I concur with the Part Time Committee that his performance was satisfactory and he should be rehired if a course is available.

Dated: June 17, 2019


James Cox, Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science

6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819-6089 • (916) 278-6202 • FAX: (916) 278-6488
WEB: <http://www.csus.edu/govt>

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Monterey Bay Northridge Pomona Sacramento San Bernardino San Diego San Francisco San Jose San Luis Obispo San Marcos Sonoma Stanislaus

Department Teaching Evaluation, Sacramento State University _____



SACRAMENTO
STATE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Performance Evaluation
Carlos Algara
2018-2019

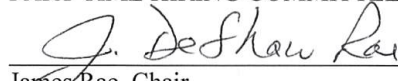
During the period under review, Professor Carlos Algara taught one course, POLS 157.

Professor Algara's syllabus was clear, thorough, and well organized. His course assignments are carefully designed and appropriate, and readings were instructive to the course material. Students were graded on two exams and an essay. Professor Algara's student evaluations were positive. The Global Index score in his student evaluations was 4.64, as 86% found the professors performance in the course to be excellent or very good. Written comments were brief since only five students offered feedback in the small class.

We commend Professor Algara on his excellent teaching and appreciate his contribution to the education of students at Sacramento State. After careful consideration, the committee has determined that during the review period Professor Algara's performance has been 'satisfactory' and we recommend that he be re-hired in the future to teach the courses for which he is qualified and has successfully taught already. We are pleased to have Professor Algara as a colleague and thank him for his dedicated work last year.

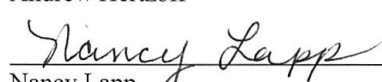
Dated: June, 2019

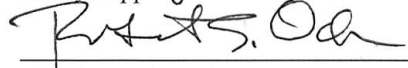
PART TIME HIRING COMMITTEE


James Rae, Chair


David Andersen-Rodgers


Andrew Hertzoff


Nancy Lapp


Robert S. Oden

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Course Syllabi

In this section, I enclose sample materials for my undergraduate introductory seminar on American Politics for which I was the Associate Instructor of Record. In this portfolio, I include the following sample items:

1. Undergraduate seminar course syllabus
2. Sample lecture handout designed to create active comprehension of the *Pivotal Politics* model of American national policymaking
3. Sample evaluation rubric of model critique essay assignment. This evaluation rubric is designed to assess student comprehension of social scientific models and their ability to 1) communicate their understanding of theoretical models and 2) competently construct an argument regarding the model's utility in explaining observable political phenomena that the model wishes to explain.

Full materials (such as course lecture slidesets, exam study criteria, class readings, and assignment prompts) can be found on my website: <https://calgara.github.io>. These materials are organized as a `GitPage` interactive syllabus designed for comprehensive accessibility of materials and seamless course flow.

Syllabi and course materials for other courses in which I have served as a teaching assistant are available upon request and can be found at <https://calgara.github.io/teaching.html>. In my role as a teaching assistant in the University of California, Davis Political Science Department, I have experience in the following courses:

- Research Design & Quantitative Methods | Lab Section Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to American Politics | Discussion Section Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to Comparative Politics | Discussion Section Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to California State Politics & Policy | Teaching Assistant
- Public Opinion of the Mass Public (American political behavior) | Teaching Assistant
- American Public Policy & Process | Teaching Assistant
- American Environmental Politics | Teaching Assistant
- Policymaking in Comparative Democracies | Teaching Assistant
- Democratization | Teaching Assistant

Pol 157: American Public Opinion
California State University, Sacramento
Spring 2019
Seminar: Amador Hall 262: T,TR 1:30-2:45

Instructor: Carlos Algara, Ph.D. Candidate
Office: Tahoe Hall 3001
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:30am-1:20pm & by appointment
Course GitPage & Resources: <https://calgara.github.io/pol157s2019.html>
✉ calgara@ucdavis.edu

Course Objective: How do we study American Public Opinion & its implications on American Political Life?

This course offers an introduction to the systematic and meticulous study of American Political Behavior in the Mass Public. Building on the scientific foundation of political science, this course is designed to provide an understanding into the determinants of political preferences held by *citizens* and how these preferences influence how citizens *participate* and gain representation within the political framework of American government. The main question motivating the course is a simple, yet complex one: how do citizens develop (*or fail to develop*) their political attitudes and what are the implications of these attitudes on political decision-making by citizens (i.e., vote preferences) and elected elites (i.e., Congress & Presidency). Recognizing that coherent attitudes and engaged political participation is the “ideal” standard for representative democracy, the motivating question of the course hinges on understanding the following concept:

- How do political sciences study and measure *citizen* political attitudes and opinion? What are some of the challenges of using surveys to measure the opinions and attitudes of *citizens* across a range of salient and controversial political topics?
- How do citizens “*reason*” about political abstractions? What are the salient determinants of political attitudes and opinions of *citizens*? How do these attitudes and opinions get translated into *citizen electoral choice*? What is the role of *rational self-interest* and *group identity* in shaping the increasingly polarized nature of American political attitudes and preferences?
- What role do these political attitudes (*or lack thereof*) play in shaping the political decision-making process by *citizens*? Specifically, how do these attitudes determine how individual *citizens* participate in politics in the electoral arena? Does exercising these political preferences through *citizen political behavior* secure *dynamic representation* and *democratic policy responsiveness* by elected elites?

These thematic questions may seem daunting, but this course will give you the necessary framework to perform careful political and social science analysis to gain leverage on these questions.

This course will provide not only an understanding of how to think of the study of the causes and implications of American public opinion, but also how to engage in careful social science analysis. This course emphasizes the tools you need to assess political behaviors, practices, and institutional representation based on theory and evidence. Welcome to the class!

Brief Course Overview Outline

1. Foundations of American Public Opinion
 - (a) What is public opinion?
 - (b) How do we measure political attitudes held by citizens and study public opinion? How stable are these opinions and what are the challenges to measuring these opinions?
2. Citizen Capacity in "Political Thinking"
 - (a) How do people "learn" and "reason" about abstract political concepts?
 - (b) Are citizens able to think in "political terms", such as engaging in ideological thinking regarding their issue positions (preferences) about the fundamental role of government in political life?
 - (c) How do citizens overcome the "democratic" dilemma? What sort of *heuristics* do citizens rely on to inform political attitudes and choice?
 - (d) Which models seek to explain the origins of the salient heuristic of partisanship? Where does partisanship come from and what are its effects on the political behavior of citizens? Does partisanship change?
3. Translating Preferences to Choice: The Role of Campaigns & Elections in American Political Life
 - (a) How are political preferences translated to representative choice? How do the partisan, spatial (ideological), and valence models differ in explaining citizen electoral preferences?
 - (b) What are the fundamental role of campaigns in determining how citizens translate their preferences to electoral choice? What sort of citizens are predisposed to participating in the electoral process?
 - (c) How well do these models of electoral choice perform in varying electoral context, such as ballot referendums, local elections, and non-partisan elections? Are there limitations to translating citizen preference to electoral choice in non-candidate and party-centered context?
4. Cleavages in the Mass Public-Are citizens polarized in political preference & attitude?
 - (a) Setting the debate: are citizens fundamentally polarized in their political preferences as elected elites (i.e., members of Congress) are? Is there variation in beliefs about political tolerance in the mass public?

- (b) What is the role of racial cleavages in American public opinion? Specifically, do different racial groups diverge in political preferences?
 - (c) What is the role of economic and class cleavages in American political life? Do different social classes diverge on political preferences, particularly on economic preferences, and what are the potential implications of this on the *resource bias* of representation?
5. Bringing the course together: Does opinion get translated into democratic responsiveness?
- (a) Does public opinion influence government policy? If it does, which citizen types are able to secure policy responsiveness from their government?
 - (b) Lastly, does the *institutional* framework of the United States facilitate or hinder the translation of American public opinion to legislative policy outcomes?

Course Logistics & Requirements

This section of the syllabus serves as a guide for course expectations (both for me and for you) and logistical information such as grade breakdown and course texts.

Course Texts, Materials, & Announcements: There is no assigned textbook for this course. The [Course GitPage](#) contains all relevant readings in the interactive syllabus. The interactive syllabus will also contain class lecture slidesets, exam study materials, and assignment materials. Course announcements will be made through [Canvas](#).

Grade Breakdown & Schedule:

- ★ 30% Midterm Exam (Exam Date: March 14th)¹
- ★ 35% Final Exam (TBD)
- ★ 25% American Political Behavior Model Evaluation Essay (Due: May 2nd)
- ★ 10% Seminar Participation & Interactive Research Participation

≥ 97%	A+	87 - 89%	B+	77 - 79%	C+	67 - 69	D+	< 60%	F
93 - 96%	A	83 - 86%	B	73 - 76%	C	63 - 66%	D		
90 - 92%	A-	80 - 82%	B-	70 - 72%	C-	60 - 62%	D-		

Exams: The midterm & final exam will feature three main components: short answer, analytical question, and essay. The short answer component will be both the *definition* and *significance* of a concept discussed in lecture and in the readings. The analytical question will require you to interpret data presented in a graph or table and then analyze how the presented findings relate to

¹Midterm exam held in regular lecture. Date subject to change with advance notice.

a question about course concepts. Lastly, the essays will require you to use the course concepts to **develop an argument** in response to stated essay question. This includes a thesis statement and supporting evidence for the thesis statement. Study guides will be provided a week before the exam along with “what constitutes an excellent” short answer and essay. The midterm is worth 30% while the **cumulative** final exam is worth 35%.

American Political Behavior Model Evaluation Essay: The essay assignment will ask students to choose a model discussed throughout the course of the quarter and write a critical analysis evaluating the model. The first half of the assignment will require the student to outline the model in detail, the mechanisms present in the model, and what the model predicts with respect to political behavior. The second half of the assignment will require the student to evaluate the model and how well the model predicts the political phenomena it seeks to explain. This second task requires students to leverage alternative material not presented in the course, particularly with finding scholarly evidence for the model. The parameters of this assignment will be outlined in detail and uploaded to the course [GitPage](#). The assignment is to be turned in via the [Canvas](#) portal under the essay assignment tab.

Make-Up Exams: I understand that throughout a quarter many exogenous, unanticipated events, may occur that would require the makeup of an exam. This course offers flexibility for administration of the *midterm exam* for whatever reason, independent of proper documentation such as a doctor’s note. Makeup examinations will consist of a robust single essay written during a ninety minute window. However, per university policy, the final exam cannot be given early and will be administered during the schedule time found on the [Office of Academic Affairs Schedule](#). Make-up *final exams* outside of this final exam period will *require* formal documentation and coordination at least a week in advance.

Seminar Participation & Research Participation: As stated earlier, there will be unannounced individual and group activities used to both 1) stimulate discussion during seminar and 2) assess student comprehension of a given day’s concepts. These exercises will generally be an in-class group exercises. These participation exercises will be incorporated into every other lecture and will be graded based on whether a student participated or not. In some exercises, students may participate on a computer or on their smart phone device. Thus, **attendance** is critical to receiving full points for the seminar participation.

Academic Dishonesty & Ethics: This course is about developing critical thought and developing personalized skill-sets necessary to examine politics in a systematic and rigorous way. Thus, it is important to develop your own arguments and work to hone in analytical skills. Academic dishonesty is not only a serious breach of ethics in the university community, but it is also detrimental to your scholarly growth. Ethics breaches, such as cheating and plagiarism, will be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). Students may refer to the [University’s Code of Academic Conduct](#) for further clarification or may contact the instructor for any specific questions.

Course Resources: If accommodations are needed for you to succeed in this course, please speak with me and we will work together to make sure you are accommodated. If you are unsure if you need accommodations, please visit the [Division of Student Affairs](#). On another note, I

highly recommend taking advantage of the great campus resources offered by the [Student Academic Success Center](#), housed in the College of Health & Human Services, for strategies on how to succeed not only in this course but throughout your tenure here.

Successful Strategies for the Systematic Study of Politics

This section of the syllabus provides successful strategies on *how* to succeed in this course.

Note on Reading Scholarly Articles: Many of the readings of this course will be academic in nature. I understand that, as an introductory seminar, these works may contain empirical analysis that may seem daunting and confusing to read (i.e., lots of equations & statistics). I will convey the article's findings at length in lecture. The *only* expectation from you is to read the article carefully before seminar, attempt to understand the article's main argument (this includes what political phenomena does the article's argument seek to explain), how the article's findings fit with the theory presented, and what the implications of the author's empirical findings are for a given week's thematic orientation. I will provide a checklist that outlines how to read these works for content and using the content in seminar discussion.

Expectations: Students can expect me to come prepared to seminar. This entails that students can expect me to give a strong effort to convey the given seminar's course concepts and the implications these concepts have for the main questions highlighted in the course description. This seminar will be taught in a *dynamic* fashion which will require full participation from *everyone* in the seminar. As such, most lectures will incorporate activities designed to stimulate student involvement and gauge comprehension of the material. It is critical that everyone (including me) is **prepared** to discuss the seminar's assigned reading for the week and come ready to discuss the concepts in a scholarly fashion.

Coming Prepared: Each seminar will introduce *new* theories that, in one way or another, **will provide different conceptions of the political behavior of individual citizens and the mass public**. It is critical that you (and I) do the assigned readings before the class. Useful class discussion is conditional on both of us doing the readings, being familiar with the reading's argument/main points, and engaging the theories presented during that week. After understanding these different theories of democracy, we will evaluate whether the American political system as constructed works well or is in need of valuable reform. The better we prepare, the better we can assess our democracy.

Keeping an Open-Mind & Importance of Questions: It is critical to challenge partisan predispositions and other biases we may hold, even if that means confronting powerful myths that can bias our perceptions and assessments. Assessing whether our democracy functions well requires **questioning everything**, both of the theories themselves and my interpretation of them. Intellectual curiosity and asking questions is both a strong and desirable virtue. Asking questions and engaging in a conversation by sharing your ideas and thoughts help strengthen our assessments.

Course Road-Map

This section of the syllabus outlines the course schedule & readings². The course will be divided into three distinct sections outlined in the course objective. Understanding of these public opinion modules will help us collectively assess how political scientists study the political behavior of *citizens* and what the implications of these studies are on our collective understanding of what determines American public opinion and what implications mass public opinion has on the quality of American representative democracy. It is imperative that you treat each section as a part of a **framework** by which we judge the functioning of American democracy. Each section objective articulates the role of the section within the **analytical framework** guiding our assessment of American public opinion.

Please note that the forthcoming course schedule & reading list is tentative and may be change as required. I will update the syllabus and course GitPage to reflect changes as the semester progresses.

1. What is Public Opinion & How Do We Study It?

Section Objective: In the first module of this course, we dive into a broad overview of American Public Opinion. This section provides an understanding of what American Public opinion and the challenges political scientist face when studying this topic. We also explore the “ideal type” of polity, with respect to public opinion, as envisioned by the architects in the American Democratic System. In this section, we also gain applied experience of how to use survey methods (a very commonly used method by political scientists) to measure the opinions, attitudes, and preferences of citizens.

1. Week 1 & 2 (January 22nd, January 29th, & January 31st): Course Overview & Defining the “Ideal Citizen” in the American Democratic System. How do political scientists study public opinion? What are some of the challenges and pitfalls of such an approach?
 - Madison, James. 1787. “Federalist 10.” In [United States Congress Resources](#)
 - Berelson, Bernard. 1952. “Democratic Theory and Public Opinion.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 16(3):313-330.
 - Atkeson, Lonna R. 2010. “The State of Survey Research as a Research Tool in American Politics.” In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.
 - Pasek, Josh & Jon A. Krosnick. 2010. “Optimizing Survey Questionnaire Design in Political Science: Insights from Psychology.” In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.
 - Green, Amelia Hoover. 2013. “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.” *Note: This is a primer on how to read social science literature, particularly for students without previous experience with applied quantitative methods.*

²Each seminar slideset and supplemental material will be uploaded before seminar on the [Course GitPage](#).

Please Note: No Class on January 31st. In lieu of class, please fill-out the class Qualtrics survey assessing political attitudes. This survey design is based on a variant of the [Cooperative Congressional Election Study](#) and you will receive credit for completing it. Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.

2. Week 3 (February 5th & February 7th): How do we measure salient political topics in the mass public? How “stable” are some of the attitudinal measures?

- Druckman, James N. & Arthur Lupia. 2000. “Preference Formation.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. 3:1-24.
- Verba, Sidney. 1996. “The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy.” *American Political Science Review*. 1-7.
- Zaller, John & Stanley Feldman. 1992. “A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences.” *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 951-971.
- Tourangeau, Roger and Tom W. Smith. 1996. “Asking Sensitive Questions: The Impact of Data Collection Mode, Question Format, and Question Context.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 60:275-304.

2. Citizen Reasoning & Determinants of Political Attitudes

Section Objective: In this second module of this course, we investigate the literature on how citizens reason about political abstractions and how they do (or don’t) think coherently about politics. We pay special attention to whether are able to think “ideologically” and develop coherent preferences about the “ideal” role of government in society. After discussing how citizens may fall short in this endeavor of specifying coherent preferences about government, we turn to potential *heuristics* (i.e., short-cuts) that may help citizens develop coherent political preferences.

1. Week 4 (February 12th & February 14th): How do citizens “reason” about politics in American Life? Are citizens generally able to “learn” in a political context?

- Nyhan, Brendan & Jason Reifler. 2010. “When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misconceptions.” *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-330.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. “Two-Thirds Full? Citizen Competence and Democratic Governance.” In Adam Berinsky, ed., *New Directions in Public Opinion Research*.
- Huckfeldt, Robert. 2007. “Information, Persuasion, and Political Communication Networks.” In Russel J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*.
- Campbell, A.L. 2002. “Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Patterns of Senior Citizens.” *American Political Science Review*. 96:565- 74.

2. Week 5 (February 19th & February 21st): Now that we have discussed how citizens do (or do not) reason about politics, we turn to whether citizens hold coherent preferences that guide their micro-level political behavior. Does the mass public generally possess high levels of political knowledge and “ideological” thinking? How do citizens use (or do not use) heuristics to overcome the *democratic dilemma*?
 - Kuklinski, James H. & Buddy Peyton. 2007. “Belief Systems and Political Decision Making.” In Russel J. Dalton & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*.
 - Klein, Ezra. 2017. “For elites, politics is driven by ideology. For voters, it’s not.” [Vox](#).
 - Freeder, Sean, Gabriel S. Lenz, & Shad Turney. 2018. “The Importance of Knowing “What Goes with What”: Reinterpreting the Evidence on Policy Attitude Stability.” *Journal of Politics*. 81(1):1-17.
 - Lau, Richard R. & David P. Redlawsk. 2001. “Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making.” *American Political Science Review* 45(4): 951-971.
3. Week 6 (February 26th & February 28th): Which models seek to explain the origins of *partisanship*, the most salient heuristic of political attitudes and choice? What are the effects of partisanship on the political behavior of citizens? Does partisanship change?
 - Bartels, Larry M. 2008. “The Study of Electoral Behavior.” In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.
 - Huddy, Leonie & Alexa Bankert. 2017. “Political Partisanship as a Social Identity.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*.
 - Zingher, Joshua. 2018. “Polarization, Demographic Change, and White Flight from the Democratic Party.” *Journal of Politics*. 80(3): 860-872.
 - Barber, Michael & Jeremy C. Pope. 2018. “Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America.” *American Political Science Review*. 1(1): 1-17.

3. Translating Preference to Behavior: The Role of Campaigns & Elections in American Political Life

Section Objective: In this section, we turn to how citizens translate their preferences into decisions of electoral choice. We investigate and assess three main models of electoral choice: the spatial model, the partisanship model, and the retrospective model. We then turn to how well these heuristics work in various electoral contexts, particularly electoral contexts lacking a clear partisan heuristic (i.e., non-partisan contexts). Lastly we discuss citizen participation in the electoral arena, with a particular focus on the *socioeconomic* model of electoral turnout.

1. Week 7 (March 5th & March 7th): How are political preferences translated to representative choice? How do the partisan, spatial (ideological), and valence models differ in explaining citizen electoral preferences?
 - Joesten, Danielle A. & Walter J. Stone. 2014. "Reassessing Proximity Voting: Expertise, Party, and Choice in Congressional Elections." *Journal of Politics*. 76(3): 740-753.
 - Bafumi, Joseph & Robert Y. Shapiro. 2009. "A New Partisan Voter." *Journal of Politics*. 71(1): 1-23.
 - Grose, Christian R. & Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 2007. "The Iraq War, Partisanship, and Candidate Attributes: Variation in Partisan Swing in the 2006 U.S. House Elections." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 32(4): 531-557.
 - Buttice, Matthew K. & Walter J. Stone. 2012. "Candidates Matter: Policy and Quality Differences in Congressional Elections." *Journal of Politics*. 74(3): 870-887.
2. Week 8 (March 12th & March 14th): Catch-Up/Review & Midterm Exam Week. For this week, we should plan on catching-up on left-over material and/or taking the class period on Tuesday (March 12th) to review the material ahead of the midterm exam.

Midterm Examination (March 14, 2019)

Spring Break: March 18th-March 22nd

3. Week 9 (March 26th & March 28th): What are the fundamental role of campaigns in determining how citizens translate their preferences to electoral choice? What sort of citizens are predisposed to participating in the electoral process?
 - Green, Donald P. & Michael Schwam-Baird. 2016. "Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy: A Retrospective & Postscript." *Party Politics*. 22(2): 158-164.
 - Martinez, Michael D. 2010. "Why is American Turnout so Low and Why Should We Care?" In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.
 - Leighley, Jan E. 1995. "Attitudes, Opportunities, and Incentives-a Field Essay on Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly*. 48(1): 181-209.
 - Gomez, Brad T. & Thomas G. Hansford. 2014. "Economic Retrospection and the Calculus of Voting." *Political Behavior*. 37(1): 309-329.
 - Kalla, Joshua & David E. Broockman. 2017. "The Minimal Persuasive Effects of Campaign Contact in General Elections: Evidence from 49 Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review*. 112(1): 148-166.

4. Week 10 (April 2nd & April 4th): How well do these models of electoral choice perform in varying electoral contexts, such as ballot referendums, local elections, and non-partisan elections? Are there limitations to translating citizen preference to electoral choice in non-candidate and party-centered context?

- Boudreau, Cheryl & Scott A. MacKenzie. 2018. "Wanting What is Fair: How Party Cues and Information about Income Inequality Affect Public Support for Taxes." *Journal of Politics*. 80(2): 367-381.
- Boudreau, Cheryl, Christopher S. Elmendorf & Scott A. MacKenzie. 2015. "Lost in Space? Information Shortcuts, Spatial Voting, and Local Government Representation." *Political Research Quarterly*. 68(4): 843-855.
- Berry, Christopher R. & William G. Howell. 2007. "Accountability and Local Elections: Rethinking Retrospective Voting." *Journal of Politics*. 69(3): 844-858.
- Bonneau, Chris W. & Damon M. Cann. 2015. "Party Identification and Vote Choice in Partisan and Nonpartisan Elections." *Political Behavior*. 37(1): 43-66.

Please Note: No Class on April 4th due to the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, IL.

4. Cleavages in the Mass Public-Are citizens polarized in political preference & attitude?

Section Objective: In this section module we dive into a salient debate in the American public opinion literature, the debate of issue preference polarization in the mass public. We begin by setting the debate around the key analytical question: Are Americans as polarized as elites in their issue preferences? Is there a clear answer to this question? We then investigate specific aspects of this issue polarization as it relates to race and class cleavages in American society. We explore this polarization assessing work on preferences are a vast array of issues. Lastly, we conclude this section discussing the implications of issue polarization on the potential prevalence of *resource bias* in American political representation.

1. Week 11 (April 9th & April 11th): Setting the debate: are citizens fundamentally polarized in their political preferences as elected elites (i.e., members of Congress) are? Is there variation in beliefs about political tolerance in the mass public?

- Abramowitz, Alan & Kyle Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 542-555
- Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel A. Abrams, & Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings." *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 556-560.
- Smith, Amy E. 2016. "Do Americans still believe in democracy?" [The Washington Post: Monkey Cage](#).

- Claassen, Christopher & James L. Gibson. 2018. "This map shows where more Americans are willing to support free speech." *The Washington Post: Monkey Cage*.
- Oliver, Eric & Thomas Wood. 2018. "Are young people today hostile to democracy and capitalism? Far from it." *The Washington Post: Monkey Cage*.

2. Week 12 (April 16th & April 18th): What is the role of racial cleavages in American public opinion? Specifically, do different racial groups diverge in political preferences?

- Valentino, Nicholas & David O. Sears. 2005. "Old Times There Are Not Forgotten: Race and Partisan Realignment in the Contemporary South." *American Journal of Political Science*. 49(3): 672-688.
- Kinder, Donald & Nicholas Winter. 2001. "Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy." *American Journal of Political Science*. 45(2): 439-453.
- Brader, Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino, & Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science*. 52(4): 959-978.
- Bowler, Shaun., Stephen P. Nicholson, & Gary M. Segura. 2006. "Earthquakes and Aftershocks: Race, Direct Democracy, and Partisan Change." *American Journal of Political Science*. 50(1): 146-159.

3. Week 13 (April 23rd & April 25th): What is the role of economic and class cleavages in American political life? Do different social classes diverge on political preferences, particularly on economic preferences, and what are the potential implications of this on the *resource bias* of representation?

- Page, Benjamin I., Larry M. Bartels, & Jason Seawright. 2013. "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 11(1): 51-73.
- Soroka, Stuart N. & Christopher Wlezien. 2008. "On the Limits of Inequality in Representation." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 41(2): 319-327.
- Gilens, Martin. 2009. "Preference Gaps and Inequality in Representation." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 42(2): 335-341.
- Broockman, David E. & Neil A. Malhorta. 2018. "What Do Donors Want? Heterogeneity by Party and Policy Domain." *Working Paper Research Note*. 1-10.

5. Bringing the course together: Does opinion get translated into democratic responsiveness?

Section Objective: Lastly, we conclude the course with a discussion of perhaps the most seminal equation motivating the course: does American public opinion influence the policy outputs

produced by our elected agents (i.e, Congress & the Presidency)? If public opinion does influence government policy responsiveness, is there variation in which citizens are able to more effectively secure this responsiveness? What could be a potential explanation of this variation? We then conclude the course on a comparative note, by investigating whether other institutional designs are more effective at translating mass public opinion into congruent government policy responsiveness.

1. Week 14 (April 30th & May 2nd): Does American public opinion influence government policy? If it does, which citizen types are able to secure policy responsiveness from their government?

- Brookman, David E. & Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review*. 112(3): 542-563.
- Gilens, Martin. 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 69(1): 778-796.
- Wlezien, Christopher. 1995. "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending." *American Journal of Political Science*. 39(4): 981-1000.

American Political Behavior Model Evaluation Essay Due May 2nd

2. Week 15 (May 7th & May 9th): Lastly, does the *institutional* framework of the United States facilitate or hinder the translation of American public opinion to legislative policy outcomes?

- Bafumi, Joseph & Michael C. Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519-542.
- Wlezien, Christopher & Stuart N. Soroka. 2012. "Political Institutions and the Opinion-Policy Link." *West European Politics*. 35(6): 1407-1432.
- Golder, Matt & Benjamin Ferland. 2018. "Electoral Systems and Citizen-Elite Ideological Congruence." In Erik S. Herron, Robert J. Pekkanen & Matthew S. Shugart, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*.

Final Exam Review (May 9th)

Final Examination (TBD)

Pol 1: Introduction to American Politics

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Fall 2017

Seminar: Hickey Gymnasium 290: T,TR 8:00-9:20

Discussion & Term Paper Period: Hickey Gymnasium 290: T,TR 9:30-9:50

Instructor: Carlos Algara, Ph.D. Candidate

Office: 663 Kerr Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00 & by appointment

Course GitPage & Resources: <https://calgara.github.io/pol1f2017.html>

✉ calgara@ucdavis.edu

Course Objective: How do we study & assess American democracy?

This course offers an introduction to the systematic and meticulous study of American politics. Building on the scientific foundation of political science, this course is designed to provide an understanding into the behavior of *citizens* and *institutions* operating within the national framework of American government. The main question motivating the course is a simple, yet complex one: how well does the American political system live up to the ideals of a representative democracy? Recognizing that representative democracy requires engaged citizens and responsive institutions, the motivating question of the course hinges on understanding:

- How does James Madison's "Republic" provide the fundamental theory that justifies the representative framework which underlies the American political system and what are the role of *citizens* and elites within this "ideal" framework?
- How do individual *citizens* make political decisions, such as which candidate to vote for and what policies & political positions (preferences) to hold? What are the implications of how *citizens* make decisions for Madison's framework and the function of democracy? How do alternative models of representation differ from Madison's framework?
- What incentives motivate how elected elites (politicians) behave within the *institution* (i.e. the Congress and the presidency) in which they serve and what are the implications of differing incentives across *institutions* for responsiveness (policymaking)? How does collective *institutional* behavior, such as gridlock, fit into Madison's view of democracy? How do parties fit (or not fit) in Madison's conception of institutional conflict between the Congress and Presidency?

These thematic questions may seem daunting, but this course will give you the necessary framework to perform careful political and social science analysis to gain leverage on these questions. This course will provide not only an understanding of how to think of the quality

of American democracy but also how to engage in careful social science analysis. This course emphasizes the tools you need to assess political behaviors, practices, and institutions based on theory and evidence. Welcome to the class!

Course Logistics & Requirements

This section of the syllabus serves as a guide for course expectations (both for me and for you) and logistical information such as grade breakdown and course texts.

Course Texts & Announcements: There is one assigned textbook for this course and the citation can be found below:

- Kollman, Ken. 2017 *The American Political System: Core Edition*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company ¹

The [Course GitPage](#) contains all lectures, supplemental readings, and exam study guides in the interactive syllabus. Course announcements will be made through [Canvas](#).

Grade Breakdown & Schedule:

- ★ 30% Midterm Exam (November 2, 2017)²
- ★ 45% Final Exam (6:00PM, December 14, 2017)
- ★ 15% American Politics Model Evaluation Essay (Due: December 8, 2017 11:59PM)
- ★ 10% Seminar Participation & Research Participation

≥ 97%	A+	87 - 89% B+	77 - 79% C+	67 - 69 D+	< 60% F
93 - 96%	A	83 - 86% B	73 - 76% C	63 - 66% D	
90 - 92%	A-	80 - 82% B-	70 - 72% C-	60 - 62% D-	

Exams: The midterm & final exam will feature three main components: short answer, analytical question, and essay. The short answer component will be both the *definition* and *significance* of a concept discussed in lecture and in the readings. The analytical question will require you to interpret data presented in a graph or table and then analyze how the presented findings relate to a question about course concepts. Lastly, the essays will require you to use the course concepts to **develop an argument** in response to stated essay question. This includes a thesis statement and supporting evidence for the thesis statement. Study guides will be provided a week before the exam along with “what constitutes an excellent”

¹Note that I have designed the course so that readings in the syllabus correspond to *both* the *Third* Edition and the *Second* Edition of the textbook.

²Midterm exam held in regular lecture. Date subject to change with advance notice.

short answer and essay. The midterm is worth 30% while the **cumulative** final exam is worth 45%.

American Politics Model Evaluation Essay: The essay assignment will ask students to choose a model discussed throughout the course of the quarter and write a critical analysis evaluating the model. The first half of the assignment will require the student to outline the model in detail, the mechanisms present in the model, and what the model predicts with respect to political behavior. The second half of the assignment will require the student to evaluate the model and how well the model predicts the political phenomena it seeks to explain. The parameters of this assignment will be outlined in detail and uploaded to the course [GitPage](#). The assignment is to be turned in via the [Canvas](#) portal under the essay assignment tab.

Make-Up Exams: I understand that throughout a quarter many exogenous, unanticipated events, may occur that would require the makeup of an exam. This course offers flexibility for administration of the *midterm exam* for whatever reason, independent of proper documentation such as a doctor's note. Makeup examinations will consist of a robust single essay written during a ninety minute window. However, per university policy, the final exam cannot be given early and will be administered during the schedule time found on the [registrar website](#). Make-up *final exams* outside of this final exam period will *require* formal documentation and coordination at least a week in advance.

Seminar Participation & Research Participation: As stated earlier, there will be unannounced individual and group activities used to both 1) stimulate discussion during seminar and 2) assess student comprehension of a given day's concepts. These exercises will be done through an online survey hosted by the **Canvas** portal or in-class group exercises. These participation exercises will be incorporated into every other lecture and will be graded based on whether a student participated or not. Students may participate on a computer or on their smart phone device. Thus, **attendance** is critical to receiving full points for the seminar participation. If applicable, students may also earn extra credit participating in a political science research experiment. Details will be explained in class and participation will be equivalent for *two course percentage* points in weight.

Academic Dishonesty & Ethics: This course is about developing critical thought and developing personalized skill-sets necessary to examine politics in a systematic and rigorous way. Thus, it is important to develop your own arguments and work to hone in analytical skills. Academic dishonesty is not only a serious breach of ethics in the university community, but it is also detrimental to your scholarly growth. Ethics breaches, such as cheating and plagiarism, will be referred to the [Office of Student Judicial Affairs](#). Students may refer to the [University's Code of Academic Conduct](#) for further clarification or may contact the instructor for any specific questions.

Course Resources: If accommodations are needed for you to succeed in this course, please speak with me and we will work together to make sure you are accommodated. If you are unsure if you need accommodations, please visit the [UC Davis SDC site](#). On another

note, I highly recommend taking advantage of the great campus resources offered by the [Student Academic Success Center](#) for strategies on how to succeed not only in this course but throughout your tenure here.

Successful Strategies for the Systematic Study of Politics

This section of the syllabus provides successful strategies on *how* to succeed in this course.

Note on Reading Scholarly Articles: After the foundational section, many of the readings in subsequent sections will be academic in nature. I understand that, as an introductory seminar, these works may contain empirical analysis that may seem daunting and confusing to read (i.e. lots of equations & statistics). I will convey the article's findings at length in lecture. The *only* expectation from you is to read the article carefully before seminar, attempt to understand the article's main argument (this includes what political phenomena does the article's argument seek to explain), how the article's findings fit with the theory presented, and what the implications of the author's empirical findings are for the function of democracy/course concepts. I will provide a checklist that outlines how to read these works for content and using the content in seminar discussion.

Expectations: Students can expect me to come prepared to seminar. This entails that students can expect me to give a strong effort to convey the given seminar's course concepts and the implications these concepts have for the main questions highlighted in the course description. This seminar will be taught in a *dynamic* fashion which will require full participation from *everyone* in the seminar. As such, most lectures will incorporate activities designed to stimulate student involvement and gauge comprehension of the material. It is critical that everyone (including me) is ***prepared*** to discuss the seminar's assigned reading for that day and come ready to discuss the concepts and what implications these concepts have for assessing the quality of American democracy.

Coming Prepared: Each seminar will introduce *new* theories that, in one way or another, **will provide different conceptions of what the ideals of democracy should be**. It is critical that you (and I) do the assigned readings before the class. Useful class discussion is conditional on both of us doing the readings, being familiar with the reading's argument/main points, and engaging the theories presented during that week. After understanding these different theories of democracy, we will evaluate whether the American political system as constructed works well or is in need of valuable reform. The better we prepare, the better we can assess our democracy.

Keeping an Open-Mind & Importance of Questions: It is critical to challenge partisan predispositions and other biases we may hold, even if that means confronting powerful myths that can bias our perceptions and assessments. Assessing whether our democracy functions well requires **questioning everything**, both of the theories themselves and my interpretation of them. Intellectual curiosity and asking questions is both a strong and de-

sirable virtue. Asking questions and engaging in a conversation by sharing your ideas and thoughts help strengthen our assessments.

Course Road-Map

This section of the syllabus outlines the course schedule & readings³. The course will be divided into three distinct sections outlined in the course objective. Understanding of these three questions will help assess the behavior of *citizens* and *institutions* and the implications these behaviors have for the functioning of the American political system as a representative democracy. It is imperative that you treat each section as a part of a **framework** by which we judge the functioning of American democracy. Each section objective articulates the role of the section within the **framework**

1. Madison's Republic: Foundation of American Democracy

Section Objective: Madison's theory of representative democracy, outlined in *Federalist 10 & 51*, outlines the justification for the American constitution and our representative form of government. This section provides an understanding of the motivation underpinning a representative form of democracy, centered around Madison's argument about human nature, how representatives behave in political life, and the consequences of Madison's argument on political change. Ask yourself, is Madison's Republic democratic relative to other forms of democracy and how well does this theory explain the American system today?

1. Meeting 1: Course Overview & "First-Attempts" at American Democracy
 - *Kollman Text*: Chapter 1: *Introduction*
 - [The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. 1777.](#)
2. Meeting 2: The Problem of Human Nature: Self-Interest, Factions, & Collective Action
 - Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist 10." In [United States Congress Resources](#)
 - *Kollman Text*: Chapter 2: *The Constitution*: Sections: What Do Constitutions Accomplish & Origins of the American Political System
3. Meeting 3: Madison's Theory: Self-Interest & Ambition as the Solution
 - Reread: Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist 10." In [United States Congress Resources](#)
 - Madison, James (or Alexander Hamilton). 1788. "Federalist 51." In [United States Congress Resources](#)
 - [Constitution of the United States](#). 1788. *Particular* emphasis on Articles I, II, IV, & VI.

³Each seminar slideset and supplemental material will be uploaded before seminar on the [Course GitPage](#).

2. Citizen Political Behavior: Functioning as Critical Principals

Section Objective: It's clear that Madison's Republic posits an important role for citizens in a representative democracy. This section highlights how citizens function as *principals* of their elected representatives (i.e. agents). This section provides an understanding of which type of citizens participate in politics, what the incentives are to be "disengaged" from the political process, how well elections work, and what role parties play (if any) in helping citizens make political decisions. Pay close attention to some key questions. What are the implications of the "disengagement" incentive for the functioning of Madison's Republic? Do elections help citizens make a more "representative" form of government and how do we know when they do? How does the pluralist theory challenge Madison's republic? And, perhaps the most important question, is an informed electorate **NECESSARY** for Madison's theory to work?

1. Meeting 4: Variation in Citizen Participation: Resources and Free-Riding Incentive

- *Kollman Text*: Chapter 10: *Political Participation*
- Schudson, Michael. 2000. "America's Ignorant Voters." *The Wilson Quarterly* 36(3): 16-22.

2. Meeting 5: Developing Political Preferences: Citizen Self-Interest

- Zaller, John & Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 951-971.
- Linn, Suzanna, Jonathan Nagler & Marco A. Morales. 2013. "Economics, Elections, and Voting Behavior" In Jan E. Leighley eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2015.

3. Meeting 6: Overcoming Limited Information: How Citizens use Short-Cuts to Act

- *Kollman Text*: Chapter 9: *Public Opinion*
- Lau, Richard R. & David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Political Science Review* 45(4): 951-971.

4. Electoral Dynamics: The Role of Campaign & Valence Context in Voting Choice

- Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander & Matthew Gunning. 2006. "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 68(1): 75-88.
- Stone, Walter J. & Matthew K. Buttice. 2010. "Voters in Context: The Politics of Citizen Behavior" In Jan E. Leighley eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2015.
- *Kollman Text*: Chapter 13: *Elections & Campaigns*

5. Meeting 8: An Alternative to the Madisonian Model of Representation: Pluralism & By-Product Representation through Interest Groups
 - *Kollman Text*: Chapter 11: *Interest Groups & Social Movements*
 - Olson Jr., Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. **Read Chapter IV: The “By-Product” & “Special Interest” Theories (p. 132-167)**
6. Meeting 9: Does Pluralism Provide Equitable Representation? Critiques of the By-Product Model
 - Gilens, Martin & Benjamin Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564-581.
 - Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. “The Scope & Bias of the Pressure System” In *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America* New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
7. Meeting 10: Review for Midterm & Catch-Up.

Meeting 11: Midterm Examination (November 2, 2017)

3: Post-Election: How Institutions Function within the Framework

Section Objective: This section turns our focus from citizens, the principals in a representative democracy, to elected representatives, the agents. This section focuses on two institutions, the Congress and the Executive, and assesses the *incentives* they have to be faithful agents for voters and *whether* they provide accurate political representation. This section begins with how **Party Theory** provides a framework of representation and policymaking. Pay close attention to how **Party Theory** differs from Madison’s conception of district-centered representation. This section wraps up with a discussion on collective **institutional** behavior. Critical questions for this section focus on comparing & contrasting Madison’s model of representation, Pluralism (By-Product Theory), and Party Theory. Speaking to institutions, think about how do the differing electoral incentives found in Congress and the Presidency inherently create a *status quo bias*? How does polarization exasperate this bias, which *types of citizens* get represented, and is the system in need of reform in light of Madison’s theory?

1. Meeting 12: Parties in the Electorate: Helping Citizens Make Political Decisions at a Trade-off (**Party Theory I**)
 - Levendusky, Matthew S. 2010. “Clearer Cues, More Consistent Voters: A Benefit of Elite Polarization.” *Political Behavior* 32(1): 111-131.
 - Bafumi, Joseph & Robert Y. Shapiro. 2009. “A New Partisan Voter.” *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 1-23.

2. Meeting 13: Parties as Organizations: Implications of the American Party System & Procedural Cartel Theory (**Party Theory II**)

- Fiorina, Morris. 2006. "Parties as Problem Solvers" In Alan S. Gerber & Erik M. Patashnik eds., *Promoting the General Welfare : New Perspectives on Government Performance*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute. 2006.
- Cox, Gary W. & Matthew D. McCubbins. 2005. "Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives." In Steven S. Smith et al. eds. *The American Congress Reader*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 2009.
- **Optional:** *Kollman Text*: Chapter 12: *Political Parties* Sections: What are Parties? & In Comparison: Parties

3. Meeting 14: Congressional Incentives & "*The Textbook Congress*": Representation & Getting Re-Elected

- Mayhew, David. 1974. "The Electoral Connection and the Congress." In Terry Sullivan & Matthew Sullivan eds., *Congress: Structure and Policy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1987.
- Evans, C. Lawrence. 2011. "Congressional Committees" In George C. Edwards III, Frances E. Lee, & Eric Schickler eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2015.
- Evans, Diana. 2011. "Pork Barrel Politics" In George C. Edwards III, Frances E. Lee, & Eric Schickler eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2015.
- **Optional:** *Kollman Text*: Chapter 5: *Congress*: Section: Congressional Elections.

4. Meeting 15: Change in Representation: Are Citizens Represented in the System?

- Bafumi, Joseph & Michael C. Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519-542.
- Bartels, Larry M., Joshua D. Clinton & John G. Greer. 2014. "Representation" In Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, & Robert Lieberman eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2016.

5. Meeting 16: The Presidency: At-Large Constituency & Presidential Representation

- Moe. Terry M. & William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29(4): 850-873.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2001. "The Presidents Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 313-329

6. Meeting 17: Executive-Legislative Bargaining: Inherent Status-Quo Bias

- Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Pivotal Politics: A Theory in U.S. Lawmaking." In Steven S. Smith et al. eds. *The American Congress Reader*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 2009.

7. Meeting 18: Polarization: Implications for Policymaking & Accountability

- Rohde, David W., & John G. Greer. 2014. "The President and Congressional Parties in an Era of Polarization" In George C. Edwards III & William G. Howell eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency* New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2016.
- Jones, David R. 2010. "Partisan Polarization and Congressional Accountability in House Elections" *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 323-337.
- **Optional:** Fiorina, Morris. 2014. "The (Re) Nationalization of Congressional Elections." *A Hoover Institution Essay on Contemporary American Politics*.

8. Meeting 19: Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems

- Shugart, Matthew S. 2006. "Comparative ExecutiveLegislative Relations." In Sarah A. Binder, R. A. W. Rhodes & Bert A. Rockman eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions* New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2008.

9. Meeting 20: Review for Final & Catch-Up

Meeting 21: Final Exam (6:00PM December 14, 2017)

Executive-Legislative Bargaining: The Pivotal Politics Model

Pol 1: Introduction to American Politics

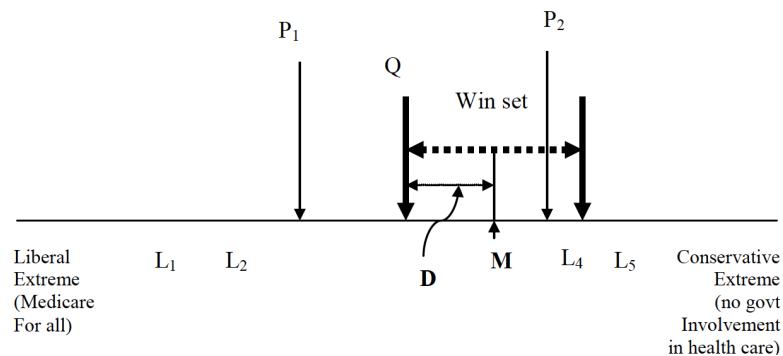
FALL 2017

1 Assumptions of the Pivotal Politics Model

*The following conditions apply to the Pivotal Politics Model of Policymaking:*¹

- ▷ The **Pivotal Politics Model** is a spatial model of policymaking where policies are debated and considered in a single, left-right ideological dimension of conflict.
- ▷ Each legislator (L_1, L_2, L_3, L_4, L_5) has an “ideal-point” where they want policy to be and will **vote for proposals closer to their ideal-point relative to the status-quo**.²
- ▷ Q is the status quo policy. For legislators in the model, the choice is always between Q and a proposal to change the status quo, P .
- ▷ M is the median voter’s ideal point. Recall that the median voter is the legislator in the **MIDDLE** of the distribution of legislators and not necessarily in the middle of the issue or ideological space. In other words, the median legislator need not be a moderate (for example: the median legislator in California is a relative liberal while the median legislator in Idaho is a relative conservative).
- ▷ D is the distance between M & Q and the win-set is $M + / - D$. The win-set is the policy space where any proposal can pass relative to the *status quo*.

2 Policymaking in a Simple Legislature



¹Please note, this is an enhanced version of the *Pivotal Politics* overhead prepared by course instructor.

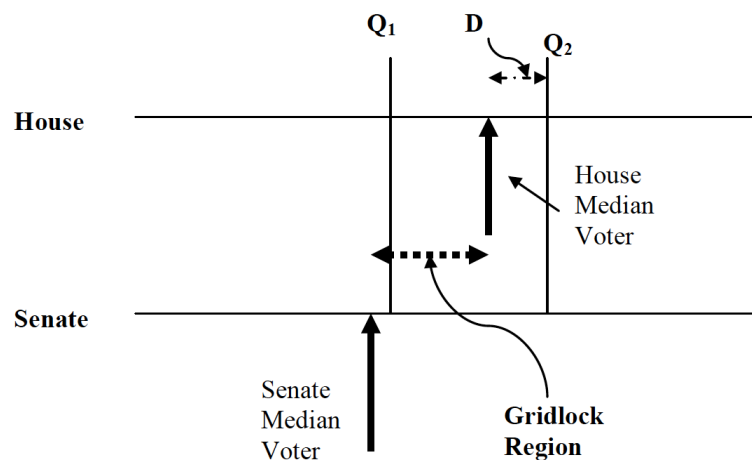
²This is the same logic specified in the **spatial model of vote-choice**, where citizens chose the candidate closest to their ideological ideal-point (preference) relative to the other candidate in the two-candidate election. Both spatial models are “**party-less**” models, where choices are driven by ideological preferences rather than partisan preferences.

Consider the following simple legislature with one majoritarian chamber. This example focuses on differing liberal-conservative preferences on Healthcare Reform. There are two proposals (P_1 & P_2) and a status quo showing the location of current Healthcare policy (Q). Using the figure, *please answer the following questions*.

1. Why does Proposal P_1 fail and proposal P_2 win. What do the legislative coalitions look like?
2. What is the new win set if P_2 passes and becomes the new Q ?
3. Why will any policy proposal within the win set pass as an alternative to Q ?
4. Why does policy converge to equilibrium at the preferences of the median voter M ? Under what conditions does policy change after it converges to M ?
5. How does one change the location of M ?

3 Policymaking in a *Bicameral* Legislature

Now, consider the following model of a bicameral legislature with a House and Senate. For the time being, assume no filibuster so policy can be passed in this legislature with a simple majority in the House and Senate.



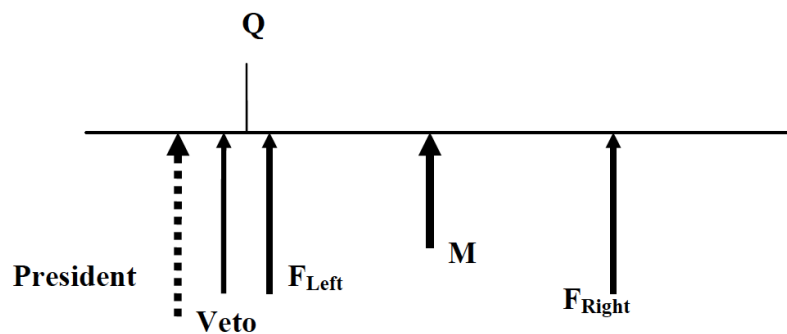
Note: Q_1 = Healthcare status quo (Obamacare) and Q_2 = GOP conservative proposal to replace Healthcare status-quo (Obamacare).

1. Why might the median voters M be located in different positions in the House & Senate?
2. Consider that this is divided government in the 114th Congress with a conservative House & a relatively liberal Senate and the House wants to overturn Obamacare Q_1 for a replacement proposal Q_2 , why couldn't it change policy?

3. Under what conditions could Q_1 change?
4. What happens if the status quo policy, Q_2 , is outside the *gridlock region*?
5. What is the “win set” for Q_2 ? What happens if the Senate median voter moves in the direction of the House median voter, like it did following the 2014 elections?

4 Policymaking in the United States Congress

Now, consider the following model with extraordinary majorities, like those found in the United States Senate. In the Senate, legislation needs the support of 60 out of 100 Senators to overcome a minority filibuster and pass the Senate.³



In the Figure above assume an ideological space found with a Democratic President:

- ▷ M = the ideological location of the *median legislator*
- ▷ F_{Left} = the ideological location of the *liberal filibuster pivot*
- ▷ F_{Right} = the ideological location of the *conservative filibuster pivot*
- ▷ **Veto** = the ideological location of the *congressional veto pivot*, the location of the Senator pivotal to overriding a presidential veto.

Please answer the following questions:

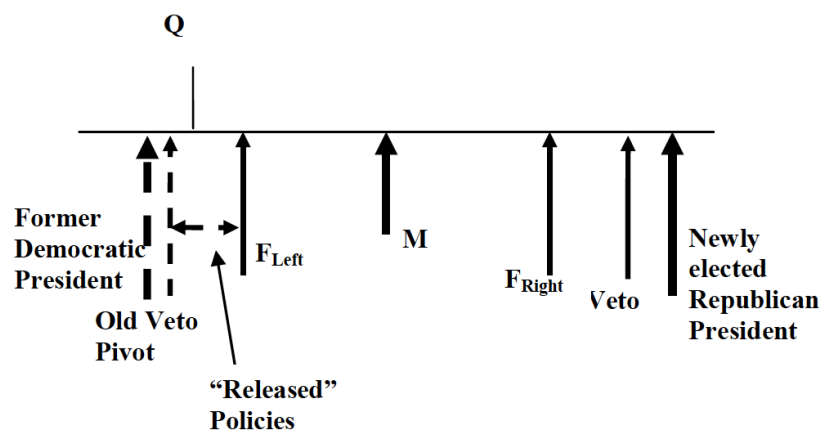
1. What is the rule for stopping a filibuster (*cloture*)? Explain what that means for the definition of the two filibuster pivots.
2. What happens to the gridlock region under an extraordinary-majority rule such as the filibuster? Who is pivotal & under what conditions?

³Note: Most legislation is subject to the 60-vote threshold in the Senate. Only budget reconciliation bills, and executive/judicial nominations, such as those for the Supreme Court or executive agency heads, are not subject to the 60 vote threshold and can be passed with a simple majority (51 votes) as in the U.S. House.

3. What is a filibuster-proof majority?
4. How does partisan polarization affect the placement of the Left and Right filibusters in the absence of a filibuster-proof majority?
5. Why do you think the model drops bicameralism? Under what conditions would the unicameral model be inaccurate?
6. What is the rule for overriding a presidential veto? Explain what that means for the definition of the veto pivot.
7. Why is the veto pivot **ALWAYS** on the same side as the president? Can any status quos (Q) be changed that fall between **Veto** and F_{Left} .

5 U.S. Policymaking: Changing the Presidential Pivot

Now, consider the following Congress with a presidential turnover found this last year. In other words, consider the following iteration of the *Pivotal Politics Model* positing what happens to U.S. policymaking when a Democratic President is replaced with a Republican President. Please answer the following question:



1. What happens to Q when a Republican President succeeds a Democratic President? Define the win-set for Q under this circumstance.
2. In light of your analysis of the win set, what policy P should M propose? Why would M not propose a policy at her ideal point?
3. Why might "released policies", such as Q in this example, contribute to the appearance of a presidential honeymoon?

Pol 1: Introduction to American Politics
American Politics Model Evaluation Essay
FALL 2017

1 Assignment Introduction

This assignment is designed to get you to think about some of the dominant political science models that are prevalent in the systematic inquiry of American politics. Throughout this course, we describe these models in detail and the implications of these models on how well American democracy functions. Your task in this assignment is to choose a model discussed throughout this course, describe the model in detail, and evaluate how well this model explains the American political phenomenon it seeks to explain. The latter part of the paper, your analysis of the model, should feature an argument as to the usefulness of the model in explaining a certain aspect of political behavior. A comprehensive list of the models we discuss in depth throughout the course are listed below.

- ★ Madison's Model of Representation
- ★ Madison's Model of Institutional Conflict
- ★ Zaller's *Top of the Head* Model of Voter Preferences
- ★ The Partisan, Spatial, and Valence Models of Vote-Choice
- ★ By-Product Theory of Representation (Pluralism)
- ★ Party Theory of Representation
- ★ *The Textbook Congress* Model of Congressional Representation
- ★ Moe & Howell's Model of Unilateral Presidential Action
- ★ *Pivotal Politics* Model of Policymaking

The next section of this prompt describes the requirements of the assignment. Pay close attention to this section of this assignment. It is **highly** recommended you outline your paper along these points. The essay should be between **3-5 double spaced pages**.¹

2 Assignment Parameters

2.1 Introducing & Describing the Model

After choosing your model, be sure to describe the model in detail. Consider the following points:

¹This is a **recommended length**. I recognize many stellar & comprehensive essays may go over the five page recommendation. That's ok! However, I would be hard-pressed to believe one can write a thorough essay in under 3 double spaced pages(equivalent to 1.5 single-spaced pages).

1. **What's your model and what does it explain?** What political phenomenon does the model seek to explain and at what level of analysis? For example, does your model speak to how *individual citizens* develop political preferences or does your model speak to how *collective institutions* interact with one another? Think of this section as identifying the key dependent variable of the model (what it is explaining).
2. **Does your model make any assumptions about the behavior of its units?** After identifying what your chosen model explains and at what level of analysis, ask does the model make any assumptions? For example, does your model assume sophisticated or ambivalent voters? Does your model assume that politicians are motivated by re-election or something else? Be sure to state the assumptions of your model, if any.
3. **What's the step-by-step process of how the model works?** After describing the assumptions, describe the "moving parts" (i.e. mechanisms) of your model. Essentially, this section should be concerned with describing how the model works. For example, applying *Party Theory* to Congress posits that the majority party will operate like a procedural cartel and monopolize all agenda setting power in order to create a record of legislative accomplishments all their members can seek re-election on. Another example could be that the *Spatial Model* of voting posits that citizens weigh their ideological preferences (self-interest) relative to both election candidates and, as a consequence, will vote for the candidate closest to them in ideological proximity. This is the real substantive area of the model introduction part of the essay and the model should be described in careful detail.

2.2 Critiquing the Model

1. **What's the utility of the model?** After introducing the reader to the model (i.e. what it tries to explain, its assumptions, how it works), state whether you think the model does a "good job" explaining the political phenomena it seeks to explain or if the model falls short. For example, one could argue that the *Pivotal Politics* model falls short in explaining policy change because it does not account for the role political parties in setting the agenda (thereby constraining the number of legislative proposals that are considered). A good strategy could be to compare & contrast your model with another model seeking to explain the same political phenomena, if applicable, or point out whether the model leaves out an important variable (consideration).
2. **Is there evidence for your argument?** Provide evidence for the argument you present above. You could use other scholarly sources or data analysis done by other publications to strengthen your argument. Empirical sources could include FiveThirtyEight, Vox, the New York Times, etc. For example, if you are writing about the partisan model of voting, you could use exit polls from the 2016 election to argue the model's utility.
3. **Sum up your argument:** Provide a short conclusion (paragraph) as to what the model explains and whether it does a serviceable job of explaining political phenomena.

Proposed Courses

I. Substantive Courses

The United States Congress

Relative to other national institutions (the courts & presidency), the U.S. Congress is the institution that is both the most contemporary barometer of the American electorate and the institution chiefly responsible for national policymaking. The goal of this seminar is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the complexities of U.S. Congressional politics, politics that are pivotal to policy responsiveness to the wishes of citizens. This seminar assesses three broad and important questions. (1) What drives the ideological policy preferences of legislators and the voters that elect them? (2) What are the institutional rules that dictate how Congress functions as a collective institution and why have these rules changed over time? (3) How does Congress interact with other institutions in the policymaking process and why does the policymaking role of Congress potentially differ from one policy domain to the next? Assessment of these questions will rely on detailed discussions of subtopics relating to congressional elections, constitutional design and procedural rules governing the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, and competing incentives of the Congress, the Presidency, and Courts.

American Political Behavior & Opinion

This seminar provides a comprehensive treatment of the major themes dominating contemporary political science research on American political behavior. This seminar focuses on two dependent variables of American political behavior: (1) political participation (voting propensity, degree of political sophistication/activism) and (2) political preferences (vote-choice, ideological preferences, political value-traits). This seminar also pays close attention to partisanship, both in a discussion as a dependent variable (i.e. what determines a citizen's partisan preference) and an independent variable (i.e. what role does partisanship play in determining electoral choice and how has this role changed over time). This seminar leverages both classical and contemporary cutting-edge research to provide a broad overview of this important American politics subfield.

American Political Parties

This seminar provides a comprehensive theoretical and empirical examination of political parties in the United States. This course provides a treatment of American political parties in three domains. First, we consider political parties *in the electorate*. In this section, we explore the salience of partisanship and the nature of party coalitions, both in contemporary and differing eras of American political life. Second, we consider political parties *as organizations*. This section provides a treatment of parties as analytical units of elite coalitions, designed to provide for the recruitment of candidates and campaign-oriented infrastructure. Lastly, this course considers political parties as analytical units *in government*. This provides for a detailed perspective of how parties, through the lens of *party theory*, solve collective action problems in the legislature. We contrast this view with traditional theories of legislative partisan influence and David Mayhew's view that "no theoretical treatment of the United States Congress that posits parties as analytical units will go very far."

Race Politics in America

This seminar provides a comprehensive treatment into the role of racial group identity plays in American politics. This seminar focuses on two emerging literatures in political science assessing the role of racial identity plays in shaping political preferences and participation. First, this course looks at the origins of group identity as it relates to our traditional understanding of minority politics. This section of the course pays particular attention to the conceptual and empirical measurement of *group consciousness* and *linked fate*, particularly with respect to the politically emerging populations of Latino and Asian Americans. This section of the course also pays special attention to how these two sources of racial identity influence political attitudes, particularly surrounding immigration and social welfare policy, and the dynamics of electoral choice. The second half of the course assesses the role of *white racial resentment* resulting from historical and contemporary shifts in American demographics. This section of the course begins with the issue evolution of Civil Rights among white Americans following the critical juncture of 1964 (Carmines & Stimson 1989) and the role racial resentment plays in the political preferences of white Americans. We specifically look at the nature of partisanship and electoral choice, and how racial resentment may explain shifts in these two salient dependent variables. We will close the course by looking at the dynamic of race politics in America during the Trump era, paying special treatment to the role white racial resentment and minority linked fate plays in the electoral coalitions of both major parties.

Elections & Voting Behavior

This seminar provides a unified approach to assessing individual and macro level factors influencing election participation and outcomes in the United States at varying levels. This course begins with the question of who participates in American elections? In this section we consider both individual-level explanations of voter turnout (education, income, etc.) and how election turnout in the U.S. compares to other advanced democracies. We also consider potential institutional reasons for variation in voter turnouts, with special attention to how institutions may (or may not) lower the cost of electoral participation by citizens and the role of campaigns in motivating the public. The second half of the course assesses multiple theories of voter decision making. In this section we focus on three prominent models of voting: 1) the retrospective valence (economic & candidate-centered) model, 2) the partisanship model, and 3) the spatial model. In this section, we unpack each model of vote-choice and discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of each model in explaining voter behavior. We also pay close attention to the Michigan model and rational-choice (Rochester) model of partisanship as it relates to voting. By the end of the course, students will be to “dissect” the effectiveness of our electoral institutions in providing outcomes congruent with aggregate preferences of the electorate.

American Political Polarization in the Mass Publics & Elites

This seminar examines the defining characteristic of contemporary American political life, political polarization. Contemporary political science research suggests polarization pervades all facets of the political arena: the legislative process, executive authority, judicial politics, elections, voting behavior, political parties, mass political participation, and political-economic linkages. Since Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal launched the academic study of contemporary political polarization with their 1984 article “The Polarization of American Politics”, polarization (and scholarly attention to it) continues to trend upward. This gives us the opportunity to study a phenomenon that has obvious relevance to our political system. This seminar will examine the nature, causes, and consequences of polarization and its impact on both elite political actors and the mass public.

II. Political Methodology Courses

Introduction to Research Design & Methods

This course provides students with an overview introduction to political methodology by emphasizing which types of questions can be studied using quantitative methods (experimental & observational) and qualitative methods (interview & ethnographic methods). At the undergraduate level, this course focuses on the principles of social scientific inquiry, such as the role of theory building, the need for design-based inference, and the limitations of various methodologies. As such, this course is organized into three key components. The first component provides students with an overview of formulating a social scientific research question and specification of causal theories and testable implications (hypotheses). The second component provides an overview of qualitative methodologies, such as process-tracing and qualitative interviews. The last component introduces students to conventional quantitative approaches of social scientific research, such as large- N studies and experimental designs. This course culminates in students specifying a research design for a political science question of their choosing, with individual exercises designed to facilitate this final product.

Quantitative Political Analysis

This seminar provides students with an introduction to quantitative research methods in political science. The goal of this course is to provide students with the skills needed to be competent consumers and communicators of quantitative methods used in political science. This course provides students with an introduction to fundamental concepts of quantitative research design, data collection, probability theory, quantitative measurement, and applied statistical inference. Students will have exposure to multiple elementary methods of hypothesis testing (analysis of variance, bivariate & multiple regression) in the form of interpreting political science research articles and completing problem sets. The course will also feature exercises to facilitate completion of an original set of quantitative analysis of a political science research question.

Data Visualization & Literacy: Introductory Data Exploration with R

This seminar provides students with an introduction to data management and visualization in the R computing environment for data analysis, a widely used system in industry and academic research. This course introduces students to data science analysis through applied case studies of working with data to derive descriptive narratives using elementary aspects of the R programming language. This is done through introducing students to multiple examples of “real-world” (and often messy) data formats and critically thinking of strategies to quantify and measure concepts of interest. Students will also learn how to visualize data for exploratory analysis and how to effectively communicate this analysis to diverse audiences.

Introduction to Survey Research & Measurement

This methods seminar is designed to provide a comprehensive review of the critically important methodology tool of surveys. The learning outcomes of this course are to provide students with the awareness of the utility of survey research to academic behavioral research, as well as policy evaluation. This course will also leverage case studies to varying sampling methods and to investigate potential sources of error and bias. Particular attention will be paid to the use of surveys in measuring latent variables. This course culminates in students producing and fielding a survey instrument assessing a question of interest.