

## PP 300: American Politics & Institutions Graduate Core Seminar

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

Fall 2021

Seminar: Mondays, 12:20PM-3:10PM (PST)

Course Location: Academic Computing 208 &

Zoom Room [<https://cgu.zoom.us/j/87168632154>]

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Instructor: Carlos Algara, Ph.D.

Office: 227 McManus Hall

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00AM-12:00PM (PST) & by appointment

Office Hours Scheduling Link: <https://appoint.ly/s/carlos.algara/fall2021oh>

Office Hours Zoom Link: <https://cgu.zoom.us/j/7788087102>

✉ [carlos.algara@cgu.edu](mailto:carlos.algara@cgu.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Alex Specht

✉ [alexander.specht@cgu.edu](mailto:alexander.specht@cgu.edu)

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### **Course Objective: What are the dominant fields of scientific inquiry in the political science subfield of American politics & what theoretical, and methodological, frameworks underpin this inquiry by political scientists?**

This course is a graduate seminar in American Politics and, for most of you, this will mark the beginning of your formal research training in the field of American politics. The main purpose of this course is to give you the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary to begin a transition from *consumers* of knowledge about American politics to *producers* of original research in the subfield. As such, this course is designed to give students the foundation necessary to be producers of knowledge by developing interesting and testable research questions, examining theoretical frameworks and research designs, and making constructive critiques of some of the best work produced by scholars of American politics. American politics is an ideal field for developing the intuition and skills needed for producing new knowledge as scholarship, given that this area continues to be at the forefront of both theory and methodological developments.

This course is designed for both Master's-level and Ph.D.-level students, with varying course outcome expectations for each. Master's students will get acquainted with the main findings across various lines of inquiry in the subfield towards the goal of demonstrating their ability to read, critique, and articulate the state of the research in the field. For doctoral students in this course, the expectation is that many of you are planning to teach courses and conduct original research on American politics. Towards that end, the specific objectives of this course include:

- ★ (1) Helping students prepare for the American politics component of qualifying exams
- ★ (2) Developing the understanding of the theoretical frameworks and empirical methods, with a stark focus on measurement and research design, covered in this course

- ★ (3) Providing a broad overview of the American politics subfield that will serve to guide students to other works in large and rapidly growing strands of literature
  - ★ (4) Developing the ability to conduct scholarly research and evaluate the research of others, particularly with respect to identifying *future* research extending standing studies
  - ★ (5) Lastly, applying the approaches and methods covered in this course to a research question of your choosing
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## Course Limitations Disclaimer

We will cover a variety of topics in the political science subfield of American politics. This course is designed to be a *survey course*, such that our introduction to each topic will be somewhat brief. Advanced courses are offered (or could be) on every topic we touch, so you can think of this class as being just the tip of the iceberg. For many of you, this type of introduction provides an excellent way to sample the types of questions, methodologies, and research being conducted in the subfields of American politics, and this may help you to choose your own course of research and area of specialty.

Given our severe time limitations, we can cover only a few of the many research questions, theoretical frameworks and empirical methods that are relevant to the scientific study of American politics. For example, we will be unable to devote substantial time to the voluminous literatures on race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, state and local politics, American political development and such topics as immigration, polarization and redistricting. Students should consider this course an introduction to some of the classic, contemporary and cutting edge research approaches in American politics and a starting point to conducting their own research in this area. Ideally, this course will also serve as a prelude to other courses in the American politics subfield.

Broadly, we will cover both institutions and behavior—the two major subfields in American politics. This means we will touch upon topics such as Congress, Interest Groups, Presidency, and Courts. But we will also cover Public Opinion, Democratic Participation & Politics, Elections, Campaigns, Political Parties, Political Organizations, and perhaps some other specialized topics that the class chooses to cover as a group. As such, the first half of the course will cover American behavioral modules while the second half will cover American institutional modules.

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## 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 text for this course. The [Course Canvas Page](#) contains all relevant readings for this seminar.

### **Grade Breakdown & Schedule:**

- ★ 20% Class Discussion Participation
- ★ 50% Weekly Response Papers
- ★ 30% Final Research Proposal

#### Claremont Graduate University Course Grading Scheme

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Description	Learning Outcome
A	4.0	<i>Complete mastery of course material and additional insight beyond course material</i>	<i>Insightful</i>
B	3.0	<i>Complete mastery of course material</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
C	2.0	<i>Gaps in mastery of course material; not at level expected by the program</i>	<i>Developing</i>
U	0	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>

*Note that grades may contain pluses or minus designations as appropriate.*

**Class Discussion Participation (20%):** As a graduate-level substantive seminar, this course requires students to attend class and be active in our collective course discussion. Ideally, I would be speaking very little during most of our seminars. As such, students are expected to shoulder the burden of driving discussions in this course. This means that students need to read the assigned materials every week and be ready to talk about the substantive topics/work discussed in that week's readings. This largely entails:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical model presented in each individual reading for this week? Do these theories "make sense" given what we know from our ongoing discussion about American politics?
2. What empirical methods and research designs are used to evaluate the theory-driven hypotheses presented in this work? What data sources do these authors rely on to test their hypotheses?
3. What do these readings tell us about the topic at hand and politics in general? What are the limitations of these studies that the authors may have missed and what could be a worthwhile avenue for future work in this area?

**Response Papers (50%):** Beginning in the second week of the course, students are responsible for turning in a reaction paper. **These response papers are to be no more than two pages single-spaced and are due at 5pm Sunday, the day prior to our class meeting over email.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Specifically, these response papers should be drafted in templates with standard one-inch margins and 12pt. font.

The purpose of this assignment is to teach students how to develop a single thesis argument in clear and concise form. While students should complete a response paper each week, I will count only **the top 8 reading responses towards their final grade**. These response papers must engage the readings in some form and are flexible with respect to content. These response papers may:

- ★ Provide an alternative research idea in response to that week's readings or a single article
- ★ Bring forth an alternative theoretical explanation than what is claimed in that week's readings or a single article
- ★ Critique the theory or research methods of a given article or theme of readings using other scholarly arguments

These are some ideas for how to frame the response papers and students have great flexibility. However, the response papers must **explicitly** concern the readings of the week in some fashion and the best papers will address one issue or question from the current readings, as well as connect them to previous readings. This assignment is due the day prior to the course meetings is due to the fact that I will rely on this assignment to structure our class discussions for that week. I strongly recommend using the ***How to Read Social Science Research Articles*** guide that I created to synthesize the literature and prepare your argument responding to this work. ***Please note that these papers are NOT summaries of the readings and should critically engage the reading material. Response papers that are merely summaries of the readings will be heavily penalized.***

**Research Proposal (30%):** Given that this course is designed to give students the foundation to foster their *independent* research agendas, students will write a 12-15 page research proposal that describes a research project of their choice (as approved by the instructor). The proposal ought to identify a question or puzzle on an important topic in American politics, summarize relevant research on the question or debate, and discuss a strategy for answering the question or moving the debate forward. The discussion of relevant research ought to address the most recent scholarship available, as well as the more seminal work on the topic. A minimum of 12 sources is expected. The strategy for answering the question ought to include a preliminary argument, testable hypothesis / proposition and a well-developed research design that could feasibly be undertaken with sufficient time and resources. A 1-2 page proposal with an annotated bibliography with at least 8 sources is **due on Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>**. Based on these proposals, I will either approve the topic or advise you on how to revise it. Final research proposals are **due on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**.

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## Course Attendance, Ethics, & Accommodations

**Course Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are unable to attend class must seek permission for an excused absence from the course director or teaching assistant. Unapproved absences or late attendance for three or more classes may result in a lower grade or an "incomplete" for the course. If a student has to miss a class, he or she should arrange

to get notes from a fellow student and is strongly encouraged to meet with the teaching assistant to obtain the missed material. Missed assignments will not be available for re-taking unless *prior arrangements are made with the course instructor*.

**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 appropriate avenues. Students may refer to the [University's Academic Integrity Archived Bulletin](#) for further clarification or may contact the instructor for any specific questions.

**Course Accommodations:** Claremont Graduate University is committed to offering auxiliary aids and services to students with verifiable disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. To ensure that their individual needs are addressed, students with special needs are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office as early as possible. Additional resources can be found on the linked page: [CGU Disability Services](#).

**CGU Mental Health Resources:** The Claremont Colleges Monsour Counseling & Psychological Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information, please see: <https://services.claremont.edu/mcaps/>.

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## 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). 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. **You can find a reading guide at the conclusion of this syllabus, which provides a checklist document that outlines how to read these works for content, using this content in seminar discussion, and synthesizing the work towards application in other research related endeavors (i.e., annotated bibliographies for research papers or comprehensive exams).**

**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.

***Keeping an Open-Mind & Importance of Questions:*** It is critical to challenge partisan pre-dispositions and other biases we may hold, even if that means confronting powerful myths that can bias our perceptions and assessments. Assessing such topics covered in this course well requires **questioning everything**, both of the theories themselves and our 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.

***Constructive Critiques:*** One of the mainstays of conducting, and consuming, scientific work is consistent critique by the scholarly community. This is part of the scientific process and, ultimately, critiques should be constructive towards the goal of strengthening our collective knowledge and improving scholarly work. As such, critiques in this course must be good-faith exercises designed to be *constructive* towards improving our ability to consume and produce research. I expect all critiques of the work we read, and produce, to follow this model of constructive and professional feedback in this course.

# Course Road-Map

## American Political Behavior Modules

1. Week 1 (8/30/2021): Course Introduction: What is “Political Science” discipline and the “Political Science” research process?
  - ★ Mansbridge, Jane. 2014. “What is Political Science For?” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(1):1-17.
  - ★ Bond, Jon R. 2007. “The Scientification of the Study of Politics: Some Observations on the Behavioral Evolution in Political Science.” *Journal of Politics* 69(3):897-907.
  - ★ Noel, Hans. 2010. “Ten Things Political Scientists Know That You Don’t.” *The Forum* 8(3): 1-19.
  - ★ Stimson, James A. 2018. “Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly opinionated Essay.”
  - ★ Lebo, Matthew J. 2016. “Managing Your Research Pipeline.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(2): 259-264.
  - ★ **No seminar or office hours due to Labor Day on September 6<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** ★
2. Week 3 (9/13/2021): Why Government? Madisonian Democracy & The Role of Policy
  - ★ Madison, James. 1787. “Federalist 10.” In [United States Congress Resources](#)
  - ★ Madison, James (or Alexander Hamilton). 1788. “Federalist 51.” In [United States Congress Resources](#)
  - ★ McGann, James & Walter J. Stone. 2021. *Republic at Risk*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: Big Answers, Better Questions: Madison’s Theory of the Republic.
  - ★ Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. 1st edition. New York: Harper and Row. (Chapters. 1-3 & 8)
  - ★ “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties.” 1950. *The American Political Science Review* 44(3), 1-96.
  - ★ Wickham-Jones, Mark. 2018. “This 1950 political science report keeps popping up in the news. Here’s the story behind it.” In [The Washington Post: Monkey Cage](#).
3. Week 4 (9/20/2021): What is “ideological” thinking and can the American mass public think “ideologically” when it comes to policy preferences?
  - ★ Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” *Critical Review* 18(1-3):1-74.
  - ★ Freeder, Sean, Gabriel S. Lenz, & Shad Turney. (2018). “The Importance of Knowing “What Goes with What”: Reinterpreting the Evidence on Policy Attitude Stability.” *The Journal of Politics* 81(1): 274–290.

- ★ Broockman, David E. 2014. "Approaches to Studying Representation." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41(1): 181-215.
  - ★ Coppock, Alexander & Donald P. Green. 2021. "Do Belief Systems Exhibit Dynamic Constraint?" *The Journal of Politics*: 1-31.
  - ★ Hare, Christopher D., Tzu-Ping Liu & Robert N. Lupton. 2018. "What Ordered Optimal Classification reveals about ideological structure, cleavages, and polarization in the American mass public." *Public Choice* 1(1): 1-22.
4. Week 5 (9/27/2021): Contrasting partisan identity (*partisanship*) and ideology: is American political behavior better explained by partisanship or ideology?
- ★ Barber, Michael, & Pope, Jeremy C. 2019. "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America." *American Political Science Review* 113(1): 38-54.
  - ★ Campbell, Angus, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, & Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. John Wiley & Sons. (Chapters 1-4)
  - ★ Bartels, Larry M. 2010. "The Study of Electoral Behavior." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
  - ★ Goren, Paul. 2002. "Character Weakness, Partisan Bias, and Presidential Evaluation." *The Journal of Politics* 46(3): 627-641.
  - ★ Montagnes, B. Pablo, Peskowitz, Zachary, & McCrain, Josh. 2019. "Bounding Partisan Approval Rates under Endogenous Partisanship: Why High Presidential Partisan Approval May Not Be What It Seems." *The Journal of Politics* 81(1): 321-326.
- ★ **Note: APSA Annual Conference will be held from September 29<sup>th</sup> - October 3<sup>rd</sup>** ★
5. Week 6 (10/4/2021): Is the American mass public polarized on cultural & ideological grounds? What does *polarization* mean in terms of measurement?
- ★ Fiorina, Morris P., & Samuel J. Abrams. 2008. Political Polarization in the American Public. *Annual Review of Political Science* 11(1): 563-588.
  - ★ Abramowitz, Alan & Kyle Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 542-555
  - ★ Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, & Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings." *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 556-560.
  - ★ Jacoby, William G. 2014. Is There a Culture War? Conflicting Value Structures in American Public Opinion. *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 1-18.
  - ★ Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 76(3): 405-431.
6. Week 7 (10/11/2021): Mobilization & Political Participation: What are the predictors of participation in American democracy and do institutional barriers to voting affect participation?



- ★ Gerber, Alan S. & Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653–663.
  - ★ Hajnal, Zoltan, Nazita Lajevardi, & Lindsay Nielson. 2017. "Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes." *The Journal of Politics* 79(2): 363–379.
  - ★ Grimmer, Justin, Eitan Hersh, Marc Meredith, Jonathan Mummolo, & Clayton Nall. 2018. "Obstacles to Estimating Voter ID Laws' Effect on Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 80(3): 1045–1051.
  - ★ Burden, Barry C. 2018. "Disagreement over ID requirements and minority voter turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 80(3), 1060–1063.
  - ★ Barreto, Matt A., Stephen Nuño, Gabriel R. Sanchez & Hannah L. Walker. 2019. "The Racial Implications of Voter Identification Laws in America." *American Politics Research* 47(2), 238–249.
  - ★ Fraga, Bernard L & Michael G. Miller. 2021. "Who Does Voter ID Keep from Voting?" *The Journal of Politics*. Forthcoming.
7. Week 8 (10/18/2021): Does the American mass public espouse liberal democratic values? Is there variation in satisfaction with democracy and liberal democratic values in the American mass public?
- ★ Graham, Matthew H. & Milan W. Svolik. 2020. "Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 392–409.
  - ★ Clayton, Katherine, Nicholas T. Davis, Brendan Nyhan, Ethan Porter, Timothy J. Ryan, & Thomas J. Wood. 2021. "Elite rhetoric can undermine democratic norms." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118(23): 1–26.
  - ★ Carey, John M., Gretchen Helmke, Brendan Nyhan, Mitchell Sanders, and Susan Stokes. 2019. "Searching for bright lines in the Trump presidency." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(3): 699–718.
  - ★ Malka, Ariel, Yphtach Lelkes, Bert N. Bakker, & Eliyahu Spivack. 2020. "Who Is Open to Authoritarian Governance within Western Democracies?" *Perspectives on Politics*, 1–20.
  - ★ Bartels, Larry M. 2020. "Ethnic antagonism erodes Republicans' commitment to democracy." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117(37): 22752–22759.

## **American Institutional Modules**

8. Week 9 (10/25/2021): Why Parties? Reducing costs to collective action in the electoral arena
- ★ Hassell, Hans J. G. 2018. "Party control of party primaries: Party influence in nominations for the U.S. Senate." *The Journal of Politics* 78(1): 75–87.

- ★ Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. “Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization.” *The American Political Science Review* 95(3): 619–631.
- ★ Maestas, Cherie & L. Sandy Maisel, & Walter J Stone. 2005. “National Party Efforts to Recruit State Legislators to Run for the U.S. House.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30(2): 277–300.
- ★ Stone, Walter J., Atkeson, Lonna R., & Rapoport, Ronald B. 1992. “Turning On or Turning Off? Mobilization and Demobilization Effects of Participation Nomination Campaigns.” *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 665–691.
- ★ Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, & John Zaller. 2012. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571–97.

★ **Research Proposal Annotated Bibliography Due on Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>**★

9. Week 10 (11/1/2021): The Electoral Connection: What motivates representation by members of Congress and what does electoral accountability look like?

- ★ 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.
- ★ Carson, Jamie L., Koger, Gregory., Lebo, Matthew J., & Young, Everett. 2010. “The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(3): 598–616.
- ★ Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, & John. F. Cogan. 2002. “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members’ Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127–140.
- ★ Jacobson, Gary C. 2015. “It’s Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections.” *The Journal of Politics* 77(1): 235–248.
- ★ Algara, Carlos. 2019. “The conditioning role of polarization in U.S. Senate election outcomes: A direct-election & voter-level analysis.” *Electoral Studies* 59: 1–16.
- ★ Grimmer, Justin. 2013. “Appropriators Not Position takers: The Distorting Effects of Electoral Incentives on Congressional Representation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 624–642.

★ **No seminar or office hours on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, due to Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference being held at Vanderbilt University from 11/7-11/8. Week 11 meeting will be rescheduled virtually.**★

10. Week 11 (11/8/2021) *Rescheduled Virtual Meeting TBD*: Why Parties, Part II? How parties reduce costs to collective action in Congress and what helps explain policy gridlock (or the lack thereof) on Capitol Hill?

- ★ 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.
- ★ 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.
- ★ McGann, James & Walter J. Stone. 2021. *Republic at Risk*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7: A Pivotal Politics Model of the Policy Process: The Separation of Powers Reimagined.
- ★ Gailmard, Sean & Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2007. "Negative Agenda Control in the Senate and House: Fingerprints of Majority Party Power." *The Journal of Politics* 69(3): 689-700.
- ★ Napolio, Nicholas G. & Christian R. Grose. 2021. "Crossing Over: Majority Party Control Affects Legislator Behavior and the Agenda." *The American Political Science Review*. Forthcoming.
- ★ Chiou, Fang-Yi & Lawrence Rothenburg. 2003. "When Pivotal Politics Meets Partisan Politics." *The American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 503-522.

11. Week 12 (11/15/2021): The Presidency: What explains the source, and rise, of unilateral presidential action and what are some of the "informal" powers at the disposal of the president?

- ★ 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 President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 313-329
- ★ Hassell, Hans J. G. & Samuel Kernell. 2016. "Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 845-859.
- ★ Kinane, Christina. 2021. "Control without Confirmation: The Politics of Vacancies in Presidential Appointments." *The American Political Science Review* 115(2): 599-614.
- ★ Ostrander, Ian & Joel Sievert. 2013. "What's So Sinister about Presidential Signing Statements?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 58-80.
- ★ Ostrander, Ian & Joel Sievert. 2014. "Presidential Signing Statements and the Durability of the Law." *Congress & the Presidency* 41(1): 362-383.

12. Week 13 (11/22/2021): The Judiciary: What are the competing models of judicial decision making and how do judicial incentives contrast with electoral incentives? Moreover, how do citizens evaluate the job performance and representation provided by the Supreme Court?

- ★ Hamilton, Alexander. 1788. "Federalist 78." In [United States Congress Resources](#)
- ★ Segal, Jeffrey A. & Harold J. Spaeth. 1996. "The Influence of Stare Decisis on the Votes of United States Supreme Court Justices." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(4): 971-1003.

- ★ Bartels, Bradon L. 2009. "The Constraining Capacity of Legal Doctrine on the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review* 40(4): 971-1003.
  - ★ Malhotra, Neil, and Stephen A. Jessee. 2014. "Ideological proximity and support for the Supreme Court." *Political Behavior*. 36(4): 817-846.
  - ★ Baily, Michael & Forrest Maltzman. 2008. "Does Legal Doctrine Matter Unpacking Law and Policy Preference on the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Political Science Review* 102(3): 369-384.
  - ★ Nicholson, Stephen P. & Thomas G. Hansford. 2014. "Partisans in Robes: Party Cues and Public Acceptance of Supreme Court Decisions." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3): 620-636.
13. Week 14 (11/29/2021): Lobbying & Interest Groups: What is the pluralistic model of representation and do interest groups exasperate representational inequalities in the American political system?
- ★ 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)**
  - ★ 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, and Winston.
  - ★ Esterling, Kevin M. 2017. "Buying Expertise: Campaign Contributions and Attention to Policy Analysis in Congressional Committees." *The American Political Science Review* 101(1): 93–109.
  - ★ Bonica, Adam, Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, & Howard Rosenthal. 2013. "Why Hasn't Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3): 103–124.
  - ★ Gilens, Martin & Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564–581.
14. Week 15 (12/6/2021): The growing diversity in the U.S. Congress—what are the implications for increased elite diversity on representation and elections?
- ★ Schaefer, Katherine. 2021. "The changing face of Congress in 7 charts." In [Pew Research Center](#).
  - ★ Broockman, David E. 2014. "Distorted Communication, Unequal Representation: Constituents Communicate Less to Representatives Not of Their Race." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 307–21.
  - ★ Juenke, Eric Gonzalez & Robert R. Preuhs. 2012. "Irreplaceable legislators? Rethinking minority representatives in the new century." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 705-715.
  - ★ Bratton, Kathleen A., & Kerry L. Haynie. "Agenda setting and legislative success in state legislatures: The effects of gender and race." *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 658-679.

- ★ Curry, James M., & Matthew R. Haydon 2018. L“awmaker Age, Issue Salience, and Senior Representation in Congress.” *American Politics Research* 46(4): 567–595.
- ★ Bratton, Kathleen A., & Stella M. Rouse. 2011. “Networks in the Legislative Arena: How Group Dynamics Affect Cosponsorship.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36(3): 423–460.

★ **Research Proposals Due on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**★  
★ **CGU Final Exam Week, December 13<sup>th</sup> - December 16<sup>th</sup>**★

This syllabus was last updated on: August 30, 2021

Acknowledgments: This syllabus was developed, in part, based on sample syllabi from Scott MacKenzie, Erik Engstrom, Ben Highton, Walt Stone, and Jennifer Victor.

# How to Read Social Science Research Articles

Fall 2021

CARLOS ALGARA

Many students may not have prior experience to reading substantive social science research. To mitigate these concerns, I prepared the following questions that students may rely on to assess and critique the political science research that we will encounter in this course. This guide can also be used to identify key components of articles that can then be used to develop the thesis statement required for your response paper and final essay exam. I **strongly** recommend using this template to assess the literature that we are assessing in this course and more generally across the social sciences.

1. **Assessing Theory:** What is the research's (i.e., article or book) main argument?

- ★ What political phenomena does the article or book **ask** try to explain/address? (i.e., what is the research question?)
- ★ What is the theoretical model advocated by the book in terms of the main **independent variable(s)** and **dependent variable(s)**.
- ★ What is the main causal mechanism(s) argued in the piece with respect to how the **independent variable(s)** exerts an effect on the **dependent variable(s)**.

2. **Assessing The Point:** How does the research fit in the overall literature?

- ★ What standing literature in political science does the piece try to speak to?
- ★ How well does this research add to our collective understanding of this literature?
- ★ Are there any implications of this research that speak to a **broader literature** within political science?

3. **Assessing Research Methodology:** What research design is used in this research?

- ★ What is the **dependent variable(s)** in the study?
- ★ How well is the **dependent variable(s)** measured?
- ★ How do the authors **operationalize** the **dependent variable(s)** in the survey? For example, on what scale is the dependent variable derived from a survey question measured?
- ★ What are the **independent variable(s)** in the study and how well are they measured?
- ★ What are the main **independent variable(s)** in the study as opposed to simple "control" **independent variable(s)**?
- ★ Does the research design try to make a **causal** argument or a **correlational** argument in terms of inference?
- ★ What specific **method** (i.e., specific statistical model? causal identification? qualitative methods?) is used in the research design?
- ★ What data is used to assess the research design outlined in the work?

- ★ Is the method appropriate given the research question asked, any strengths or weaknesses?

4. **Assessing Research Significance & Quality:** If you had advice for the author(s), what would you suggest?

- ★ Are there any shortcomings to the study in terms of the ***theoretical argument*** or ***research design***?
- ★ Are there alternative explanations to the research findings of this work and are these alternative explanations accounted for in this research?
- ★ What are the implications of this research?
- ★ Are there any future avenues of research that this study points us to?
- ★ Should this study be replicated, either in terms of ***theoretical argument*** or ***research design***, in other contexts?