

## Problems in US Politics

*GOV 371C, Fall 2023*

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*TuTh 3:30-5:00, GAR 0.128*

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*This syllabus will be updated from time to time, and posted (with a new date) on Canvas. Please be sure that you have the most recent version.*

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What's wrong with American politics? Those who follow politics are familiar with the litany of complaints – populism, polarization, inequality, money, special interests, corruption, disengagement, lack of deliberation, lack of accountability... Both liberals and conservatives find much that is wanting – though, naturally, they don't always agree on what it is.

Typically, normative questions are downplayed in political science. We place them front and center as a way of motivating the course. Specifically, we shall try to identify potential problems with American politics, to conceptualize them clearly, to measure them in a systematic fashion, to chart their history, to compare their status in other countries, to understand their causes and their effects, and their possible solutions. In short, we shall try to apply social science to the apparent problems of American politics.

## **Eligibility**

This is an upper division course in political science (aka government). I expect that some students will be avid political junkies. All students should have taken at least one introductory course in American politics. If you're unsure about the basics, review a textbook on American politics.

You should be aware that this class will require a good deal of time and effort on your part. If you are unable to make this time-commitment you may be happier in a different course.

## **Grades**

Grades will be based on the following components: (a) attendance (10%), (b) classroom participation, including one oral presentation (10%), (c) pop quizzes on the day's reading (20%), (d) final exam (25%), and (e) research paper, final draft (35%). Note that most of the grading points are assigned at the end of the semester.

## **Protocol**

Please arrive on time. Do not read, sleep, or chat with your neighbors. Put your cell phones away. If you need to use your laptop to access readings or to take notes do not surf the web or use email. To discourage this, I ask that everyone *turn off wi-fi during class*. Be respectful of others in your comments. Do not leave until class is dismissed.

## **Academic conduct**

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”

This means that work you produce on assignments, tests and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. The instructor will make it clear for each test, exam or assignment whether collaboration is encouraged or not. Always cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must make that clear otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty Policy:  
[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

## **Absences, extensions**

Students are expected to take exams and complete written work at their scheduled times. By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a

project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## The syllabus

The syllabus is laid out in as organized a fashion as I could manage. However, the problems of American politics do not always resolve themselves into tidy categories. Indeed, there is a *lot* of overlap across these topics. This means that readings listed for one class meeting may be relevant for another. (In a few instances, I have listed the same study twice.) It also means that our class discussions – and your research topics – may not be limited to just one topic, as listed below.

Finally, it is important to note that the syllabus is likely to undergo small adjustments as we proceed, e.g., changing dates for presentations, new background readings, and so forth. The most recent draft of the syllabus will be posted in Canvas. (If there are especially important changes, e.g., to deadlines, I will notify everyone through Canvas.)

## Readings

Assigned readings, as well as many of those listed as background, will be posted on Canvas or available online.

Some of these readings are written for a broad audience and should be easy to understand. This is generally the case for books and articles published in popular venues.

Academic journal articles may be more challenging. You will get practice reading academic scholarship through the course of the semester. In any case, you can always get the main point of the author's argument and evidence even if you do not follow the details of the methodology (which I'm happy to help with). Abstracts, introductions, and conclusions are usually straightforward and non-technical.

For each substantive (non-methodological) reading, I would like to try to address the following issues. This will structure our discussion and also familiarize you with the terminology of social science analysis, and its various applications.

Argument:

Descriptive:

Concept definition

Measurement (Is it precise, valid, and consistent with the concept?)

Typology (various sorts)

Synthesis

Causal:

Outcome of theoretical interest

Cause(s) of theoretical interest

Characteristics:

Clarity (What is the envisioned variation on  $X$  and  $Y$ , background conditions, and scope-conditions?)

Manipulability (Is the causal factor manipulable, at least potentially?)

Precedence (Is  $X$  separable from  $Y$  and prior to other causes of  $Y$ ?)

Impact (How much of the variation in  $Y$  can  $X$  explain?)

Mechanism (How does  $X$  generate  $Y$ ?)

Research design:

Type:

Experimental

Observational

Characteristics:

Covariation (Does  $X$  co-vary with  $Y$ ?)

Comparability (Are observations causally comparable to each other? Are there confounders?)

## A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

The first several meetings of the course follow the traditional educational format. We will read sections from a methodology textbook and I will do a fair bit of lecturing. The format is good for imparting lots of information but not very good at eliciting original thought or honing writing and presentational skills. After that, we will adopt a very different format. Since it is unfamiliar, I want to explain the rationale in some detail.

The hallmark of a good education is not the facts you learn but your ability to learn new facts, and analyze those facts – to take a problem and work through it on your own or in the company of your peers, and to present your solution. This is what employers are looking for in the modern workforce, where most (well-paying) jobs demand creativity, analytic skills, independent learning, and skillful presentation – not rote memorization and highly repetitive, structured assignments.

To facilitate this, we will “flip” the traditional classroom in the remainder of the course. I will begin each class by leading a discussion based on the day’s topic and reading. To participate meaningfully you must have done the reading. To encourage this, and to reward those who are conscientious, there will be periodic pop quizzes based on the assigned reading for that day.

Note that readings are chosen with an eye toward stimulating discussion. Some of the readings were originally published in academic journals; others were produced for books or other popular venues. I am sure you will notice the difference, and I hope you will learn to appreciate the virtues of different sorts of writing.

All of the assigned articles and book chapters may be flawed in some way; indeed, all work is flawed or limited in some way. It is our job to identify the strengths and weaknesses, extensions and limitations, of each reading.

After our class discussion (about midway through the session), I will turn over the class to a student who will present their own work on a topic related to that week’s general subject. There may also be time for discussion after the presentation.

You will find that my approach to readings, discussion, and presentations is very predictable. I will push you to identify the main argument of the reading and then to critique that argument. Frequently, I will play devil’s advocate – taking the opposite side of whatever issue is being discussed.

During general discussion I will push you to formulate general arguments (e.g., Why is polarization growing?) and then to defend that argument (Why do you think X is the cause of polarization? How do you know it’s true? What evidence can you provide? What sort of evidence would address this question? How could one research it?) Ditto for your own presentations. The emphasis of this course is on thinking and analysis, not the accumulation of facts. It is like a graduate seminar in this respect.

Our discussion will inevitably draw on current events. The proper noun “Trump” will appear regularly, I suspect. But I also want our discussion to move beyond current events, to discuss broader trends and their causes and effects. That’s what distinguishes social science from journalism. We need to distinguish the idiosyncratic features of a situation from those that are systematic (general, iterated, non-accidental).

I expect active participation from all students, within the constraints imposed by class size. You will not be able to “free ride.” Do not think of participation simply as a matter of “saying something.” There are insightful comments and questions, and there is irrelevant drivel. You know what I’m getting at. Be especially judicious in the use of anecdotes drawn from your personal life. Sometimes, they are relevant to the subject matter; sometimes, not.

Let me say a word about my own responses to your comments. You should realize that any instructor who incorporates discussion into classroom activity is in an awkward position. I want to encourage open and frank discussion but I must also be sure to correct any misperceptions that arise from such discussion. If a comment is factually or logically wrong I will call attention to it. The purpose is not to embarrass the speaker but simply to clarify the point – for that person and for everyone else, many of whom may share the confusion.

Making mistakes is part of the learning experience. If you do not allow yourself to make mistakes you are preventing yourself from learning. I make mistakes all the time. There is nothing wrong with a wrong answer. Oftentimes, the most productive sort of answer or question is one that reveals what is not clear in people's minds. It is problematic, however, if your answer reveals that you have not done the assigned reading or that you have not been paying attention to previous class discussion.

Please be attentive to standard rules of decorum: avoid dogmatism, respect others' views, and try to move class discussion forward (pay attention to what others say and respond to the previous point).

## **RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT**

At the beginning of the semester you will choose a general topic area – falling within one of the substantive categories identified on the syllabus (anything but the “methods” segment). I will try to accommodate people's choices but would prefer to have everyone work on different topics – bearing some resemblance to the syllabus.

### **Questions you might consider...**

Once you have signed up for a section (e.g., “polarization”) browse the background readings (most of which are posted in Canvas) and think about what you might focus on.

Questions include (but are not limited to)... What is the problem, exactly? How should it be defined, conceptualized? How can it be measured? What is its history and possible future course (the latter of course is speculative so it shouldn't be the main subject of your paper)? How does it play out at international, national, state, and local levels? (Is there evidence of the phenomenon in Austin or at UT?) How does the situation in the US compare with other countries? (Is the US typical or exceptional?) What are the possible causes? What are the possible effects?

For any of these questions (or some others), you might focus on scholarly debates about a topic. What is the basis of the disagreement? (Are scholars looking at different aspects of a problem? Are they using different sources? Do they have different interpretations of the data? Are they using different methodologies?) Do you think one side is right and the other wrong? (If so, why?) Is it possible to reconcile contending views?

You might limit yourself to a review of the secondary literature (published articles and books). Or you might gather some original data, which might be qualitative or quantitative. (If you have some experience working with quantitative data that opens up lots of possibilities, and I am happy to help.)

If you wish, you may conduct a survey experiment. (Since you will not be publishing the results of your research you do not need to apply for IRB approval. However, you should think through any relevant ethical concerns involved in using human subjects.) As subjects, you might recruit fellow students at UT. To administer the survey, you might use an online platform such as Qualtrics, for which UT has a subscription. (There are some limitations on the student license but

this shouldn't be a problem.) As outcomes of interest, you might think of preferences for the parties or turnout. (If this is an election year you could administer your treatment prior to the election and then re-survey subjects after the election to record their voting behavior.) For some examples focused on turnout, see Maricruz Ariana Osorio, Melissa R. Michelson, "College students have been voting at record rates. Why?" Monkey Cage at WaPo (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/08/30/college-student-voting-midterms/>).

If your research involves some data analysis, you are free to use any software you please. Excel allows for some limited operations. Stata and R are much more advanced and will allow you to anything you might want to do. Stata is probably easier to learn for those who are just starting out, and UT has a license that you can use – but only through an online system accessed through VPN. Ask the IT people if you have trouble figuring out how to get access. R is open-source and therefore free but you will have to download a copy. The final section of the textbook offers some guidance with respect to statistics, if you have not had a course in the subject or if you want to refresh your memory.

### General advice

The key thing is to find something to focus on. You cannot address all of the foregoing questions. Nor can you possibly address all facets of a problem, as listed on the syllabus for each week of the course. The more focused your topic is, the better. You need to find some small piece of that puzzle, or some angle, that can provide the focus of a short research paper that is distinctive in some way (relative to what has already been written).

Your goal is to produce an *original* research paper, where you bring something new to the subject – a new perspective, a new argument, a new way of reconciling existing debates, new empirical material,... It must have your stamp on it.

Whatever you do, you should consider the methodological angles, the topic of Section I of the course. This means reviewing the strength and weaknesses of extant work, as well as your own (if there is an empirical aspect to your paper). Many debates in American politics boil down to methodological issues. Should we accept the correlation between money and voting behavior in Congress as a sign of the (causal) influence of money? How can we play out the counterfactual (a member's behavior if s/he didn't receive a campaign contribution from a corporation or individual)?

When citing a study, the presenter will need to be able to answer questions about its methodology. It is not sufficient to note that it was published in a peer review journal with lots of fancy tables and graphs. This is why the first section of the course, on social science methodology, is so important.

If you are making a causal argument, you should lay out the experiment – real or imaginary (“magic wand”) – that tests your argument. If you are unsure what an experiment is, or what a causal argument is, please re-read the relevant chapters in the textbook. If still unclear, speak with me.

### Sources (“the literature”)

In putting together your presentation and paper you should survey the literature on the topic – books and articles, with special attention to scholarly work. State how your argument builds on, or argues with, extant work. This is important. You must differentiate your contribution from what others have done.

To get you started, I have listed background sources for each topic on the syllabus. This list of sources is not intended to be comprehensive, nor is it necessarily representative. I have privileged recent work over older work, and studies that seemed fairly comprehensive over those that are more targeted. Even so, this list of sources (which it took me a long while to compile) should offer a

jumping-off place for your paper. Make sure you review the listed background sources and cite them in your paper – if they are relevant.

Wherever possible, PDF copies of the articles and books are posted on Canvas. Articles, in any case, should be available electronically from the library homepage. And books not posted on Canvas should be at the library.

Note that just because a source is relevant to your topic does not mean that you need to read it from beginning to end. It means that you must read in a focused, strategic manner.

I encourage you to spend more time on academic sources than popular sources. Still, with a topic such as ours it is important to see what journalists, pundits, and bloggers have to say. Sometimes, it's pretty sophisticated; sometimes, it's merely dogmatic. You be the judge.

Although this is not a course on current events, you should stay on top of what's going on in the crazy world of US politics. For general coverage and commentary see: New York Times, Washington Post, Vox, FiveThirtyEight, Monkey Cage. For a sampling of right- and left-wing views see Real Clear Politics.

Beyond textbooks, academic work appears in a variety of university presses and in journals, most of which are available electronically through the library and many of which are hosted in JSTOR.

Search for published work on a subject with *Google Scholar* or on the university library homepage. If you find a source that is right on topic, take a look at the sources that it cites (usually in a list of references at the end of the book or article) and the sources that cite it (which Google Scholar and Web of Science will allow you to do).

## Drafts

You are required to hand in a rough draft, which will be commented on and assigned a grade. That grade will be recorded but will not count for your class grade. Only the grade on your final draft counts. So the grade you receive on the draft is purely advisory – it is the grade you would receive if you hand in the same paper at the end of the semester.

Think of the draft as a potential “do-over.” You write a paper, the professor grades it, and then you have an opportunity to improve it to get a better grade. This is a great learning opportunity.

However, the process works only if you commit to it. In order to get something out, you must put something in. If you don't spend much time on your draft your comments will probably be about weaknesses you are already aware of, e.g., there's no thesis, you haven't surveyed the relevant literature, your evidence doesn't support your claims, the writing is sloppy, etc. You won't learn much from this.

If on the other hand you spend a lot of time on your draft, to the point where you think the paper is pretty good, you will learn a lot about how to improve it for the final draft. Also, the better the draft the less work you need to do at the end of the semester, when time is generally at a premium.

The rough draft must be handed in within two weeks of your oral presentation. For those presenting near the end of the semester, it must be quicker. Otherwise, you will not get any feedback, or you will be unable to process the feedback in your final draft. It's in your interest to follow these guidelines. If you don't, the TA may not have time to read your draft, in which case you will not benefit from this process.

## Suggested outline

Most academic work adopts a similar structure. It goes like this...

- Introduction

- Literature Review\*
- Thesis\*
- Methods\*
- Evidence/Supporting Arguments
- Conclusion
- End matter

*(\*May be combined with each other or placed in the introduction, depending upon their length.)*

For further discussion see Ch 14 in the textbook.

## LLMs

The advent of large language models such as ChatGTP is introducing changes to how all of us conduct our work. I expect this is the same for university students. For now, there are no university guidelines except the following: “use of AI by students or instructors should always be fully disclosed, including the tool used and the parts of the process it was used in.” We will discuss this further in class.

## Criteria

Length is the least important aspect of this project. Having said this, I would suggest a target length of about 10 pages, single-space.

Please submit all drafts in Microsoft Word, as this is easiest for me to comment on.

Students are encouraged to exchange ideas, sources, and drafts – especially if they are working on related topics. But writing must be done individually. Any sharing of text will be viewed as plagiarism unless it is explicitly cited.

Here are the criteria I will use to evaluate the finished product. (For further discussion of these points, see Ch 14 in the textbook.)

- Is there a thesis and is it clearly stated?
- Is the thesis significant? Does it matter?
- Is the thesis adequately argued or proven (within the constraints imposed by time, resources, and available sources)?
- Is the study innovative with respect to theory, method, or findings? Does it expand our knowledge of the chosen subject relative to extant work? (This is what your review of the literature should accomplish.)
- Is the essay well-written, i.e., cogently organized, grammatically correct, stylistically elegant, citing all appropriate sources, and not burdened with redundancies or irrelevancies?

## Oral Presentation

The purpose of the presentation is to present your research, at whatever stage it happens to be at that time. It is understood that those going early in the semester are likely to be at an earlier stage.

(The benefits of presenting early on is that you get feedback – from me and from the class – which should help you develop your topic, and you have plenty of time to work on it before the semester ends. However, you have to have some idea of what you plan to do; the more specific it is the more helpful our feedback will be.)

You should prepare a talk and PPT presentation that lasts about 20 minutes.

Because the talk is a condensed version of the paper everything said about the paper (above) applies to the talk. But for the latter, things must be more condensed.

State clearly what you wish to accomplish at the outset. Your second slide (after the title slide) should contain an outline of the talk, and this outline should be logically ordered – just like an outline for a research paper.

One of the early slides should clearly state the research question that you wish to pursue. Ideally, this is followed by a specific hypothesis. Later slides should indicate how you plan to address (test, gather evidence for) that research question/hypothesis.

The last slide(s) of the PPT should display a list of the works (books and articles) that you surveyed or will survey – your working bibliography. Please send your PPT to my email on the day you present. (And remember to bring an opening joke, no matter how corny!)

For further tips, see Chapter 15 of the textbook (Gerring & Christenson, *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*).

The presentation will be accompanied and followed by questions and discussion from the rest of the class. Those in the audience should act as (constructive) critics. That is, they should offer their own views, especially if at variance with the speaker's views. This is an occasion for a wide-ranging discussion of the problem at-hand (within the available time-constraints). With respect to the presentation itself, audience members should praise the strengths of the presentation while also pointing out ambiguities and weaknesses, and giving specific feedback on the proposed topic. How can the presenter achieve his/her goals? Is it a tractable topic? (Is it too big, or too small?) What evidence might be helpful?

The audience is a crucial element of the presentation. I expect you to engage with the speaker and the topic, perhaps bringing your own research into the discussion. Note that all of the topics for this class overlap, so you may know something about the speaker's topic that s/he does not.

## Assistance

Three places to look for assistance...

1. Gerring and Christenson, *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*, chs 11-12, 14.
2. UT Writing center (schedule an appt online: <https://uwc.utexas.edu/>)
3. Your professor and TA. We will offer feedback when you present your project to the class and when you hand in your rough draft. However, it is strongly advised to check in with us at other points in the semester – particularly at the beginning, as you work towards a topic.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

### Sanger Learning Center

More than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance. All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slcc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

### University Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the services offered by the University Writing Center. The UWC offers 45-minute, one-on-one consultations with UT students on any piece of writing. You may visit up to three times per assignment. The consultants are well trained, and the cost of the service is

covered in your tuition. If you wish to make an appointment, you may do so through the UWC website: [uwc.utexas.edu](http://uwc.utexas.edu).

### **Counseling and Mental Health Center.**

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

### **Student Emergency Services**

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

### **ITS**

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

### **Libraries**

For help searching for information: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

512-471-6259. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

## **I. METHODS**

### **Introduction (22 August)**

#### **Part I: Substance**

The Insurrection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWJVMoe7OY0>

#### **Part II: Methods**

*Questions:* What is an argument? What are the different kinds of arguments? What is evidence? Where does it come from? What makes a descriptive analysis good?

*Suggested:* Gerring, John, Dino Christenson. 2017. *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chs 2, 4.

### **Causality (24 August)**

Sign up for presentations.

*Questions:* What is a causal argument? What is a causal analysis? Subtext: Why are questions about global development so intractable? How do we know what we know, and why don't we know the things we want to know?

*Assigned:* Gerring, John, Dino Christenson. 2017. *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chs 6-7.

- Correlation/causation (short video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMUQSMFGBDo&t=65s>
- Jern, Alan. 2020. "Covid-19 death skepticism, explained by a cognitive scientist." *VOX* (Sep 1): [www.vox.com/2020/9/1/21410352/cdc-6-percent-covid-19-deaths-comorbidities](http://www.vox.com/2020/9/1/21410352/cdc-6-percent-covid-19-deaths-comorbidities)
- *An example:* <http://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/CEW-Buyer-Beware.pdf>

### **Finding sources, reading, reviewing, brainstorming, writing (29 August)**

*Questions:* How to find what you are looking for. How to summarize the literature on a subject. How to identify a topic. How to communicate with the written word. How to use (or not) LLMs such as ChatGPT.

*Assigned:* Gerring, John, Dino Christenson. 2017. *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chs 11-14.

### **Missed class (31 August)**

Professor Gerring attends American Political Science Association meetings in Los Angeles.

## **II. POPULISM**

*Proposition:* The problem with American politics is the populist tenor of political discourse and issue-positions.

### **Populism I (5 September)**

*Assigned:* Spruyt, Bram, Gil Keppens, Filip Van Droogenbroeck. 2016. "Who supports populism and what attracts people to it?" *Political Research Quarterly* 69.2: 335-346.

*Presenter:* TBA

### **Populism II (7 September)**

*Assigned:* Bor, Jacob. 2017. "Diverging life expectancies and voting patterns in the 2016 US presidential election." *American journal of public health* 107.10: 1560-1562.

*Presenter:* TBA

### **Background**

- Abromeit, John D. (ed). 2016. *Transformations of Populism in Europe and the Americas: History and Recent Tendencies*. Bloomsbury.
- Albertazzi, Daniele, Duncan McDonnell (eds). 2008. *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
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### III. POLARIZATION, PARTISANSHIP

*Proposition:* The increasing ideological distance between right and left – among elites and, perhaps, among citizens – is the crux of the current dysfunction of American politics. (This section overlaps a good deal with the next section.)

#### Polarization, Partisanship I (12 September)

*Assigned:*

Balz, Dan, Clara Ence Morse. "American democracy is cracking. These forces help explain why. Behind the sense that the political system is broken lies a collision between forces both old and new." New York Times (18 August 2023). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/08/18/american-democracy-political-system-failures/>

Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, Sean J. Westwood. 2019. "The origins and consequences of affective polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129-146.

*Presenter:* TBA

#### Research topic due (13 September)

Post your research topic – a one page description of your research question and how you intend to address it – on Canvas.

#### Polarization, Partisanship II (14 September)

*Assigned:*

Edsall, Thomas. 2020. "How Could Human Nature Have Become This Politicized?" *New York Times* (July 8). [www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/opinion/trump-politics-psychology.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/opinion/trump-politics-psychology.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage)

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*Presenter:* TBA

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## IV. CULTURAL DIVISIONS

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is in its cultural divisions – gender, race, religion, ethnicity, immigration, and urban v. rural – which structure political competition in an invidious fashion. Group consciousness has eclipsed class consciousness. (This section overlaps a good deal with the previous section.)

### Cultural divisions I (19 September)

*Assigned:*

- Mayda, Anna Maria, Giovanni Peri, Walter Steingress. 2022. "The Political Impact of Immigration: Evidence from the United States." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 14(1): 358–389.  
*Blue/red America by state:* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_states\\_and\\_blue\\_states#Urban\\_versus\\_rural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_states_and_blue_states#Urban_versus_rural)  
*Blue/red America by county:* <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/graphics/2020/11/10/election-maps-2020-america-county-results-more-voters/6226197002/>

*Presenter:* TBA

### Cultural divisions II (21 September)

*Assigned:*

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Presenter: TBA

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- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press.
- Craig, Maureen A., and Jennifer A. Richeson. 2014. "On the Precipice of a 'Majority Minority' America: Perceived Status Threat from the Racial Demographic Shift Affects White Americans' Political Ideology." *Psychological Science* 25: 1189–1197.
- Desmet, Klaus, Romain Wacziarg. 2018. "The Cultural Divide." NBER Working Paper No. 24630.
- Engelhardt, Andrew M. 2019. "Trumped by Race: Explanations for Race's Influence on Whites' Votes in 2016." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*: Vol. 14: No. 3, pp 313-328.
- Enos, Ryan D. 2017. *The Space Between Us: Social Geography and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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## V. CLASS DIVISIONS

*Proposition:* The root of dysfunction in American politics is to be found in pervasive social inequality and the political dominance of the upper class.

### Class divisions I (26 September)

*Assigned:* Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (4): 651–66.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Class divisions II (28 September)

*Assigned:* Page, Benjamin I., Larry M. Bartels, Jason Seawright. 2013. "Democracy and the policy preferences of wealthy Americans." *Perspectives on Politics* 11.1: 51-73.

Levitz, Eric. 2021. "Is America Too Rich for Class Politics?" *New York Magazine* (Sep 29).

Van Dam, Andrew. 2022. "The most common restaurant cuisine in every state, and a chain-restaurant mystery." <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/09/29/chain-restaurant-capitals/>

*Presenter:* TBA

## Background

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- Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 2000. *Class and party in American politics*. Routledge.
- Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 2017. "The Puzzle of Class in Presidential Voting." *The Forum*. Vol. 15. No. 1.

## VI. MONEY

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is money, specifically the current system of campaign finance and the personal wealth of politicians, which exerts a pervasive bias on politics and public policy.

### Money I (3 October)

*Assigned:* Kalla, Joshua L. David E. Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(3): 545-558.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Money II (5 October)

*Assigned:* Slattery, Cailin R, Alisa Tazhitdinova, Sarah Robinson. 2022. "Corporate Political Spending and State Tax Policy: Evidence from Citizens United." National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper Series 30352.

*Presenter:* TBA

## Background

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- Mutch, Robert E. 2014. *Buying the vote: A history of campaign finance reform*. Oxford University Press.
- Mutch, Robert E. 2016. *Campaign finance: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press.
- Norris, Pippa, Andrea Abel Van Es (eds). 2015. *Checkbook Elections?: Political Finance in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Primo, David M., Jeffrey Milyo. 2006. "Campaign finance laws and political efficacy: evidence from the states." *Election Law Journal* 5.1: 23-39.
- Scarow, Susan E. 2007. "Political Finance in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10: 193-210.
- Stratmann, Thomas. 2005. "Some talk: Money in politics. A (partial) review of the literature." *Policy Challenges and Political Responses* 124.1-2: 135-156.

## VII. ELECTORAL LAW AND GEOGRAPHY

*Proposition:* The roots of dysfunction in American politics are to be found in the interaction of electoral rules and electoral geography. Here, we consider the intertwined topics of gerrymandering, over-representation of rural areas, first-past-the-post rules, and the electoral college.

## **Electoral law I** (10 October)

*Assigned:*

- Chen, Jowei, David Cottrell. 2016. "Evaluating partisan gains from Congressional gerrymandering: Using computer simulations to estimate the effect of gerrymandering in the US House." *Electoral Studies* 44: 329-340.
- Cohn, Nate. 2022. "Gerrymandering Isn't Giving Republicans the Advantage You Might Expect." *New York Times*.

*Presenter:* TBA

## **Electoral law II** (12 October)

*Assigned:*

- Adams, James F., Nathan J. Rexford. 2018. "Electoral Systems and Issue Polarization." *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Scholars for Redistricting Reform. 2022. "Letter to Congress on Ending Single Member Congressional Districts and Adopting Proportional Representation." <https://medium.com/@scholars-redistricting-reform/open-letter-to-congress-to-end-single-member-congressional-districts-and-adopt-proportional-97ad1cf6aa2e>

*Presenter:* TBA

## **Background**

- Abrams, Samuel J., Morris P. Fiorina. 2012. "'The big sort' that wasn't: A skeptical reexamination." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45(2): 203-210.
- Alexander, Robert M. 2019. *Representation and the Electoral College*. Oxford University Press.
- Bishop, Bill. 2008. *The big sort: Why the clustering of like-minded America is tearing us apart*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Bugh, Gary (ed). 2016. *Electoral College Reform: Challenges and Possibilities*. Routledge.
- Calvo, Ernesto, Timothy Hellwig. 2011. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives under Different Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 27-41.
- Carey, John M., Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 383-97.
- Cox, Gary W. 1990. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 903-35.
- Curini, Luigi, Airo Hino. 2012. "Missing Links in Party-System Polarization: How Institutions and Voters Matter." *Journal of Politics* 74(2): 460-73.
- Dow, Jay K. 2011. "Party-System Extremism in Majoritarian and Proportional Electoral Systems." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 341-61.
- Dow, Jay K. 2017. *Electing the House: The Adoption and Performance of the US Single-Member District Electoral System*. University Press of Kansas.
- Edwards III, George C. 2019. *Why the Electoral College is bad for America*. Yale University Press.
- Ezrow, Lawrence. 2008. "Parties' Policy Programmes and the Dog That Didn't Bark: No Evidence That Proportional Systems Promote Extreme Party Positioning." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(3): 479-97.
- Golder, Matt, Benjamin Ferland. 2017. "Electoral rules and citizen-elite ideological congruence." *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems*.
- Iversen, Torben, and David Soskice. 2006. "Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More Than Others." *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 165-81.
- Keyssar, Alexander. 2020. *Why Do We Still Have the Electoral College?*. Harvard University Press.
- King, Gary, Robert X. Browning. 2017. "How to conquer partisan gerrymandering." *Boston Globe* 292: A10.
- Kolev, Kiril. 2014. "The contingent effect of institutions: Electoral formulas, ethnic polarization, and election quality." *Electoral Studies* 35: 200-214.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1984. *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Martínez i Coma, Ferran, Ignacio Lago. 2018. "Gerrymandering in comparative perspective." *Party Politics* 24.2: 99-104.
- Matakos, Konstantinos, Orestis Troumpounis, Dimitrios Xefteris. 2016. "Electoral rule disproportionality and platform polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 60.4: 1026-1043.

- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, Howard Rosenthal. 2009. "Does gerrymandering cause polarization?" *American Journal of Political Science* 53.3: 666-680.
- McGann, Anthony J., Charles Anthony Smith, Michael Latner, Alex Keena. 2017. *Gerrymandering in America: The House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, and the Future of Popular Sovereignty*. Cambridge University Press.
- Powell, G. Bingham, Jr. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Richie, Robert, Steven Hill, Joel Rogers. 1999. *Reflecting all of us: the case for proportional representation*. Beacon Press.
- Schumaker, Paul, Burdett A. Loomis. 2002. *Choosing a president: The electoral college and beyond*.
- Wegman, Jesse. 2020. *Let the people pick the president: The case for abolishing the electoral college*. All Points Books.

## VIII. CANDIDATE SELECTION AND POLITICAL PARTIES

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is not that political parties are too strong but rather that they are too weak. This manifests itself most importantly in the task of candidate selection, the defining function of political parties. The current process appears to be governed by money, special interests, new media, and populist tactics, and favors candidates who are ideologically extreme and perhaps charismatic (at least to their core supporters), but ill-prepared to govern.

### Presidential elections (17 October)

*Assigned:* Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, John Zaller. 2016. "Party versus faction in the reformed presidential nominating system." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49, 4: 701-708.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Congressional elections (19 October)

*Assigned:* Rauch, Jonathan, Raymond La Raja. 2017. "Re-engineering politicians: How activist groups choose our candidates—long before we vote." *Brookings Institution*. (December 7).

*Presenter:* TBA

### Background

Presidential candidates: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_United\\_States\\_presidential\\_candidates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_presidential_candidates)

Length of campaigns: <https://stanforddaily.com/2019/01/22/as-length-of-presidential-campaigns-increases-2020-might-follow-suit/>

Boatright, Robert G. 2014. *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*. The University of Michigan Press.

Boatright, Robert G. (ed). 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Primary Elections*. Routledge.

Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, John Zaller. 2008. *The party decides: Presidential nominations before and after reform*. University of Chicago Press.

Goren, Paul. 2001. "Core Principles and Policy Reasoning in Mass Publics: A Test of Two Theories." *British Journal of Political Science* 31: 159– 177.

Goren, Paul. 2005. "Party Identification and Core Political Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 882– 897.

Hazan, Reuven Y., Gideon Rahat. 2010. *Democracy within Parties: Candidates Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hill, Seth J. 2015. "Institution of Nomination and the Policy Ideology of Primary Electorates." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10(4):461 {487}.

Klar, Samara, Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. *Independent politics*. Cambridge University Press.

McCarty, Nolan, Eric Schickler. 2018. "On the theory of parties." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 175-193.

McGhee, Eric, Seth E. Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, Nolan McCarty. 2014. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislator Ideology." *American Journal of Political Science* 58: 337– 351.

Porter, Rachel A., Sarah Treul. 2019. "The Increasing Value of Inexperience in Congressional Primaries." Presented at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Schlozman, Daniel, Sam Rosenfeld. 2019. "The hollow parties." In Frances E. Lee and Nolan McCarty (eds), *Can America Govern Itself?* (Cambridge University Press) 120-154.

- Sides, John, Chris Tausanovitch, Lynn Vavreck, Christopher Warshaw. 2018. "On the representativeness of primary electorates." *British Journal of Political Science* 1-9.
- Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *Journal of Politics* 76(3):786-797.

## IX. MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is to be found in changes within the media – the rise of cable television, blogs, YouTube, social media (Twitter, Facebook), and other venues that favor “narrow-casting” over “broad-casting” and that give candidates, activists, and public officials direct access to voters and donors.

### Media (24 October)

*Assigned:*

Sargent, Greg. 2021. "The right-wing media is helping Trump destroy democracy. A new poll shows how." *Washington Post* (Sep 16). [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/16/prri-poll-fox-news-jan-6-trump/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/16/prri-poll-fox-news-jan-6-trump/)

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. "Why do partisan media polarize viewers?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57.3: 611-623.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Background

- Arceneaux, Kevin. 2015. "Why you should not blame polarization on partisan news." In Daniel J. Hopkins and John Sides (eds), *Political polarization in American politics* (Bloomsbury) 100-05.
- Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson. 2010. "Does media fragmentation produce mass polarization? Selective exposure and a new era of minimal effects." Presented at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association.
- Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson. 2013. *Changing minds or changing channels?: Partisan news in an age of choice*. University of Chicago Press.
- Boczkowski, Pablo J., Zizi Papacharissi (eds). 2018. *Trump and the media*. MIT Press.
- Davis, Nicholas T., Johanna L. Dunaway. 2016. "Party Polarization, Media Choice, and Mass Partisan-Ideological Sorting." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80.S1: 272-297. [This journal does not allow PDF downloads, so you'll have to look this up on the UT library homepage and read it online]
- DellaVigna, Stefano, Ethan Kaplan. 2007. "The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(3): 1187–1234.
- Durante, Ruben, Paolo Pinotti, Andrea Tesei. 2019. "The political legacy of entertainment TV." *American Economic Review* 109.7: 2497-2530. [present in class]
- Dvir-Gvirsman, Shira. 2016. "Media audience homophily: Partisan websites, audience identity and polarization processes." *New media & society* 19.7: 1072-1091.
- Farrell, Henry. 2012. "The consequences of the internet for politics." *Annual review of political science* 15: 35-52.
- Graber, Doris, Johanna Dunaway. 2017. *Mass Media and American Politics*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Congressional Quarterly.
- Levendusky, Matthew S. 2015. "Are Fox and MSNBC polarizing America?." In Daniel J. Hopkins and John Sides (eds), *Political polarization in American politics* (Bloomsbury) 95-99.
- Prior, Markus. 2007. *Post- Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tucker, Joshua A., Andrew Guess, Pablo Barberá, Cristian Vaccari, Alexandra Siegel, Sergey Sanovich, Denis Stukal, Brendan Nyhan. 2018. "Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature." *William and Flora Hewlett Foundation*. [pp. 1-53]

### Public opinion (26 October)

*Assigned:* Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, Sinan Aral. 2018. "The spread of true and false news online." *Science* 359.6380: 1146-1151.

*Presenter:* TBA

## Background

- Bikhchandani, Sushil, David Hirshleifer, Omer Tamuz, Ivo Welch. 2021. *Information cascades and social learning*. No. w28887. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Cinelli, Matteo, Gabriele Etta, Michele Avalle, Alessandro Quattrociocchi, Niccolò Di Marco, Carlo Valensise, Alessandro Galeazzi, Walter Quattrociocchi. 2022. "Conspiracy theories and social media platforms." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 101407.
- Del Vicario, Michela, Alessandro Bessi, Fabiana Zollo, Fabio Petroni, Antonio Scala, Guido Caldarelli, H. Eugene Stanley, and Walter Quattrociocchi. 2016. "The spreading of misinformation online." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 3: 554-559.
- Giglietto, Fabio, Laura Iannelli, Augusto Valeriani, and Luca Rossi. 2019. "'Fake news' is the invention of a liar: How false information circulates within the hybrid news system." *Current sociology* 67, no. 4: 625-642.
- Kuran, Timur. 1997. *Private truths, public lies: The social consequences of preference falsification*. Harvard University Press.
- Rozado, David, Ruth Hughes, and Jamin Halberstadt. 2022. "Longitudinal analysis of sentiment and emotion in news media headlines using automated labelling with Transformer language models." *Plos one* 17.10: e0276367.
- Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. Penguin.
- Soroka, Stuart N., Christopher Wlezien. 2010. *Degrees of democracy: Politics, public opinion, and policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sunstein, Cass R. 2019. *Conformity*. New York University Press.
- Sunstein, Cass R. 2020. *Too much information: understanding what you don't want to know*. MIT Press.

## X. PARTICIPATION, TRUST

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is low civic engagement, participation, and political trust.

### Participation (31 October)

*Assigned:*

- Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal participation: Democracy's unresolved dilemma." *American political science review* 91.1: 1-14.
- Shaw, Daron, John Petrocik. 2021. "Does High Voter Turnout Help One Party?" *National Affairs* (Fall) 1-15.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Trust and Social Capital (2 November)

*Assigned:*

- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6 no. 1, 1995, p. 65-78.
- Yuan, Mingliang, Giuliana Spadaro, Shuxian Jin, Junhui Wu, Yu Kou, Paul AM Van Lange, and Daniel Balliet. 2022. "Did cooperation among strangers decline in the United States? A cross-temporal meta-analysis of social dilemmas (1956–2017)." *Psychological Bulletin* 148, no. 3-4: 129.

*Presenter:* TBA

## Background

- Citrin, Jack, Laura Stoker. 2018. "Political trust in a cynical age." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 49-70.
- The Economist. 2019. "If everyone had voted, Hillary Clinton would probably be president."
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1999. "Extreme voices: A dark side of civic engagement." *Civic engagement in American democracy* 395: 405-413.
- Fowler, Anthony. 2013. "Electoral and Policy Consequences of Voter Turnout: Evidence From Compulsory Voting in Australia." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8:159–82.
- Fraga, Bernard L. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hajnal, Zoltan, Nazita Lajevardi, Lindsay Nielson. 2017. "Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes." *The Journal of Politics* 79:363–79.

- Hetherington, Marc J. 2005. *Why trust matters: Declining political trust and the demise of American liberalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Hetherington, Marc J., Thomas J. Rudolph. 2015. *Why Washington won't work: Polarization, political trust, and the governing crisis*. University of Chicago Press.
- Highton, Benjamin. 2017. "Voter identification laws and turnout in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 149-167.
- Leighley, Jan, Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton University Press.
- Lerman, Amy, Vesla Mae Weaver. 2014. *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levi, Margaret, Laura Stoker. 2000. "Political trust and trustworthiness." *Annual review of political science* 3.1: 475-507.
- Pharr, Susan J., Robert D. Putnam (eds). 2000. *Disaffected democracies: what's troubling the trilateral countries?*. Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2001. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and Schuster.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Henry E. Brady. 2018. *Unequal and Unrepresented: Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press.
- Shaw, Daron, John Petrocik. 2020. *The Turnout Myth: Voting Rates and Partisan Outcomes in American National Elections*. Oxford University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda, Morris P. Fiorina (eds). 2004. *Civic engagement in American democracy*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Verba, Sidney. 2003. "Would the dream of political equality turn out to be a nightmare?" *Perspectives on politics* 1.4: 663-679.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Harvard University Press.

## XI. REPRESENTATION, ACCOUNTABILITY

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is that democratic elections do not produce adequate representation and accountability.

### Representation, Accountability I (7 November)

*Assigned:* Hibbing, John R., Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2002. *Stealth Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [chs 8-9]

*Presenter:* TBA

### Representation, Accountability II (9 November)

*Assigned:* Achen, Christopher H., Larry M. Bartels. 2017. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Chapter 11]

*Presenter:* TBA

### Background

- Ahler, Douglas J., David E. Broockman. 2018. "The delegate paradox: Why polarized politicians can represent citizens best." *The Journal of Politics* 80.4: 1117-1133.
- Ahn, T. K., Robert Huckfeldt, John Barry Ryan. Forthcoming. *Experts, Activists, and Democratic Politics: Are Electorates Self-Educating?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, Jason Ross. 2012. "The Electoral Consequences of Voter Ignorance." *Electoral Studies* 31: 796– 815.
- Ashworth, Scott. 2012. "Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 183– 201.
- Caplan, Bryan. 2011. *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*-New Edition. Princeton University Press.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David E. Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent*, 206– 261. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

- Delli Carpini, Michael X., Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams. 2012. *Disconnect: The breakdown of representation in American politics*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green. 1998. "Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 42: 794– 818.
- Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber. 2010. "Partisanship, Political Control, and Economic Assessments." *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 153– 173.
- Hochschild, Jennifer L., and Katherine Levine Einstein. 2015. *Do Facts Matter? Information and Misinformation in American Politics*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Lupia, Arthur, Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need To Know?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Page, Benjamin I., Robert Y. Shapiro. 2010. *The rational public: Fifty years of trends in Americans' policy preferences*. University of Chicago Press.
- Przeworski, Adam, Susan C. Stokes, Bernard Manin, eds., 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogowski, Jon C. 2018. "Voter decision-making with polarized choices." *British Journal of Political Science* 48.1: 1-22.
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Schaffner, Brian F., Jesse H. Rhodes, Raymond J. La Raja. 2020. *Hometown Inequality: Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

## XII. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES, AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

*Proposition:* The root problem of American politics is the fragmentation of political power, leading to the incapacity of its government – and of Congress in particular – to handle pressing policy needs (e.g., infrastructure, health care, education). Within the halls of government we find increasing inter-party conflict; a focus on scoring points, finger-pointing, passing the buck; symbolic gestures rather than policymaking; and a loss of comity. All of this might be traced, in some degree, to the structure of the US Constitution.

### Presidentialism (14 November)

*Assigned:* Gerring, John, Strom C. Thacker, Carola Moreno. 2009. "Are parliamentary systems better?" *Comparative Political Studies* 42.3: 327-359.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Congress (16 November)

*Assigned:*

McCarty, Nolan. 2019. "Polarization and the Changing American Constitutional System." In Lee, Frances E., Nolan McCarty (eds), *Can America Govern Itself* (Cambridge University Press): 301-28.

Leonhardt, David. 2022. "A Functional Congress? Yes." *New York Times* (August 16).

*Presenter:* TBA

### Background

- Binder, Sarah A. 1999. "The dynamics of legislative gridlock, 1947–96." *American Political Science Review* 93.3: 519-533.
- Binder, Sarah A. 2004. *Stalemate: Causes and consequences of legislative gridlock*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Binder, Sarah A. 2014. "Polarized we govern?" Brookings Institution.
- Brady, David W. 2018. *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush*. Routledge.
- Conley, Richard Steven. 2003. *The presidency, congress, and divided government: A postwar assessment*. Texas A&M University Press.
- Cox, Gary, Samuel Kernell. 2019. *The politics of divided government*. Routledge.
- Dahl, Robert Alan. 1977. "On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States." *Political Science Quarterly*, 92, 1 (Spring), 1-20. [replace with something else next time; perhaps a chapter from Dahl 2003]

- Dahl, Robert Alan. 2001. *How democratic is the American constitution?* Yale University Press.
- Gerring, John, Strom C. Thacker, Carola Moreno. 2005. "Centripetal democratic governance: A theory and global inquiry." *American Political Science Review* 99.4: 567-581.
- Howell, William, Terry Moe. 2016. *Relic: How Our Constitution Undermines Effective Government – And Why We Need a More Powerful Presidency*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jacobson, Gary. 2019. *The electoral origins of divided government: Competition in US House elections, 1946-1988*. Routledge.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1996. "Institutional and partisan sources of gridlock: A theory of divided and unified government." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8.1: 7-40.
- Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure majorities: Congress and the perpetual campaign*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lee, Frances E., Nolan McCarty (eds). 2019. *Can America Govern Itself?* Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, Sanford. 2006. *Our undemocratic constitution: Where the constitution goes wrong (and how we the people can correct it)*. Oxford University Press.
- Mann, Thomas E., Norman J. Ornstein. 2016. *It's even worse than it looks: How the American constitutional system collided with the new politics of extremism*. Basic Books.
- Mayhew, David R. 1991. *Divided We Govern*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rauch, Jonathan. 1994. *Demosclerosis: The Silent Killer of American government*. Crown.
- Saeki, Manabu. 2010. *The Other Side of Gridlock: Policy Stability and Supermajoritarianism in US Lawmaking*. SUNY Press.
- Sinclair, Barbara. 2016. "Partisan Polarization and Congressional Policy Making." *Congress and Policy Making in the 21st Century*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sundquist, James. 2011. *Constitutional reform and effective government*. Brookings Institution Press.
- The Economist*. 2019. "Are Western Democracies becoming Ungovernable?" (August 1).

### Thanksgiving vacation (20-25 November)

### US exceptionalism (28 November)

*Assigned:* Steinmo, Sven. 1995. "Why Is Government so Small in America?" *Governance* 8: 303–34.

*Presenter:* TBA

### Background

- González, Francisco E., Desmond King. 2004. "The state and democratization: the United States in comparative perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 34.2: 193-210.
- Hadenius, Axel. 2015. *American Exceptionalism Revisited: US Political Development in Comparative Perspective*. Springer.
- Halpern, Rick, Jonathan Morris (eds). 1997. *American exceptionalism?: US working-class formation in an international context*. Springer.
- Hodgson, Godfrey. 2009. *The myth of American exceptionalism*. Yale University Press.
- Lappi-Seppälä, Tapio. 2018. *American exceptionalism in comparative perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1988. "American exceptionalism reaffirmed." *International Review of Sociology* 2.3: 25-69.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1997. *American exceptionalism: A double-edged sword*. WW Norton.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin, Gary Marks. 2000. *It didn't happen here: why socialism failed in the United States*. WW Norton.
- Lockhart, Charles. 2012. *The Roots of American Exceptionalism: Institutions, Culture and Policies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Madsen, Deborah L. 1998. *American exceptionalism*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.
- Markovits, Andrei S., Steven L. Hellerman. 2001. *Offside: soccer and American exceptionalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Shafer, Byron E. 1991. *Is America different?: A new look at American exceptionalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Shafer, Byron E. 1999. "American exceptionalism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2.1: 445-463.
- Taylor, Steven L., Matthew S. Shugart, Arend Lijphart, Bernard Grofman. 2014. *A different democracy: American government in a 31-country perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Tyrrell, Ian. 1991. "American exceptionalism in an age of international history." *The American Historical Review* 1031-1055.
- Wilson, Graham K. 1998. *Only in America?: The Politics of the United States in Comparative Perspective*. Chatham House.

### XIII. DENOUEMENT

**Summary** (30 November)

*Presenter:* TBA

**Final draft of paper due** (TBA)

Post to Canvas by midnight.

**Final exam** (TBA)

Covers all readings, presentations (prof and student), and discussions. Held in our usual classroom.