

1/10/13

PSC 505 – SEMINAR IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Spring Semester, 2013
Wednesdays 6-8:50 PM
520 Park Hall

Prof. James E. Campbell
Office: 511 Park Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4pm
e-mail: jcampbel@buffalo.edu
Phone: 645-8452

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this seminar is to provide a broad overview of the state of empirical research on American political institutions, behavior, and processes. This seminar will acquaint students with (1) the structure, roles, and norms governing American political institutions such as the presidency, Congress, the bureaucracy, political parties and interest groups, elections, and other topics encompassed by the American politics field; and (2) mainstream empirical research into the behavior of various political actors in each of these institutional settings.

Given the breadth of research in the American politics sub-field, I have of necessity been selective in both the topics chosen for discussion and the readings assigned. This seminar should be viewed as a foundation upon which one may develop further knowledge of American politics through additional readings and course work. This is only the beginning, just "the tip of the iceberg." To complete a field in American politics successfully you must read well beyond what is covered in this as well as in other course work.

This semester, a segment of the course will focus on research relating to the polarization of American politics and its consequences for representation and effective government. These are issues that have received a good deal of attention in the last couple of years and there are several interesting books and articles that have been published about them in the last few years.

PHILOSOPHY OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

It may be helpful, particularly for those of you coming directly from your undergraduate degrees, to think about education as being comprised of four related elements. Before graduate school, education concentrates on the first two of these. The acquisition of *knowledge* is the first element. You should know the essential facts and research findings that concern American politics and government. The second element is *understanding*. You should not just know the facts but understand how they are believed to be related to one another theoretically, their causes and consequences. Like undergraduate education, graduate education in political science entails these first two elements, though you are expected to know and to understand more than what is expected of an undergraduate. However, this difference in expectation is not the main difference between undergraduate and graduate education. Graduate education is not just a few more years of undergraduate education.

Unlike most of undergraduate education, graduate education involves a third and fourth element—the development of a *critical capacity* and the learning of *research skills* that allow for the assessment and development of new knowledge. The third element is the development of a capacity for critical insight into research. You should know and understand the facts, theories, and methods of the field well enough that you can thoughtfully question the basis of research. You should be able to distinguish good research from bad and great research from good and explain what makes any piece of research great, good, or bad. Research findings should never be believed just because they have been published. Neither should findings be cynically and unthinkingly rejected because they do not fit preconceived ideas or because they are based on methodologies with which you are unfamiliar. You should demand and inspect the evidence and how it was analyzed and you should be able to discern adequate and appropriate analyses from inadequate and inappropriate analyses. Always ask, "why

should anyone believe this?" A thorough understanding of political science methodologies is absolutely essential to this critical judgment. You should take as many methodology courses and learn about as many statistical techniques as possible. You should also always bear in mind that these are tools to be used in the service of, but are not substitutes for, rigorous scientific thinking. At the end of this syllabus is a set of questions that I have prepared that you should use to guide you in critically evaluating the research that you read. You should carefully read these questions and go back to them periodically throughout the course until they become second-nature to you in your reading.

The fourth element of political science education is the development of the ability to contribute to the literature or "knowledge base" of the field. To undertake and execute research that adds to our knowledge and understanding of American politics requires a thorough knowledge and understanding of the existing research and a critical eye to where that knowledge could be refined, elaborated, revised, corrected, or extended. It also requires an expertise with the methodological tools necessary to complete an empirical research project. You must be able to identify an important question, frame a specific and testable hypothesis, collect or identify properly measured pertinent data, analyze the data with appropriate techniques, draw careful and reasonable inferences from that data, and draw out the broader implications of your findings. In general, you should develop the ability to anticipate why others might not believe your findings and address the basis for their likely concerns.

The first three elements of education place the student in the role of a consumer of knowledge. The fourth element (the ability to contribute to the literature) is important because the student is in the role of a producer of knowledge. The student is not just taking from the field, but giving something back. This element is important to keeping the field alive and also helps the student gain additional perspective on what is important in a field, what research has or has not been done well, and what further work needs to be pursued. In short, good producers are better informed consumers and the dichotomy often drawn between teaching and research is in most respects a false one.

The four interdependent elements of political science education do not develop in sequence and they do not develop in course work alone. Ultimately, you are responsible for accumulating the knowledge and developing these learning skills. This course and others can help to develop and tests can help to assess, in part, your success in these areas. However, in the end, it is your job to prepare yourself as fully as you can for your career as a political scientist. Some would say that you must be committed (as in "dedicated") if you want a career in political science (or any other academic discipline). You will be competing not with your fellow students at UB, but with students coming out of graduate school across the country. You need to read as much as you can, develop your research skills as much as you can, and get a solid start in conducting and participating in research. This begins with your course work and the field reading list, but goes well beyond both.

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE ON BECOMING A POLITICAL SCIENTIST

There are a few things to plan for and to do in starting your training to become a political scientist with a field in American politics. If you have not done it already (or are not receiving a Department sponsored membership as a first year student), you should join the American Political Science Association. The APSA website (<http://www.apsanet.org/>) indicates that the current student membership rate is just \$45 a year (with a 7 year limit of eligibility for this rate). As a member you receive three quarterly journals: *American Political Science Review*, *PS: Politics & Political Science*, and *Perspectives on Politics*. In addition, you will have internet access to the APSA's national job listings. The APSA also has a number of organized sections of interest to scholars of American politics. Among those most likely to be of interest to American politics' scholars are: federalism; legislative studies; public policy; political organizations and parties; presidency research; political methodology; religion and politics; urban politics; women and politics research; state politics and policy; political communication; politics and history; political economy; political psychology; elections, public opinion, and voting behavior; and race, ethnicity and politics. Many of these sections

now include a heavily discounted specialized journal with their section dues.

Within the first year or so, you should undertake some serious research projects--research that could be presented at professional meetings and submitted to professional journals for publication, by the end of your first year in graduate school and no later than during your second year. Initially, you may want to work with others on a research project, but you should undertake some independent research of your own early in your graduate career. You should present a research paper at a professional conference within your first two years in the graduate program. You may want to make your first presentation at one of a number of regional and state level annual conferences. The New York Political Science Association meeting in the Spring is a good place to start. It is probably a good idea to attend a professional meeting before applying to present your research at a conference. You should check the Conferences, Seminars, and Programs in the Profession page on the APSA's website for an extensive list of meetings and "calls for papers," the submission requirements for presenting a paper at a meeting.

The most prominent general meetings are:

- (1.) APSA over Labor Day weekend every year at a changing location. Next year will be in Chicago. The submission of proposals were due in the prior December (about 9 months before the meeting).
- (2.) Midwest Political Science Association meeting at the end of March in Chicago. The paper proposal submission deadline is early October (about 6 months before the meeting).

Other meetings to keep in mind are:

- (3.) Northeastern Political Science Association meeting in mid-November, alternating between Boston and Philadelphia. The paper proposal submission deadline is mid-June (about 5 months before the meeting).
- (4.) Southern Political Science Association meeting in early January, usually in New Orleans. The paper proposal submission date is early August (about 5 months before the meeting).

More local meetings are:

- (5.) New York State Political Science Association meeting in early April. This year it is at Niagara University. The deadline for this is usually in December.
- (6.) New England Political Science Association meeting in late April. This year it is in Hartford, CT. The deadline for this is usually November.

There have been several useful essays published in *PS: Political Science and Politics* that provide advice to getting started as a political scientists, these include:

- Wolfinger, Raymond E. 1993. "Tips for Writing Papers," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, v.26, n.1 (November) pp.87-88. [on writing research papers]
- Jentleson, Bruce W. 1986. "Strategic Choices and Dangerous Traps," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, v.19, n.1 (Winter) pp.69-70. [on dissertations]
- Cohen, David B. 2002. "Surviving the Ph.D.: Hints for Navigating the Sometimes Stormy Seas of Graduate Education in Political Science," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, v.35, n.3 (September) pp.585-588. [on the whole graduate experience]
- Wuffle, A. 1989. "Uncle Wuffle's Advice to the Advanced Graduate Student," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, v.22, n.4 (December) pp.838-839. [15 rules for graduate students]
- Garand, James C. and Michael W. Giles. 2003. "Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, v.36, n.2 (April) pp.293-308. [an analysis of the perceived quality of 115 political science journals]

There are several other websites that you should find of interest. The first is JSTOR (www.jstor.org), accessible through the UB Library website. Many of the major journals have made electronic downloadable copies of their articles available on JSTOR. The latest volumes are not

available for most journals, but volumes from several years ago and older are available. You might also be interested in a site that compiles links of interest to political scientists: the “Ultimate Political Science Links” <http://www.rvc.cc.il.us/faalink/pruckman/PSLinks.htm>

There are also a number of substantive websites that, as students of American politics, you may want to check from time to time. Among these are:

- American National Election Study: <http://www.umich.edu/~nes/>
- Polling Report.com: <http://www.pollingreport.com/>
- Real Clear Politics: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>
- Gallup Poll: <http://www.gallup.com/>
- Zogby International: <http://zogby.com/>
- Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections: <http://uselectionatlas.org/>
- Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House: <http://clerk.house.gov/>
- The Living Room Candidate: <http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php>
- Statistical Abstract of the United States: <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>
- Bureau of Economic Analysis: <http://bea.gov/>
- Campaign Finance, OpenSecrets: <http://www.opensecrets.org/index.asp>
- The Campaign Finance Institute: <http://www.campaignfinanceinstitute.org/>
- C-SPAN: <http://www.c-span.org/>
- Project VoteSmart: <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm>
- VoteView (Keith Poole’s website): <http://www.voteview.com>

Finally, you should obtain a copy of a statistical software program such as STATA, SPSS, or SYSTAT and become well versed with it. MYSTAT, a scaled down version of SYSTAT is available for free at <http://www.systat.com/MystatProducts.aspx>



COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The course grade for each student in this class will be based on the following four components:

Discussion Leadership	15%
Observation Papers & Class Participation	25%
Annotated Bibliography Paper	25%
Comprehensive final exam	35%

Every student will be assigned to be a discussion leader for one week. For the meeting in which you are the discussion leader you should be especially well versed about the week's reading and should help direct the class discussion, either through questions or comments designed to provoke further analysis of the reading, its methodological soundness, its theoretical contribution, its general importance, and implications for other research. As a discussion leader, you should present a brief (no more than 12 to 15 minutes) summary of the book at the beginning of the class meeting. You should clearly present the following information:

- (1.) what is the research question and hypotheses?
- (2.) why is the research question important enough to write a book about?
- (3.) how did the authors attempt to answer the research question (what was the data and how was it analyzed)? and
- (4.) what was the answer to the research question?

You should not present a lengthy summary of the book. After this brief presentation and any clarifying questions from other class participants, your responsibility is to raise questions and offer commentary to spur discussion in order to illuminate the quality and importance of the research presented in the book.

Class participation and preparation is a major component of the evaluation. It should go without saying, but I will say it in any case, that attendance at and preparation for every class meeting is expected. It should also go without saying, but you should bring your copy of the week's book with your notes on it to each class discussing a book. Each student, whether leading the discussion or not, should be well-prepared and should participate actively and thoughtfully in the class discussions. Each student will also be assigned 3 weeks in which he or she is required to prepare in writing a critical (positive, neutral, or negative) comment or question regarding the week's reading. These are the reading observation papers. This need not be more than a single paragraph. They should be sent via e-mail to other members of the class by at least 11pm of the Tuesday evening before the Wednesday night class. Several of these comments may be read for the class. The comments should concern the reading as political science *and absolutely not as literature*. That is, comments regarding whether or not you think that a book is well-written are NOT appropriate for these observation papers. You will not receive a grade on these papers per se, unless they are unacceptable. However, your grade for participation may be affected by how insightful these papers are about the readings.

I will randomly assign the discussion leader and observation note assignments after the first week of classes. Your assignments will be listed in the reading assignment section of this syllabus (beginning on page 8). Late registrants to the course will be assigned to achieve balance in coverage of the material.

You are required to write an annotated bibliography drawn from a topic addressed in an article published in a major research journal within the last six years. You may select an article from the APSR, AJPS, JOP, POQ, PRQ, LSQ, or Presidential Studies Q in any issue published from 2006 to the present. The article must be on a topic in the purview of this course and must be approved by me. An article can only be used by one student in the class. You should identify 5 related articles (in any journal) or book chapters written before or after this "topic article" and write a one-page annotated entry for each of the six articles. The annotated entry involves: (1.) identifying the bibliographic information about the article, (2.) in a paragraph, describing the research in the article by answering the central four questions about it—what is the research question and hypotheses, why is the research question important enough to write a book about, how did the authors attempt to answer the research question (what are the data and how were they analyzed), and what is the answer to the research question?, and (3.) in a paragraph, assess the quality of the research (keep in mind the "questions for analyzing research" included with this syllabus). You may consult any research that you find pertinent in critiquing the article. After the six entries, you should write a brief discussion (about two to three pages) on how the articles conflict, cumulate, or build to a conclusion and what further work needs to be done on this research topic. You should be as specific as possible and reference the seven articles in composing your conclusions. Your annotated bibliography paper should be no longer than ten pages in length (single-spaced in 11 point font with one-inch margins). A hard copy of your paper is due at the class meeting on April 24 and you should send e-mail copies to the members of the class. Students will present their annotated bibliographies to the class in the last week's session of the course. Each student should prepare a 10-12 minute presentation of his or her paper and absolutely should not simply read the paper to the class. Students should also raise questions about each annotated bibliography. You are not spectators at a presentation.

Finally, there will be a comprehensive examination on the course readings and class meetings. This may be in-class, take-home, or a mix of the two. If a take-home exam is given, it will be handed out at the last class and due at the scheduled time of the final examination.

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COURSE READINGS

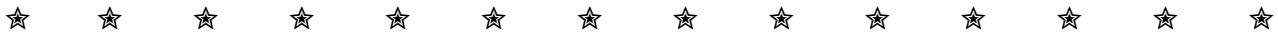
The following ten books (listed in the order of use) have been ordered through the UB Bookstore:

- (1.) Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- (2.) Bruce E. Keith, David B. Magelby, Candice J. Nelson, Elizabeth Orr, Mark C. Westlye, and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 1992. *The Myth of the Independent Voter*. University of California Press.
- (3.) James A. Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- (4.) David R. Mayhew, 2013. *Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System*. Princeton University Press.
- (5.) Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams. 2009. *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- (6.) Alan I. Abramowitz, 2010. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, & American Democracy*, Yale University Press.
- (7.) Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, 2012. *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism*. Basic Books.
- (8.) Diana Mutz, 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- (9.) Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech. 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. University of Chicago Press.
- (10.) Robert W. Merry. 2012. *Where They Stand: The American Presidents in the Eyes of Voters and Historians*. Simon and Schuster.

There are several different approaches one can take in an introductory pro-seminar. One possibility is to emphasize the classics such as *The American Voter* by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller and Donald Stokes; *Who Governs* by Robert Dahl; *Presidential Power* by Richard Neustadt; *Congressmen in Committees* by Richard Fenno; or my favorite *Elections and the Political Order*, by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes. Another option is immersion in current research published in the major professional political science journals. A third option is to cover the waterfront by selecting synthesis books and articles that summarize and critique research in each of the major subfields of American politics. What I have decided to do is pick what I think are some of the more interesting and highly regarded books that have been recently written in the field. These books do not cover all of American politics. For instance, there is no book explicitly on interest groups, and as it happens, there are several books that are in one way or another on Congress. However, these books will give you a good idea about the kind of research that is done in the American politics field.

Of course, much of the research in American politics appears in the professional journals. The annotated bibliography papers should acquaint you with the journals in some topics in the American politics field. In reading journal articles, you should of course focus on the substantive aspects of the research as well as the methodology (why you should believe the findings of the research), but you should also learn from the format of the presentation. That is, you should learn how research results

are presented in a professional manner: the order, length, and scope of the presentation; the way in which the literature is incorporated into the discussion of the research question; the way in which the data analysis is presented and discussed, etc. You will spend a good deal of time as beginning political scientists writing convention papers and articles for professional journals, so it is a good idea to learn early how this is done: what a professional article looks like. In effect, you should read articles at least at two levels: substantively and stylistically (remembering that “good style” in this case is fitting in with the professional format and not “great literature.”).



The Journals

There are a great many professional journals that publish research articles in American politics. I list below the major journals and the acronyms by which they are referred. The *APSR* is the major journal of the discipline (published by the American Political Science Association) and publishes a good deal of research in the American Politics field. The *American Journal of Political Science* (*AJPS*) and the *Journal of Politics* (*JOP*) are next in line in terms of prestige and both publish leading research in the field. They are the journals of the Midwest Political Science Association (*AJPS*) and the Southern Political Science Association (*JOP*). *Political Research Quarterly* (*PRQ*) is also a regional journal (of the Western Political Science Association) that has risen in prominence. *Polity* (Northeast PSA) and *SSQ* (Southwest PSA) are also regional journals, though *Polity* emphasizes political theory and *SSQ* is interdisciplinary and within political science emphasizes public policy research. The *BJPS*, although not read or cited as widely as the preceding journals, is also of the first-tier in prestige. The other journals listed are, for the most part, highly regarded. Some are more specialized (eg., *LSQ*), while some are good general journals of the field (eg., *APR*, formerly *APQ*).

- American Political Science Review* -- *APSR*
- American Journal of Political Science* (formerly *Midwest Journal of Political Science*) -- *AJPS*
- The Journal of Politics* -- *JOP*
- Political Research Quarterly* (formerly the *Western Political Quarterly*) -- *PRQ*
- Social Science Quarterly* -- *SSQ*
- Legislative Studies Quarterly* -- *LSQ*
- American Politics Research* -- *APR* (until 2001 *American Politics Quarterly*)
- Public Opinion Quarterly* -- *POQ*
- Political Science Quarterly* -- *PSQ*
- Congress and the Presidency*
- Presidential Studies Quarterly*
- British Journal of Political Science* -- *BJPS*
- Political Behavior*
- Electoral Studies* (comparative, but some U.S.)
- Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, & Parties* (new British journal, but some U.S.)
- PS: Politics & Political Science* -- *PS*
- The Forum* (internet journal of political science)
- Public Choice* (formal)
- Studies in American Political Development*
- Social Science History*
- Polity*
- American Review of Politics*
- Party Politics* (comparative, but some American)
- Political Analysis* (Methodology, but some American)
- Quarterly Journal of Political Science* (a new “positive political science and contemporary political economy” journal)
- State Politics & Policy Quarterly*
- Politics and Policy*
- Publius*

Political Communication

Most, if not all, of these journals are available in electronic form through the UB Library. Older issues are also available through the library database, JSTOR. The major archived political science journals of greatest interest to American politics researchers and the journals' available volumes on JSTOR are:

American Journal of Political Science 1973-2008 (*Midwest Jour. of Political Science* 1957-72)
American Political Science Review 1906-2006
British Journal of Political Science 1971-2004
Journal of Politics 1939-2006
Legislative Studies Quarterly 1976-2004
Political Behavior 1979-2006
Political Research Quarterly 1993-2008 (*Western Political Quarterly* 1948-1992)
Political Science Quarterly 1886-2004
Public Opinion Quarterly 1937-2004
Presidential Studies Quarterly 1974-2006

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READING ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1. JANUARY 16

The Syllabus and Course Requirements
Introduction: The American Politics Field
The Scientific Study of American Politics
A Few Basics of Political Methodology
The Logic of Causal Models
How to Analyze Research
The Reading List of the American Politics Field
Overviews: Pluralism and Its Critics
Responsible Party Government and Its Critics
Examples of Some of My Recent Research:
Forecasting, Explaining Realignments, Recalibrating the NES, Electoral Constituencies and Governing, Presidents and the Economy, *The American Campaign*, 2008 and 2010.

WEEK 2. JANUARY 23

The 2012 Presidential Election, the Forecasts, and the Explanations

Campbell, James E. 2012. "Forecasting the Presidential and Congressional Elections of 2012: The Trial-Heat and the Seats-in-Trouble Models," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v.45, n.4 (October), 630-34.

Bevan, Tom and Carl M. Cannon, 2012. "21 Reasons for Obama's Victory and Romney's Defeat," *Real Clear Politics*
http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/11/07/21_reasons_for_obamas_victory_and_romneys_defeat_116090-full.html

Campbell, James E. 2013. "The Miserable Presidential Election of 2012: A First Party-Term Incumbent Survives," *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, v.10, n.4, article (2013).

Selections from the Current issue of *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics* on the Presidential Election of 2012.

WEEK 3. JANUARY 30

Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*.
Campbell, James E., 2006. "Party Systems and Realignment in the United States, 1868-2004,"
Social Science History, v.30, issue 3 (Fall), pp. 359-86.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 4. FEBRUARY 6

Keith et. al., *The Myth of the Independent Voter*.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations:

WEEK 5. FEBRUARY 13

Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. .

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 6. FEBRUARY 20

Mayhew, *Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System*.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 7. FEBRUARY 27

Fiorina and Abrams, *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*.

Brady, David W. and Hahrie C. Han, 2006. "Polarization Then and Now: A Historical
Perspective," in Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady's *Red and Blue Nation?*

Campbell, James E., 2006. "Polarization Runs Deep, Even by Yesterday's Standards," in
Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady's *Red and Blue Nation?*

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 8. MARCH 6

Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, & American
Democracy*.

Poole, Keith T. 2008. "The Roots of the Polarization of Modern U. S. Politics." *Revista de
Ciencia Politica*. v.28, n.2. pp. 3-37. (Original English version).

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

SPRING BREAK MARCH 13

WEEK 9. MARCH 20

Mann and Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System
Collided With the New Politics of Extremism*.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 10. MARCH 27

Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 11. APRIL 3

Baumgartner et. al., *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why.* .

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 12. APRIL 10

Merry, *Where They Stand: The American Presidents in the Eyes of Voters and Historians.*

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 13. APRIL 17

Presidents and the Economy

Bartels, Larry M., 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age.* Princeton University Press, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp 1-63).

Campbell, James E., 2011. “The Economic Records of the Presidents: Party Differences and Inherited Economic Conditions,” *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, v.9, n.1, article 7 (April), 1-29.

Comiskey, Michael, and Lawrence C. Marsh. 2012. “Presidents, Parties, and the Business Cycle, 1949-2009.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, v.42, n. 1 (March), pp. 40-59.

Campbell, James E., 2012. “The President’s Economy: Parity in Presidential Party Performance,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, v.42, n.4 (December), 811-18.

Comiskey, Michael, and Lawrence C. Marsh. 2012. “The President’s Economy: A Response to Campbell,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, v.42, n.4 (December), 819-26.

Presidents and Governing

Campbell, James E., 2010. “Political Forces on the Obama Presidency: From Elections to Governing,” In *The Obama Presidency: Appraisals and Prospects*, edited by Bert A. Rockman, Andrew Rudalevige, and Colin Campbell (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2012) chapter 4, pp. 67-93.

Discussion Leader:

Reading Observations from:

WEEK 14. APRIL 24

Annotated Bibliography Presentations

FINAL EXAMINATION – May 1



QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING RESEARCH

The Description Questions -- What is the Research?

1. What is the Subject of the Research?
2. What is the Basic Question(s) or Hypotheses? (Recommendation: Construct a Causal Model)
3. What are the Alternative Answers to these Questions?
4. What Data are Used to Answer the Question (or Test the Hypothesis)?
What is the Level of Analysis?
What is the Time and Space of the Study? (Where and When?)
5. How are the Central Concepts Measured?
6. How are the Relationships among these Concepts Analyzed?
That is, What Methodological Techniques are used to Examine the Data?
7. What are the Findings of the Study?
Did the Findings Overturn or Confirm the "Conventional Wisdom"?

The Evaluation Questions -- How Good is the Research?

1. Is the Subject of the Research Important?
Are the Central Questions of the Research Important? Why or Why not?
2. Are the Basic Questions or Hypotheses Plausible? Why or Why Not?
3. Are All Plausible Alternative Explanations Considered?
Does the Research Exclude Other Plausible Hypotheses (or Variables)?
Is the Analysis Fully and Appropriately Specified?
If Not, What are the Likely Consequences?
4. Are the Data Appropriate to Address the Questions?
Are there Limitations on What can be Concluded because of the Cases Examined?
Is there Sufficient Variation in Values on the Dependent and Independent Variables?
Are there Sampling Problems? Are the Cases Representative?
If Not, What are the Likely Consequences?
5. Are the Data Measurements Precise, Reliable and Valid?
If Not, How Might They Be Improved?
If Not, What are the Likely Consequences?
6. Are the Appropriate Methodological Techniques Used to Examine the Data?
Are there any Problems Introduced by the Methods Used?
7. Should We Believe the Findings of the Study?
If So, Why and How Certain Should We Be?
If Not, Why Not? What Should We Believe About It and Why?
8. Are the Conclusions that the Research Draws From the Findings Appropriate?
Are they closely connected to the findings or are they stretched and speculative?
What other Conclusions might have been drawn or Implications Suggested, if any?
9. What is the "Value-Added" By This Research?
How Does This Research Contribute to "the Literature"?
What Do We Know Now That We Didn't Know Before?
Did the Research Provide New Insights? If so, What Specifically were These New Insights?
Did it Add Certainty and/or Precision to Prior Findings?
10. How Might Future Research Improve Upon or Extend This Research?

THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF AMERICAN POLITICS

1. What makes Political Science Scientific?

The application of rigorous methods to the examination of evidence (data) of political phenomena in an attempt to test general theories that purport to explain the causes and effects of the political phenomena.

The building blocks of political science are the relationships between one political concept and another. The interrelationships among these bivariate relationships builds toward an integrated empirical (as opposed to normative) political theory.

In order for a theory of politics (or a simple relationship) to be tested scientifically to determine its general applicability, multiple observations must be examined to distinguish the general or systematic relationship from the idiosyncratic or chance relationship between two concepts (variables).

2. Why is Scientific Political Science Statistical Political Science?

(Or why should scientific political science at least *aspire* to be statistical political science?)

If a political concept is real,
some manifestation of it can be observed (directly or indirectly).

If some manifestation of a political concept can be observed (directly or indirectly),
then it can be measured (even if only crudely (eg., a dichotomous or dummy variable)).

If the manifestation of a political concept can be measured crudely,
its measurement can be improved and refined (within the bounds of what is practically possible).*

If the manifestation of a political concept can be measured well,
it can be quantified.

If the measurement of the political concept can be quantified (even if only crudely), its relationship
with other concepts can be examined statistically.

&

If one has multiple observations of quantified political concepts, then statistics are desirable &
necessary to distinguish what is true generally from what may be idiosyncratic or due to chance.

Note regarding a common misconception about statistical analysis: Statistical analysis does not neglect the complexity of political phenomena. To the contrary, it is vital to untangling those complex relationships and providing more precise, reliable, and interpretable assessments of the vast amounts of observations necessary to make theoretical generalizations about complex political phenomena.

*If a concept entails actual discrete categories, there is no measurement refinement possible beyond categories (a dummy variable when there are two categories).

A Few Basics of Political Methodology: Statistics

Statistics summarize data

Some definitions:

A variable: The measurement of a concept that has different scores (or values or numbers) for the different observations (or cases).

Example: Age measured in years takes on different values for different people (the cases).

The dependent variable (commonly designated as Y): A variable whose scores depend on and can be explained to be the result of the scores of other variables. The effect of one or more causes.

An independent variable (commonly designated as X): A variable whose score does not depend on the score of the dependent variable and whose value can help to account for variation in the values of the dependent variable. One of the causes of an effect. You may have and usually do have several independent variables to help explain variation in one dependent variable.

Levels of Analysis: The unit of the observation. For example, a study may be conducted at the level of individual voters or representatives or at the level of an election year or a nation. (N is the term for the number of observations or cases in a study.)

Levels of Statistical Analysis

Univariate statistics summarize aspects of one variable (measured concept)

Eg. mean summarizes central tendency, standard deviation summarizes dispersion (variability)

Bivariate statistics summarize the general relationship between two variables

You want to know the exact nature of the relationship (the slope: how much one unit change in X affects a change in Y) and the certainty of the relationship. That is, there is always some possibility that a relationship is due to chance. We want to know how likely that is so we know how much confidence to place in the relationship as a generally true phenomena.

Multivariate statistics summarize the general relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable, holding constant the effects of the other independent variables.

In multiple regression (the most common form of multivariate statistics in American politics research), variation in a dependent variable is accounted for (or explained) in terms of a set of independent variables. In different terminology, an observation's value on the dependent variable can be described as some combination of the independent variables (each weighted by their estimated effect on the dependent variable) and an error term (the value of the dependent variable not accounted for by the independent variables).

In multiple regression there are several statistics that summarize the relationships between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable:

The effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable is summarized as the unstandardized coefficient (commonly designated as b). Each b has a standard error (s_b) associated with it that can be used to assess the confidence that we should have in the estimate (the likelihood that it is significantly different from zero or whether it may be due to chance). Based on the b and its standard error a t statistic can be computed

($t = b/s_b$). As a rule of thumb, a t score of 2 or greater generally indicates that we can be 95% confident that the association (b) is not really zero (and $b > 0$ because of chance).

The effects of independent variables can be compared within a single multiple regression study based on their standardized regression coefficients (commonly referred to as betas).

A beta indicates that a one standard deviation shift in an independent variable can be expected to cause a change of “beta” standard deviations in the dependent variable. For example a beta estimate of .5 would indicate that a 1 standard deviation in X produces a .5 standard deviation change in Y.

The standard error of the estimate (SEE) and the R^2 are overall measures of the completeness with which the independent variables collectively account for variation in the dependent variable. The standard error of the estimate is an absolute measure that ranges from zero (when the regression has fully accounted for all of the variation in the dependent variable) to the standard deviation of the dependent variable (when the regression has accounted for none of the variation in the dependent variable). The R^2 is a relative measure of the proportion of the variance (in the dependent variable that has been explained) and ranges from zero to one.

Some Variants of Linear Multiple Regression Analysis

Interactions – The impact of some independent variables may depend on other independent variables in which case they can be modelled as having interactive effects on the dependent variable. For example, campaign spending may have a larger effect on the vote for challengers than it has for incumbents. Thus, an interaction term of incumbency and campaign spending could be included in the regression.

Nonlinearity – The impact of some independent variables may be nonconstant or different at different levels. For example, age may make a big difference to the likelihood of voting when people age from 20 to 25 but a much smaller effect when they age from 50 to 55. This suspected nonlinearity can be incorporated into the specification of the regression.

Probit and Logit – With dichotomous (two category) variables, categorical, and, more generally, limited range dependent variables, probit or logit is the appropriate variant of regression to use. These can provide probabilities of being in a certain category of the dependent variable. (Note: Limited or categorical independent variables still allow conventional regression analysis. Also, regression analysis is still a useful and more intuitive technique for the initial estimation of probit or logit specifications).

Causal Models

Are depictions of the interrelationships among variables. Variables are designated and arrows are drawn between causes and effects. It is especially helpful in sorting out the web of suspected theoretical relationships and the assumptions that theories are making. They are also useful in detecting indirect relationships (X affects Z that in turn affects Y).

A simple multiple regression model would have an array of X's (X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots) with individual arrows pointing to the dependent variable Y.

An Example of Political Science Statistical Analysis

An examination of the impact of campaign spending on contested U.S. House elections in the 2000 elections.

The unit of analysis in the congressional district.

N= 369 (contested House elections)

1. RVTPT00 is the dependent variable.

It is the percentage of the two-party House vote received by the Republican congressional candidate in the district.

$$RVTPT00 = 100 * (RVOTE00 / (DVOTE00 + RVOTE00))$$

Where, RVOTE00 and DVOTE00 are the actual number of votes in a district received by the Democratic and Republican House candidates in 2000.

2. RPCTSPEND00 is an independent variable

It is the Republican candidate's percentage of campaign spending in the district of the total spending by the major party candidates in the district.

$$RPCTSPEND00 = 100 * (RSPEND00 / (DSPEND00 + RSPEND00))$$

Where, DSPEND00 and RSPEND00 are the actual number of campaign dollars spent in the district by the Democratic and Republican House candidates in 2000.

RPCTSPEND00 can range from 100 when the Republican spends all of the campaign money spent in the district to 0 when the Democratic candidate does all of the spending.

3. RINC00 is another independent variable

It indicates whether an incumbent is running and which party the incumbent is a member of.

RINC00 = +1 when a Republican incumbent is running,
RINC00 = -1 when a Democratic incumbent is running,
RINC00 = 0 when there is no incumbent running.

4. RPRESVT00 is another independent variable

It indicates the percentage of the two-party vote in the district cast for the Republican presidential candidate (Bush).

5. RVTPT98ADJ is the lagged dependent variable, the Republican House vote in the district in 1998 (adjusted to take into account whether the district was uncontested in 1998)

The adjustment sets a minimum vote of 23 percent and a maximum of 77 percent in districts that had been left uncontested in 1998.

Results: Adjusted $R^2 = .959$, all coefficients are statistically significant ($p < .001$, one-tailed) see printout.

Data for the following results were selected according to:

(CONST00= 1)

1 case(s) deleted due to missing data.

Dep Var: RVTPCT00 N: 369 Multiple R: 0.97957 Squared multiple R: 0.95956

Adjusted squared multiple R: 0.95911 Standard error of estimate: 3.91316

Effect	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t	P(2 Tail)
CONSTANT	7.87245	0.99834	0.00000	.	7.88557	0.00000
RPCTSPEND00	0.22291	0.01351	0.44046	0.15588	16.49837	0.00000
RINC00	2.28375	0.46688	0.11274	0.20913	4.89147	0.00000
RPRESVT00	0.34806	0.02179	0.25559	0.43401	15.97447	0.00000
RVTPCT98ADJ	0.25367	0.02488	0.26223	0.16800	10.19667	0.00000

Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum-of-Squares	df	Mean-Square	F-ratio	P
Regression	1.32249E+05	4	33062.20396	2159.12082	0.00000
Residual	5573.86236	364	15.31281		

*** WARNING ***

Case 222 is an outlier (Studentized Residual = -4.05011)
Case 424 is an outlier (Studentized Residual = 4.00697)

Durbin-Watson D Statistic 1.74289
First Order Autocorrelation 0.12763

Perspectives on American Politics

Pluralism, Participatory Democracy and Democratic Elitists

The Central Question:

What is and what should be the balance of power between citizens and leaders?

How responsive should government be?

		How Inclusive is American Government?		
		Very	Moderately	Not Very
Very Inclusive		Satisfied democrats	<i>Participatory democrats</i>	<i>Participatory democrats</i>
How Inclusive should the Government Be?	Moderately Inclusive	Democratic elitists	Satisfied pluralists	<i>Participatory democrats</i>
	Not Very Inclusive	Democratic elitists	Democratic elitists	Satisfied elitists

The Debate over Responsible Party Government

I. Criticisms of Conventional American Party Politics

- A. The Parties Themselves
 - 1. Fragmented
 - 2. Unprogramatic, Deemphasize Issues
 - 3. Not Cohesive, Not Disciplined
 - 4. Indistinct - Too Centrist, Too Muddled
- B. Consequences for Voter Behavior
 - 1. Unthinking, Knee-jerk Party Votes
 - 2. Unsystematic, Candidate-driven Non-Party Votes
- C. Consequences for Interest Groups - More Influential as they fill the power void
- D. The Bottom-line: Irresponsible Parties
 - 1. Parties Lack Power Within Government
 - 2. Parties NOT Clearly Accountable to Public
 - In a system of separated powers requiring coordinated action to govern, the only meaningful accountability is collective accountability and the only clear collective accountability is party accountability.*
 - 3. Low Power + Low Accountability = Irresponsible

II. The Doctrine of Responsible Party Government

- A. Popular Control Requires Responsible Parties
 - 1. Parties Strong Enough to Run Government
 - 2. Parties Identifiable Enough to be Answerable for the Running of Government
- B. The Requirements of Responsible Parties
 - 1. Clear and Distinct Party Positions
 - 2. Party Unity/Cohesiveness in Leadership through:
 - a. Selection of Candidates
 - b. Party Discipline
 - c. Constitutional Imperatives - Votes of Confidence
 - d. Natural Ideological Agreement
 - 3. Party Voting
 - a. Voters Accurately Perceive Party in Power
 - b. Voters Associate Party and Policy
 - c. Voters Hold Party Collectively Accountable
 - 4. Interest Groups Shut Out of Direct Power

III. Defense of Conventional Aggregating "Weak" Party Politics (Loose Coalition Parties, The 1940s to 1970s)

- A. Responsible Parties are *Unrealistic*
 - 1. Voters are not sufficiently issue-oriented
 - 2. Uncompromising Parties would encourage Third Parties
 - 3. Discipline is not easily available – violates democratic norms
 - 4. Government Structure encourages Party Fragmentation
- B. Responsible Parties are *Undesirable*
 - 1. Would Intensify Social Conflicts
 - 2. Party Discipline may cost Intra-Party Democracy
 - 3. "Deadlock" or Compromised Coalition Government may be Desirable
 - a. Stimulates Deliberation
 - b. Permits a Mix of Policies, Flexibility
 - c. Provides Stability to Policy, No lurching from left to right and back
 - 4. Would Lower General Satisfaction with Electoral Choice
 - a. May lead to less competition in some areas of the nation
 - b. May lead to multi-party system & gridlock among these more ideological parties

IV. Retrospective on Party Development: Evolution into Responsible Parties (The 1980s to 2006)

- A. Parties are Polarized with Clear and Distinct Positions
- B. Party Cohesion in Government is High, though Not Perfect
- C. Partisanship in the Electorate is Strong
(High Percentage are Partisan, High Loyalty Rates, Low Split-Ticket Voting)
- D. Realignment Induced Responsible Parties rather than Discipline Induced Responsible Parties

Table 11.1. Divided Government following Presidential and Midterm Elections, 1860-2012

Elections resulting in divided government			
Election years	% Presidential elections	% Midterm elections	% All elections
1860-1894	22% (2 of 9)	67% (6 of 9)	44% (8 of 18)
1896-1966	6% (1 of 18)	28% (5 of 18)	17% (6 of 36)
1968-2012	58% (7 of 12)	82% (9 of 11)	70% (16 of 23)
1860-2012	26% (10 of 39)	53% (20 of 38)	39% (30 of 77)

NOTE: The numbers in parentheses are the actual number of elections in the category that resulted in divided government and the total number of presidential or midterm elections held during that period.

SOURCE: James E. Campbell, *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections, Second Edition*. (University Press of Kentucky, 1997) p.251 and updated for 1998-2012. 2000 is counted as a unified government election, though within several months the government was divided because of a party switch by Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords. In the recent era, we have had divided government in 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2006, 2010, and 2012 and unified government in 1976, 1978, 1992, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2008.