

Senior Seminar: American Macropolitics

PSC 495, Fall 2009
University at Buffalo, SUNY
5th Floor Seminar Room, Park Hall
2:00 – 4:50pm Tuesdays

Prof. James E. Campbell
522 Park Hall
645-8452
E-mail: jcampbel@buffalo.edu

A great deal of political science research in American politics focuses on the individual political actor: the citizen, the voter, the representative, the activist, the candidate, the elected representative. Aggregate or macro politics has often been examined only as a way to make ecological inferences about individual behaviors when individual data is unavailable. In recent years, however, there has been growing interest in aggregate politics for its own sake. There has been a rebirth of interest in examining and explaining American *macropolitics*.

This course will review several general studies of American macropolitics and then explore research on specific macropolitical topics. Among the macro-political subjects to be addressed in this course are: inter-election congressional seat change, the polarization of public opinion, reasons for fluctuations in turnout rates, declarations of presidential mandates, the passage of major legislation, the dynamics of presidential and congressional job approval ratings, the impact of partisan control on national economic growth, partisan realignments, and election forecasting.

This is not your standard undergraduate course. This is a research intensive course. We will examine quantitative American macropolitical science research in detail and students are expected to produce an original piece of quantitative American macropolitical science research paper by the end of this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be based on two considerations: class participation (including your leadership of a class discussion) and your research paper. These will be weighted equally in computing your overall course grade.

Class participation in a seminar of this sort is not optional. After the first week of class, the professor should not talk any more than any member of the class. Do not just sit back and wait to be asked a question. Ask questions and offer criticisms and observations. It is expected that you have and will state and defend your views about the research examined each week. The class session is nearly three hours long, so we will take a ten minute break at about 3:30pm in each class.

By the fourth week of the class, you should have selected a research question for your paper. These may come from the classes, from the list of possible research questions on the syllabus, or anywhere else. You should prepare a one page paper proposal in which you clearly state the research question, clearly state one or more hypothesized answers to the question, and how you propose to answer the question or determine whether your proposed answer is supported by available data. In this last section of your paper proposal, you should identify the data that you intend to analyze in order to determine whether your hypothesized answer is supported.

CLASS READING

There are four books that I have ordered for this class. The rest of the reading will largely be of journal articles (see J-STOR), book chapters, and unpublished manuscripts. Many of the readings involve research projects that I conducted or am working on. The four required books are:

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge.

David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern, 1946-2002*. New Haven, CT: Yale.

Larry M. Bartels, 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Patricia Heidotting Conley, 2001. *Presidential Mandates*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Week 1, September 1

Introduction to Macropolitics.

Some Background on Statistical Analysis

SYSTAT and MYSTAT (<http://www.systat.com/MystatProducts.aspx>)

Macro Data Sources

Two Examples of Macropolitics Research:

Swing Voters in Elections and Electoral Incentives in Governing

(1.) Campbell, 2008. "Do Swing Voters Swing Elections?" in *The Swing Voter in American Politics*, ed. by William G. Mayer (Washington, D.C.: Brookings) chapter 7.

(2.) Campbell, 2008. "Presidential Politics in a Polarized Nation: The Re-election of George W. Bush," in *The George W. Bush Legacy*, ed. by Colin B. Campbell, Bert A. Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevige (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press), pp. 21- 44.

Week 2, September 8

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 1.

Why was Barack Obama elected in 2008?

Gary C. Jacobson, 2009. "The 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections: Anti-Bush Referendum and Prospects for the Democratic Majority," *Political Science Quarterly*, v.124, n.1 (Spring): 1-30.

Campbell, Forthcoming. "The Exceptional Election of 2008: Performance, Values, and Crisis," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.

Week 3, September 15

What explains variation in voter turnout?

- Paul R. Abramson and John H. Aldrich, 1982. "The Decline of Electoral Participation in America," *American Political Science Review*, v.76, n.3 (September): 502-21.
- Carol A. Cassel and Robert C. Luskin, 1988. "Simple Explanations of Turnout Decline," *American Political Science Review*, v. 82, n.4 (December): 1321-1330.
- Michael P. McDonald and Samuel L. Popkin, 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter," *American Political Science Review*, v. 95, n. 4 (December): 963-974.

Week 4, September 22

How can the national vote share for a party be predicted?

- Campbell, 2008. "Editor's Introduction: Forecasting the 2008 National Elections," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 679-82.
- Helmut Norpoth, 2008. "On the Razor's Edge: The Forecast of the Primary Model," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 683-86.
- Michael S. Lewis-Beck and Charles Tien, 2008. "The Job of President and the Jobs Model Forecast: Obama for '08?" *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 687-90.
- Alan I. Abramowitz, 2008. "Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Time-for-Change Model," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 691-95.
- Campbell, 2008. "The Trial-Heat Forecast of the 2008 Presidential Vote: Performance and Value Considerations in an Open-Seat Election," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 697-701.
- Robert S. Erikson and Christopher Wlezien, 2008. "Leading Economic Indicators, the Polls, and the Presidential Vote," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 703-07.
- Thomas M. Holbrook, 2008. "Incumbency, National Conditions, and the 2008 Presidential Election," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 709-712.
- Brad Lockerbie, 2008. "Election Forecasting: The Future of the Presidency and the House," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 713-16.
- Alfred G. Cuzán and Charles M. Bundrick, 2008. "Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election: A Challenge for the Fiscal Model," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v, 41, n. 4, (October): 717-22.
- Post-Election Analyses: Forecasting Recap in *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v 42, n. 1, (January 2009), pp 19-23.
- Campbell, "The 2008 Campaign and the Forecasts Derailed,"
- Norpoth, "The Primary Model in 2008,"
- Lewis-Beck and Tien, "Race Blunts the Economic Effect?"
- Abramowitz, "Time-for-Change Model Again Right on the Money in 2008,"
- Erikson and Wlezien, "The Economy and the Presidential Vote in 2008,"
- Holbrook, "Incumbency, National Conditions, and the 2008 Presidential Election,"

Lockerbie, "A Retrospective on the Prospective Model,"
Cuzán and Bundrick, "Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Fiscal Model: The Challenge Met."

Week 5, September 29

Does internal party competition for the presidential nomination cost the party votes in the general election?

Campbell, 2007. "Nomination Politics, Party Unity, and Presidential Elections," In *Understanding the Presidency: Fourth Edition*, edited by James P. Pfiffner and Roger H. Davidson, (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), chapter 12, pp.74-90

What effects presidential approval ratings?

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Chapter 2.

Week 6, October 6

What explains the gains or losses for a political party of U.S. House seats in on-year and midterm congressional elections?

Ray C. Fair, 2009. "Presidential and Congressional Vote-Share Equations," *American Journal of Political Science*, v.53, n.1 (January): 55-72.

Campbell, Chad A. Hankinson, and Walter E. Koch, 2007. "Re-Evaluating the Theory of Surge and Decline: Seat Change Requires Competition," manuscript.

Week 7, October 13

Has the American electorate undergone partisan realignments throughout its history?

Philip Converse, 1966. "The Concept of the 'Normal Vote'," in *Elections and the Political Order*, New York: Wiley.

David Mayhew, 2004. *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*.

Campbell, 2006. "Party Systems and Realignments in the United States, 1868-2004," *Social Science History*, v.30, n.3 (Fall), pp. 359-86

Week 8, October 20

What explains changes in macropartisanship?

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Chapters 4 and 5.

Campbell, 2009. "Explaining Politics, Not Polls: Macropartisanship from Recalibrated ANES Data," manuscript.

Week 9, October 27

Has the American electorate become more ideologically polarized?

Morris P. Fiorina and Matthew S. Levendusky, 2006. "Disconnected: The Political Class versus the People," in *Red and Blue Nation? Volume 1*, Washington, DC: Brookings. Comments by Alan I. Abramowitz and Gary C. Jacobson and exchanges.

David W. Brady and Hahrie C. Han, 2006. "Polarization Then and Now: A Historical Perspective," in *Red and Blue Nation? Volume 1*, Washington, DC: Brookings. Comments by Campbell and Carl M. Cannon.

What influences the public's "mood"?

Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Chapter 6.

Week 10, November 3

Does divided government decrease the likelihood of major legislation being enacted? (Week 1)

David W. Mayhew, 2005, *Divided We Govern, Second Edition*. New Haven: Yale

Week 11, November 10

Does divided government decrease the likelihood of major legislation being enacted? (Week 2)

George C. Edwards III, Andrew Barrett, and Jeffrey Peake, 1997. "The Legislative Impact of Divided Government," *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 41, n. 2 (April), pp. 545-563.

Gregory R. Thorson, 1998. "Divided Government and the Passage of Partisan Legislation, 1947-1990," *Political Research Quarterly*, v. 51, n. 3 (September), pp. 751-764.

William Howell, Scott Adler, Charles Cameron, and Charles Riemann, 2000. "Divided Government and the Legislative Productivity of Congress, 1945-94," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, v. 25, n. 2 (May), pp. 285-312.

John Frendreis, Raymond Tatalovich, and Jon Schaff, 2001. "Predicting Legislative Output in the First One-Hundred Days, 1897-1995," *Political Research Quarterly*, v. 54, n. 4 (December), pp. 853-870.

Week 12, November 17

Do the partisan policies of the President affect the growth of the economy and the extent of income inequality? (Week 1)

Larry M. Bartels, 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapters 1-3.

Week 13, November 24

Do the partisan policies of the President affect the growth of the economy and the extent of income inequality? (Week 2)

Bartels, 2008. *Unequal Democracy*, Chapters 4-7.

Week 14, December 1

Do the partisan policies of the President affect the growth of the economy and the extent of income inequality? (Week 3)

Bartels, 2008. *Unequal Democracy*, Chapters 8-10.

Is the American electorate increasingly polarized because of growing income inequality?

Campbell, "Is the American Electorate Increasingly Polarized Because of Growing Income Inequality?" Northeastern Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, November 2007.

Week 15, December 8

Why do Presidents declare that they were elected with a mandate?

Patricia Heidotting Conley, *Presidential Mandates*, chapter 4 (pp.51-76)

Why are some Presidents are evaluated more highly than others?

James M. Carlson and Shannon Hulst, "The Subjectivity of Expert Ratings of America Presidents: A Q-Study," paper presented at the New England Political Science Association Annual Meeting. May 8, 2009

Paper due on December 15



Some Possible Paper Topics

What affects growth in the size of government?

Michael S. Lewis-Beck and Tom W. Rice, 1985. "Government Growth in the United States," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (February), pp. 2-30.

Does growth in the size of government harm economic growth?

Why do states have different turnout rates?

What explains the frequency of presidential vetoes?

Jong R. Lee, 1975. "Presidential Vetoes from Washington to Nixon," *The Journal of Politics*, v. 37, n. 2 (May), pp. 522-546.

Gary W. Copeland, 1983. "When Congress and the President Collide: Why Presidents Veto Legislation," *The Journal of Politics*, v. 45, n. 3 (August), pp. 696-710.

Todd G. Shields; Chi Huang, 1995. "Presidential Vetoes: An Event Count Model," *Political Research Quarterly*, v. 48, n. 3 (September), pp. 559-572.

John B. Gilmour, 2002. "Institutional and Individual Influences on the President's Veto," *The Journal of Politics*, v. 64, n. 1 (February), pp. 198-218.

What accounts for the likelihood of divided government?

Morris P. Fiorina, *Divided Government*. New York: MacMillan, 6-23.

What determines presidential support levels in Congress?

Brandice Canes-Wrone and Scott de Marchi, 2002. "Presidential Approval and Legislative Success," *The Journal of Politics*, v. 64, n. 2 (May), pp. 491-509.

Richard Fleisher, Jon R. Bond, and B. Dan Wood, 2008. "Which Presidents are Uncommonly Successful in Congress?" In Bert A. Rockman and Richard Waterman eds. *Presidential Leadership: The Vortex of Power*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.191-213.

Can presidential elections be forecast earlier and more accurately with leading measures of the economy?

Robert S. Erikson and Christopher Wlezien, 2008. "Leading Economic Indicators, the Polls, and the Presidential Vote," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, v. 41, n. 4, (October): 703-07.

Have class politics increased or decreased?

Does the American electorate have a center-right tilt or is this an illusion of misidentified self-reports of conservatism?

How effective are presidents in shaping the ideological direction of the Supreme Court?

Why are some campaigns more negative than others?

Emmett Buell and Lee Sigelman, *Attack Politics: Negativity in Presidential Campaigns since 1960*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.



Data Sources

U.S. Statistical Abstract <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>

Real Clear Politics <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/latestpolls/>

Polling Report <http://www.pollingreport.com/>

Gallup Poll <http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>

Bureau of Economic Analysis <http://www.bea.gov/>

United States Elections Project http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm

American National Election Studies <http://www.electionstudies.org/>

ICPSR <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/>

General Social Survey <http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website/>

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>

The Book of the States (Council of State Governments) <http://www.csg.org/pubs/TheBookoftheStates.aspx>

Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections <http://uselectionatlas.org/>

The American Presidency Project <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data.php>

GovernmentSpending.com <http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/classic.html>

Congressional Budget Office
on effective tax rates <http://www.cbo.gov/>
<http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=8885>

The White House (budget) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals/>

Not quite data--
The Living Room Candidate <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

