

American Political Frontiers: Macropolitics

PSC 761, Fall 2007
University at Buffalo, SUNY
Seminar Room Park Hall
6:00 – 8:50pm Tuesdays

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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 possible 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, presidential support levels in Congress, the dynamics of presidential and congressional job approval ratings, the growth in the size of the national government, the impact of partisan control on national economic growth, partisan realignments, and election forecasting.

This is not your standard graduate seminar. This is a research intensive course. Students are expected to be conversant in quantitative analytical techniques. Each student will conduct a research project for this class. The course is focused on teaching the conduct of professional political science research and each student in the class is expected to produce a publishable piece of research by the end of the semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be based of three considerations: class participation, your paper proposal, and your research paper. These will combined in the following percentages to compute your overall course grade:

(1.) Class Participation	30%
(2.) Paper Proposal	10%
(3.) Research Paper	60%

Class participation in a graduate 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. You should not just sit back and wait to be asked a question. It is expected that you have views about research that you state and can defend.

Every student will prepare, present, and defend a paper proposal by the fifth week of the class. The paper proposal should indicate (1.) the specific research question you will be trying to answer, (2.) what is known about it and the reasons why it is an important question, (3.) the

possible answers that you anticipate to the question (your hypotheses), and (4.) how you intend to try to answer the question (measurements, data, and methods). You should formulate several macropolitical research questions in the first week or two of the class and investigate the research that has been done on these questions. Remember, you will be conducting research to answer a research question, not picking a topic. The question should be answerable and the question should be a real one. That is, the answer should be really open to question, not necessarily obvious. Your paper proposal is to be distributed and presented to the class. Each member of the class is responsible for reading and offering critical commentary (hopefully constructive) on each other's paper proposals.

The most important part of this course is conducting the research. A segment of each seminar meeting from week 6 through week 15 will be devoted to updating the class on the progress of your research and addressing any questions that you might have about your project. You will present the a preliminary and then completed versions of your paper in the last few weeks of the class. These presentations should be in the format that would be used at a professional conference. You will have 10 to 12 minutes for each presentation. These will be followed by questions from the class. The presentation, questioning, and response to questioning will all be taken into account in your grade. Don't sit back and just observe.

CLASS READING

There are five books that I have ordered for this class. Others may be added, but the rest of the reading will largely be of journal articles. The five required books are:

- Campbell, Colin, Bert A. Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevige, 2008. *The George W. Bush Legacy*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York, Cambridge.
- Campbell, James E. 1997. *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections, 2nd edition*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 2000. *Class and Party in American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, Michael J. Malbin. 2007. *Vital Statistics on Congress 2005-2006*. Washington, DC: National Journal.

The assigned reading have been tentatively spread out over weeks 6 through 15, though these can be altered depending on the selection of research questions for your macropolitics papers. You are also strongly encouraged to seek out additional research on these topics and discuss them with the class in the meeting relevant to the research topic or question.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Week 1, August 28

Introduction to Macropolitics.

Five Examples

1. The American Campaign
2. Partisan Realignments: In Voting and in Macropartisanship
David Mayhew's *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*
James E. Campbell, 2006. "Party Systems and Realignments in the United States, 1868-2004," *Social Science History*, v.30, issue 3 (Fall), pp. 359-86
James E. Campbell, 2006. "Explaining Politics, Not Polls: Macropartisanship from Recalibrated ANES Data," Presented at the Annual Meeting of the New England Political Science Association, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Sheraton Harborside, May 5-6, 2006.
3. Early Intra-Party Unity and Election Results
James E. 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.
4. Swing Voters and Election Outcomes
James E. Campbell, forthcoming 2008. "Do Swing Voters Swing Elections?" *The Swing Voter in American Politics*, edited by William G. Mayer (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007) chapter 7.
5. Election Forecasting
James E. Campbell, 2007. "Do "Evaluating U.S. Presidential Election Forecasts and Forecasting Equations," International Symposium in Forecasting, New York, NY, June 2007.
The 2006 Midterm Election (APSA Roundtable Presentation)

Week 2, September 4

Some Examples in Presidential Studies

Read: Campbell, Colin, Bert A. Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevige, 2008. *The George W. Bush Legacy*, (Washington, DC: CQ Press).

Week 3, September 11

The Macro Polity I

Read: Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity*, pp.1-151.

Week 4, September 18

The Macro Polity II

Read: Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity*, pp.152-283.
Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity*, pp.284-448.

Week 5, September 25

The Macro Polity III

Read: Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity*, pp.284-448.

Presentations of Research Designs

Week 6, October 2

What Explains Interelection Seat Change?

Read: Campbell, James E. 1997. *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections*, 2nd edition. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky) and

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

Week 7, October 9

Explaining Change in the Public's Thermostatic Policy Mood

James A. Stimson, 2004. *Tides of Consent*. New York: Cambridge University Press, chapters 2 & 3 pp.23-95.

Has America Become More Polarized Because of Growing Income Disparity?

Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 71-113.

Has America Become More Polarized Because of Growing Religious Divide?

Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders. 1998. "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (August), pp. 634-652

Week 8, October 16

Has the Class-Division of American Politics Increased and, if so, Why?

Paul R. Abramson, 1978. "Class Voting in the 1976 Presidential Election," *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 40, No. 4 (November), pp. 1066-1072.

Jeffrey M. Stonecash, 2000. *Class and Party in American Politics*, Boulder, CO: Westview, chapter 5 (pp. 87-121).

Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Mark D. Brewer, R. Eric Petersen, Mary P. McGuire, and Lori Beth Way, 2000. "Class and Party: Secular Realignment and the Survival of Democrats outside the South," *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 53, No. 4 (Dec., 2000), pp. 731-752.

What Effects Declarations of Presidential Mandates?

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

Week 9, October 23

Does the Economy (and Presidential Approval) Have Weaker Electoral Effects in Open Seat Presidential Races?

- Lee Sigelman, 1979. "Presidential Popularity and Presidential Elections," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter), pp. 532-534.
- Richard Brody and Lee Sigelman, 1983. "Presidential Popularity and Presidential Elections: An Update and Extension," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Autumn), pp. 325-328.
- Robert S. Erikson. 1990. "Economic Conditions and The Presidential Vote," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 567-573
- Nadeau, Richard and Michael S. Lewis-Beck. 2001. "National Economic Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 63:159-181.
- Alan I. Abramowitz, 2007. "Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Time for Change Model," Presented at the 27th Annual International Symposium on Forecasting, New York, NY, June 24-27, 2007
- Fair vs. Campbell on Pollyvote at <http://www.forecastingprinciples.com/Political/>
- James E. Campbell, 2007. "Evaluating U.S. Presidential Election Forecasts and Forecasting Equations," manuscript.

Week 10, October 30

Why does Turnout Vary?

- Michael P. McDonald; Samuel L. Popkin, 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (December), pp. 963-974.
- Paul R. Abramson and John H. Aldrich, 1982. "The Decline of Electoral Participation in America," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (September), pp. 502-521.
- Samuel C. Patterson; Gregory A. Caldeira, 1983. "Getting Out the Vote: Participation in Gubernatorial Elections," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (September) pp. 675-689.
- Carol A. Cassel and Robert C. Luskin, 1988. "Simple Explanations of Turnout Decline," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), pp. 1321-1330.
- Warren E. Miller, 1992. "The Puzzle Transformed: Explaining Declining Turnout," *Political Behavior*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (March), pp. 1-43.
[Variation in other political activities?]

Week 11, November 6

The Legislative Effects of Divided Government

- David W. Mayhew, 2005, *Divided We Govern, Second Edition*. New Haven: Yale, pp. 175-199 (also tables 4.1 and 5.2).
- George C. Edwards III, Andrew Barrett, and Jeffrey Peake, 1997. "The Legislative Impact of Divided Government," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April), pp. 545-563.
- Gregory R. Thorson, 1998. "Divided Government and the Passage of Partisan Legislation, 1947-1990," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 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*, Vol. 25, No. 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*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (December), pp. 853-870.
- David R. Jones, 2001. "Party Polarization and Legislative Gridlock," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (March), pp. 125-141.
- David Epstein, Ida Pagter Kristensen, and Sharyn O'Halloran, 2008. "Conditional Presidential Leadership: Pivotal Players, Gridlock, and Delegation." In Bert A. Rockman and Richard Waterman eds. *Presidential Leadership: The Vortex of Power*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.81-104.

Week 12, November 13

The Occurrence 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*, Vol. 64, No. 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.

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.

Week 13, November 20

The Dynamics of Presidential and Congressional Job Approval Ratings

- James A. Stimson, 1976. "Public Support for American Presidents: A Cyclical Model," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring), pp. 1-21.
- Samuel Kernell, 1978. "Explaining Presidential Popularity. How Ad Hoc Theorizing, Misplaced Emphasis, and Insufficient Care in Measuring One's Variables Refuted Common Sense and Led Conventional Wisdom Down the Path of Anomalies," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (June), pp. 506-522.
- Michael B. MacKuen, 1983. "Political Drama, Economic Conditions, and the Dynamics of Presidential Popularity," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (May), pp. 165-192.
- Charles W. Ostrom, Jr., and Dennis M. Simon, 1985. "Promise and Performance: A Dynamic Model of Presidential Popularity," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (June), pp. 334-358.
- George C. Edwards III, William Mitchell, and Reed Welch, 1995. "Explaining Presidential Approval: The Significance of Issue Salience," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (February), pp. 108-134.
- Brian Newman, 2002. "Bill Clinton's Approval Ratings: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (December), pp. 781-804.

Presentations of Preliminary Findings

Week 14, November 27

Does Party Control Effect the Unemployment, Inflation, and/or Growth in the Economy?

- Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., 1977. "Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (December), pp. 1467-1487.
- Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., 1979. "The Mass Public and Macroeconomic Performance: The Dynamics of Public Opinion Toward Unemployment and Inflation," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (November), pp. 705-731
- William R. Keech, 1980. "Elections and Macroeconomic Policy Optimization," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (May), pp. 345-367
- Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., 1986. "Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policies and Outcomes in the United States," *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2, *Papers and Proceedings of the Ninety-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association* (May), pp. 66-70.
- Paul Whiteley, 1988. "Party Incumbency and Economic Growth in the United States: 1929 to 1984," *Political Behavior*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter), pp. 293-315

Week 15, December 4

Does Policy affect Income Inequality?

Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr. and Christopher Dennis, 1988. "Income Distribution in the United States," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (June), pp. 467-490.

Nathan J. Kelly. 2005. "Political Choice, Public Policy, and Distributional Outcomes," *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 49, n. 4, (October), pp. 865-80.

What Explains the Frequency of Presidential Vetoes?

Jong R. Lee, 1975. "Presidential Vetoes from Washington to Nixon," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May, 1975), pp. 522-546.

Gary W. Copeland, 1983. "When Congress and the President Collide: Why Presidents Veto Legislation," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (August), pp. 696-710.

Todd G. Shields; Chi Huang, 1995. "Presidential Vetoes: An Event Count Model," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (September), pp. 559-572.

John B. Gilmour, 2002. "Institutional and Individual Influences on the President's Veto," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Feb., 2002), pp. 198-218.

Final Meeting, December 11

Final Presentations (Paper due)

