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Political Science 904
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Fall Semester 2019
Office Hours: T+Th 4-5 p.m.,
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413 North Hall

CLASSICS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce the core questions, concepts, and theories of the field through the "classic" works. I developed this seminar in response to graduate students who believed that too many graduate courses in American politics had lost sight of the forest by examining the trees in too much detail (or in some cases, by putting parts of each branch and leaf under a microscope). Advanced seminars typically focus on cutting edge research and often assume the reader is familiar with the theoretical debates and underlying issues. However, most graduate students have not had the opportunity to read the original works that motivate contemporary research. This seminar will provide that opportunity. A related issue concerns the methodology employed in "classic" and current research. Many first-year students (and other advanced students who have not had statistics) have difficulty plowing through the technical work that is assigned in many American politics seminars. The onslaught of numbers, equations, and formal models from the *APSR* or *AJPS* can be pretty daunting. The classic works assigned here rarely employ any math more sophisticated than descriptive statistics or simple correlation. While I believe it is important to master the more technical approaches, a prior requirement is to understand the important theories and issues in the field.

While the primary aim of the seminar is to introduce you to the central questions and concepts in the field, we will spend some time each week developing your research skills. We will examine the methods employed by the authors, discuss whether the methods were appropriate for answering the question at hand, and determine how the methodological choices may have helped shape the research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) The quality of this seminar depends on participation from all of you. Everyone is expected to read the required readings by the day of the seminar and be willing and able to participate meaningfully in discussions. It is essential to have a good understanding of each reading, not only individually but also how they fit together. Before each seminar you may find it useful to write down an outline of the questions and issues that you see as central (and make sure to bring these up, even if discussion seems to be heading in a different direction).

2) You will write six short papers (two to three pages) that critically review the readings for a given week. You will not be required to do outside reading for these papers. The papers should be heavy on the critique and light on the review of the various articles and books.

3) You will be responsible for a presentation, during a week of your choice, of the research that was spawned by a given classic (or set of classics for that week). You also will be responsible for preparing an annotated bibliography for that week of the subsequent work on the topic (about 10-12 pages). Your presentation, which should be about 10-15 minutes, should outline the main directions of research, a critique of the body of work, and remaining important questions on the topic.

4) There will be a take-home final examination. We will discuss the format of the exam in class.

COURSE EVALUATION

Seminar participation is 20%, the bibliography and presentation is 20% of your grade, the short papers are 36% (6% each), and the final exam is 25% of the final grade (which adds up to 101%, but that is close enough!).

COURSE READINGS

The following books are available for purchase in the University of Wisconsin bookstore:

Mayhew, David. Congress: The Electoral Connection. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2nd edition, 2004 (the 1974 edition is fine as well if you already own a copy or find it in a used bookstore).
Dahl, Robert. Preface to Democratic Theory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.
Cardozo, Benjamin. The Nature of the Judicial Process. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921.

The other readings will be available on the course Canvas site.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

September 9th – Studying American Politics (We will discuss the following readings in the first seminar meeting).

Robert Dahl, "The Behaviorist Approach," APSR 60:4 (December, 1961): 763-72.
William Riker, "Political Theory and the Art of Heresthetics," The State of the Discipline, Ada Finifter ed., 47-67; and conclusion to The Art of Political Manipulation, 1986, 142-52.
Richard Fenno, "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics," APSR 80:1 (March, 1986): 3-15.
Theodore J. Lowi, "The State in Political Science: How We Become What We Study." APSR 86:1 (March, 1992): 1-7.

II. Political Institutions

A. September 16th – The President

Corwin, Edward, The President: Office and Powers, 1787-1957, 1957, 3-30.
Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power, 1960, 3-79.
Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," originally published in Trans-Action 4:2 (December, 1966).
James David Barber, "The Interplay of Presidential Character and Style: A Paradigm and Five Illustrations," from Aaron Wildavsky, Perspectives on the Presidency, 1975, 62-91.

B. September 23th – Congress

David Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection, 2004 (1974, 1st edition), entire book.
Herbert Asher, "The Learning of Legislative Norms," American Political Science Review 67 (June, 1973): 499-513.

Samuel P. Huntington, "Congressional Responses to the Twentieth Century," in Congress and America's Future, 1965, 5-31.

Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, "Constituency Influence in Congress," APSR 57 (1963): 45-57.

C. September 30th – The Courts

Benjamin Cardozo, The Nature of the Judicial Process, 1921, entire book.

Walter Murphy, Elements of Judicial Strategy, 1964, pp. 1-90.

Alexander Bickel, "Establishment and General Justification of Judicial Review," from The Least Dangerous Branch, 1962.

Robert Dahl, "Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy Maker," Journal of Public Law 6 (Fall, 1957): 279-95.

D. October 7th – The Bureaucracy

Norton E. Long, "Power and Administration," Public Administration Review 9 (Autumn, 1949): 257-64.

James Q. Wilson, "The Bureaucracy Problem," The Public Interest 6 (Winter, 1967).

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," Public Administration Review 19 (Spring, 1959): 79-88.

Herbert Kaufman, The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior, 1960, pp. 3-22, 203-41.

William A. Niskanen, "Bureaucrats and Politicians," Journal of Law and Economics 18 (1975): 617-43.

Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," APSR 63:3 (September, 1969) 689-718.

III. Parties and Groups

A. October 14th – Pluralism

Federalist Paper #10.

Robert Dahl, Preface to Democracy Theory, 1956, entire book.

October 21st – Pluralism and the Collective Action Problem

Earl Latham, "The Group Basis of Politics: Notes for a Theory," APSR 46:2 (June, 1952): 376-97.

Arthur Bentley, The Process of Government, 1908, pp.201-222.

Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, 1965, 1-51 (you may skip 22-33 and read the "non-technical summary"), 111-67.

October 28th – Critics of Pluralism

E.E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People, 1960, entire book.

Theodore Lowi, "The Public Philosophy: Interest-Group Liberalism," APSR 61:1 (March, 1967): 5-24.

Theodore Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," World Politics 16:4 (July, 1964): 677-715.

B. November 4th – Political Parties

Schattschneider, E.E., Party Government, 1942, chapters 1+4.

"Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System," APSA Committee on Political Parties, APSR 46:3, Part 2 (September, 1950): 15-96.

V.O. Key, Southern Politics, 1949, 298-311, 386-405.

C. November 11th – Partisan Realignment

V.O. Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," Journal of Politics 17:1 (February, 1955): 3-18.

V.O. Key, "Secular Realignment and the Party System." Journal of Politics 21:2 (May, 1959): 198-210.

Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics, 1970, pp. 1-70, 175-93.

James L. Sundquist, Dynamics of the Party System, 1983 (rev. edition), 1-49.

D. November 18th – Race and Politics

Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy 1944, pp. xli-iv, 26-80, 1065-70.

V.O. Key, Southern Politics (1949), pp 533-54, 644-63.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America 1967, pp.vii-xii, 34-84.

Mario Barrera, Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality (1979), pp. 174-219.

IV. The Individual in Politics

A. November 25th – Voting

Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign, 1954, pages tba.

Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, 1957, 3-49, 114-141, 295-300.

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, The American Voter, 1960, Chapter 2 "Theoretical Orientation," pp. 18-37 from the unabridged version and pp. 3-48, 269-90, from the abridged version.

V.O. Key, The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960, 1966, vii-xv, 1-28.

B. December 2nd – Participation

Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality, 1972, 1-55, 286-343.

Harold Lasswell, Power and Personality, 1948, 20-58.

Joseph Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, 1966, 1-36, 194-211.

Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," 1963, 3-40.

V. December 9th – Who Governs?

Robert Dahl, Who Governs?, 1961, 1-8, 163-65, 184-89, 223-301, 311-25.

C. Wright Mills, "The Structure of Power in American Society," British Journal of Sociology 9:1 (May,

1958): 29-41.

Bachrach and Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," APSR (December, 1962): 947-52.

The week on Public Opinion had to be cut because we lost one week because of a shorter semester than the last time I taught the course! Here are the readings for those of you who are interested:

Walter Lippmann, from The Essential Lippmann: A Political Philosophy for Liberal Democracy, 1982, 89-101.

V.O. Key, Public Opinion and American Democracy, 1960, 3-18, 411-31, 535-58.

Prothro and Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," JOP 22 (1960): 276-94.

Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David E. Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent, 1964.

Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," APSR, 58 (1964): 361-82.