



## POLS 563: Seminar in American Politics Spring 2021

Professor: Jongho Lee, Ph.D.                      Meeting Time: Wednesday 3:30 – 6 PM  
Office: Morgan 412                                  Meeting Place: Morgan 312  
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Office Hours\*: T & TH 12:30 – 1:30 PM *in person or via Google Meet*  
W 1 – 3 PM *via Email or Google Meet*

\* It would be best if you could let me know via email in advance whether you want to meet virtually or in person. The best way to reach me is via email.

**Note:** *We are expected to follow the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the university and thus everyone should wear a face covering at all times in the classroom. In case in-person classes are canceled due to a spike in COVID-19 cases or any unforeseen circumstances beyond our control, the class will be immediately shifted online. This will inevitably result in changes in the course requirements and schedule, among others. Efforts will be made, however, to minimize any negative effects of changes in the delivery mode of the course.*

### Course Overview

This course is a survey of some of the literature on major research topics in the field of American politics. Research on American politics is too enormous to be covered in one course. Therefore, rather than taking an encyclopedic approach to the study of American politics or attempting to provide a comprehensive treatment of the field, the course is designed to selectively introduce you to some of the important works that illuminate the question of how American democracy works.

Democracy is often understood as a political system *of the people, by the people, and for the people* (to borrow words from Abraham Lincoln). Perhaps, the United States of America best epitomizes the spirit of democracy. But a growing number of people openly declare that American democracy is broken. To understand the sources of the problem, we will begin by examining the politics of ordinary citizens—a common definition of political behavior. After all, “we, the people” are the ultimate foundation of American democracy as demanded by the principle of popular rule. We will particularly learn about how ordinary citizens form opinions on issues of the day and develop political preferences.

We will then move onto a discussion on institutions that connect ordinary citizens to political processes. We will look closely at institutions that shape and are shaped by the wants and needs of the people—most notably, political parties, Congress, and Presidency. In so doing, I hope that this course will provide a solid ground on which you may launch more rigorous inquiry into the study of American politics.

## Course Objectives

The primary objective of the course is three-fold:

- To help you acquire an advanced understanding of the concerns, issues, and controversies that have been the sources of inquiry on American politics.
- To improve and refine your analytical skills by acquainting you with various approaches and methods used to study American political behavior and institutions.
- To guide you to think about and develop your own research programs so that you can start to make the transition from a consumer to a producer of knowledge.

## Course Format

The format of the course will be hybrid, but essentially a *seminar*. Each class will be divided into two sessions. There will be a 10-to-15-minute break between the sessions.

**Session I (approximately 75 minutes)**—I will begin the session with a 45-minute introduction to the topic at hand. I will then turn the discussion over to the student presenter, who will walk us through the readings for a given week. Each week there will be one presenter—who will give a 20 to 30 minutes long presentation of the week's readings and lead the class in a discussion of those readings.

Every student in the class will serve as the presenter at one point during the semester. Depending on the number of students enrolled, however, you could be asked to sign up to lead the class discussion more than once. The presenter may structure the discussion by topic or reading-by-reading, but, when applicable, should address the following questions:

- What are the objectives of the study?
- What are the main research questions and hypotheses?
- What is the theory (How are the hypotheses derived)?
- What are the main findings? In particular, what is the evidence used to support the hypotheses?
- What are the implications of the research?
- What are the shortcomings of the study?

**Session II (approximately 60 minutes)**—The remaining portion of class will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of selected questions or issues from the week's readings as an extension of the preceding session and more importantly, new research questions and agenda on the week's topic that could serve as a spring board for your own research program. Each and every student is expected to propose a minimum of one (but ideally two) substantive or methodological question(s) for class discussion.

## Course Requirements and Grading

### Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

Class attendance is required. *Absences due to COVID-19 symptoms or other COVID-19 related issues (including quarantine) will be excused. Please be sure to notify me of your COVID-19 related absences via email.*

Active participation in class discussion is also expected. ***Please come prepared to discuss the assigned readings each week.*** Class participation will be evaluated at the discretion of the instructor. This component is worth 10% of your overall grade in this class.

### Presentation(s) (10%)

You will be asked to serve as the presenter at one point over the course of the term.

### Discussion Questions (10%)

Each week you are expected to formulate and submit a minimum of one question suitable for class discussion. Please post to the discussion board on the class website at Western Online by **11:59 PM on *the Tuesday of each week*** any question on the topic of that week you find interesting and important.

### Exams—Mid-term (20%) and Final (20%)

Over the course of the semester, there will be two in-class exams. The exams will include essay questions. Each exam will be based on lectures, readings, and class discussions and worth 20% of your overall grade. The final exam will *not* be cumulative.

### Term Paper (30%)

You are expected to write a 15 page, double-spaced, research paper that primarily reviews the literature on a specific topic of your choice in the areas of American political institutions and behavior. The paper should focus on specific questions and give what you think the best answer to the questions drawing on the relevant, up-to-date literature. Please submit your paper to **“Assignments”** under **“Assessments”** on the class website at Western Online no later than 11:59 PM on **Friday, April 30.**

To help you complete the research paper in a timely manner, you are encouraged to post to the discussion board a schematic outline—one or two pages long—of your paper no later than 11:59 PM on **Friday, March 19**. The schematic outline should include your research questions (and hypotheses) and a brief, preliminary review of the literature relevant to your research questions.

You will receive feedback on the outline from the other members of the seminar so that you may revise your work as needed. The outline of your paper will *not* be graded.

### **Grading Scale**

90-100%	=	A
80-89%	=	B
70-79%	=	C
60-69%	=	D
Below 60%	=	F

## **Course Policies**

### **Course Rules**

- As a rule, a make-up exam will only be permitted in cases of documented medical or personal emergencies.
- Please come to class on time and stay for the entire class period. Cell phones should be turned off before arriving in class.
- Please treat your fellow students with respect.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Please visit <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> for details.

### **Academic Honesty**

Please visit <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php> for details.

### **Students with Disabilities**

“In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability

Resource Center at 309-298-2512, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.”

### **Title IX Policy**

“University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

[http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.”

### **Course Materials**

There are five required texts for the course:

1. Zaller, John R. 1992. The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. New York: Cambridge University Press.  
**ISBN 0521407869**
2. Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.  
**ISBN 9780872894679**
3. Aldrich, John. 2011. Why Parties?: A Second Look. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.  
**ISBN 9780226012742**
4. Mayhew, David. 2004. Congress: The Electoral Connection (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.  
**ISBN 9780300105872**
5. Kernell, Samuel. 2007. Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.  
**ISBN 9781568028996**

A number of articles and book chapters will also be assigned for the course. These readings should be treated as though they are required texts. Occasionally, *additional readings* could be assigned. Additional readings will be announced in class at least one

week in advance. All supplementary readings will be placed on the class website at Western Online.

- \* Class information will be posted and regularly updated on the class website at Western Online: Go to <https://WesternOnline.wiu.edu> and log in with your ECOM username and password.

## Course Outline

- \* Please note that the following schedule is subject to change.

### Week 1 (Jan 20): Course Introduction

### Week 2 (Jan 27): Public Opinion--Its Origins and Content

Zaller, John R. 1992. The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. New York: Cambridge University Press. ***Chaps 1-5.***

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. ***Pp. 75-89 & 141-66.***

### Week 3 (Feb 3): Reasoning and Information Processing

Sullivan, John, Wendy M. Rahn, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2002. "The Contours of Political Psychology: Situating Research on Political Information Processing." In Thinking About Political Psychology, ed. James H. Kuklinski. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Quatrone, George A., and Amos Tversky. 1988. "Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice." American Political Science Review 82:719-36.

Wilson, Timothy D., and Jonathan W. Schooler. 1991. "Thinking Too Much: Introspection Can Reduce the Quality of Preferences and Decisions." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 60:181-92.

Kuklinski, James H., and Paul J. Quirk. 2000. "Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion." In Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality, ed. Arthur Lupia, Mathew D. McCubbins, and Samuel L. Popkin. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. ***Pp. 111-40.***

#### **Week 4 (Feb 10): Attitude Formation and Change**

Zaller, John R. 1992. The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. New York: Cambridge University Press. **Chaps 6-7 & 11-12.**

Zaller, John R. 1998. "Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science." PS: Political Science & Politics 31:182-9.

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. **Pp. 90-110.**

#### **Week 5 (Feb 17): Party Identification and Issue Preferences**

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. The American Voter Revisited. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. **Chaps 6 & 7.**

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. **Pp. 221-318.**

#### **Week 6 (Feb 24): Biology and Politics**

Alford, John R., and John R. Hibbing. 2004. "The Origin of Politics: An Evolutionary Theory of Political Behavior." Perspectives on Politics 2:707-23.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" American Political Science Review 99:153-167.

Oxley, Douglas R., Kevin B. Smith, John R. Alford, Matthew V. Hibbing, Jennifer L. Miller, Mario Scalora, Peter K. Hatemi, and John R. Hibbing. 2008. "Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits." Science 321:1667-70.

Hatemi, Peter, John R. Alford, John R. Hibbing, Nicholas G. Martin, and Lindon J. Eaves. 2009. "Is There a 'Party' in Your Genes?" Political Research Quarterly 62:584-600.

Alford, John R., Peter K. Hatemi, John R. Hibbing, Nicholas G. Martin, and Lindon J. Eaves. 2011. "The Politics of Mate Choice." Journal of Politics 73:362-79.

Smith, Kevin, John R. Alford, Peter K. Hatemi, Lindon J. Eaves, Carolyn Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2012. "Biology, Ideology, and Epistemology: How Do We Know Political Attitudes Are Inherited and Why Should We Care?" American Journal of Political Science 56:17-33.

**Week 7 (Mar 3): Mid-term exam**

**Week 8 (Mar 10): No Classes**

**Week 9 (Mar 17): Political Participation**

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. **Chaps 9-12.**

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. **Pp.23-74.**

Fowler, James, Laura A. Baker, and Christopher T. Dawes. 2008. "Genetic Variation in Political Participation." American Political Science Review 102:233-48.

**Week 10 (Mar 24): Voting Behavior**

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. **Pp. 167-220.**

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. The American Voter Revisited. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. **Chaps 1-5.**

**Week 11 (Mar 31): Political Behavior of Ethnic and Racial Minorities**

Leighley, Jan, and Arnold Vedlitz. 1999. "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations." Journal of Politics 61:1092-1114.

Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." American Political Science Review 95:589-602.

Gay, Claudine. 2004. "Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes." American Political Science Review 98:547-62.

Alvarez, R. Michael, and Lisa Garcia Bedolla. 2003. "The Foundations of Latino Voter Partisanship: Evidence from the 2000 Election." Journal of Politics 65:31-49.

Leal, David L., Stephen A. Nuño, Jongho Lee, and Rodolfo O. de la Garza. 2008. "Latinos, Immigration, and the 2006 Midterm Elections." PS: Political Science and Politics 41:309-17.



Barreto, Matt A., Luis R. Fraga, Sylvia Manzano, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Gary M. Segura. 2008. "Should They Dance with the One Who Brung 'Em?": Latinos and the 2008 Presidential Election. PS: Political Science and Politics 41:753-60.

### **Week 12 (Apr 7): Political Parties—Their Origins**

The Federalist, No. 10 (by James Madison)

See: [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed\\_10.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_10.html).

Aldrich, John. 2011. Why Parties?: A Second Look. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. **Chaps 1-5**.

### **Week 13 (Apr 14): Party System Change**

Aldrich, John. 2011. Why Parties?: A Second Look. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. **Chaps 6-9**.

Niemi, Richard, Herbert Weisberg, and David Kimball, eds. 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. **Pp. 319-98**.

### **Week 14 (Apr 21): Congress**

Mayhew, David. 2004. Congress: The Electoral Connection (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lee, Frances E. 2008. "Dividers, Not Uniters: Presidential Leadership and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004." Journal of Politics 70:914-28.

### **Week 15 (Apr 28): Presidency**

Kernell, Samuel. 2007. Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

**\* The research paper is due on Friday, Apr 30.**

**\* Final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5, at 3 PM.**