Professor Greg Hager  
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Office Hours: Tues. 8:45-10:00, Wed. 1:30-3:00, and by appointment.

Description:
This course is designed as a broad overview of mainstream political science research on the three branches of the U.S. system of government: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. Since there could be -- and are -- courses on any one of these institutions, I have necessarily been quite selective in the topics and readings to be covered. For the most part, topics were selected that have generated the most research interest over time and/or currently.

Each seminar session will focus on a critical discussion of the assigned readings, with the instructor as another discussant. The instructor will, as necessary, place the readings in the context of other research we did not read, provide background information, and answer any questions, but the primary value of this course comes from student participation. For each week's readings, be prepared to discuss -- at least-- the following questions:

1. What "big picture" research questions are these readings trying to answer? For example, such questions for the first week could be "Why are political institutions necessary? Do institutions matter? If so, how?" Etc.
2. More specifically, what is the author trying to explain? In other words, what are the dependent and independent variables? Given the research question, do these variables make sense?
3. What theoretical approaches do authors utilize? What theoretical assumptions are being made? Is the theory appropriate to the research question? What other theoretical perspectives would be appropriate?
4. Are the research methodologies appropriate? Why or why not? How could they be improved?
5. If an article makes use of data, is it appropriate? Why or why not? What would the ideal data for this research question be? Could the research be replicated using different data?
6. Most importantly, so what? Does this research have any implications for governing, democracy, representation, or anything that we should actually care about?
7. Finally, based on these readings, what suggestions can you make for future research? Specifically, what are the unresolved questions in this area of inquiry?

Requirements:
Grades will be based on three elements: class participation, three short papers, and a final exam.

1. Participation (20%): Besides the normal aspects of participation of regularly showing up and taking part in class discussion, you are also required to turn in questions for each week's readings. These can be questions about things you did not understand from the readings. They can be questions about the implications of the readings. They can be questions about how the readings do or do not fit together. They can be questions on the topic not even addressed by the readings. The most important thing is that your questions be thoughtful ones. You do not necessarily have to know the answer to questions you ask, but you should be able to discuss them at least.
Questions for the upcoming topic are due by Tuesday at 12:30, at the latest. You should turn in at least two questions for each weekly topic.

2. Three Short Papers (15% each): You are to turn in three short (4 - 7 pages) papers on questions about the readings. Due dates for the papers will be spaced throughout the semester. The purpose of the assignment is to encourage you to think about course material; no outside readings or research are required. I will provide the questions about a week before papers are due.

3. Final Exam (35%)

Readings:

The following books have been ordered and should be available in the bookstores.


There will also be various articles and book chapters to read. Photocopies of all the readings for the upcoming week will be available in a box in the graduate student mailbox area (Patterson 1643). Please be considerate and return readings to the box quickly. For each topic, I have also listed further readings. These are just suggestions should anyone have a particular interest in an area; you do not have to read them for the class.

Abbreviations:

*APSR=American Political Science Review; AJPS=American Journal of Political Science; JOP=Journal of Politics; LSQ=Legislative Studies Quarterly; APQ=American Politics Quarterly; PRQ=Political Research Quarterly; PSQ=Political Science Quarterly.*

1. Sept. 2

An Overview of Institutions

Shepsle and Bonchek: *Analyzing Politics*, ch. 8-10.

Further Reading (most useful readings indicated by *):


2. Sept. 9

**Representation I**

James Madison, *Federalist Papers 10 and 51.*


3. Sept. 16

**Representation II**

Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics:* ch. 2-5, 7.

Further reading:

* Loewenberg, Gerhard, Samuel C. Patterson, and Malcolm E. Jewell (editors). 1985. *Handbook of Legislative Research.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Pr. This is a 700+ page compilation of review articles originally appearing in *LSQ* on most topics of legislative research.

4. Sept. 23

**The Electoral Connection**


Further Reading:


5. Sept. 30

**Congress and the Bureaucracy**

Shepsle and Bonchek, ch. 13.


Further Reading:

### 6. Oct. 7  Legislative Organization

Aldrich, *Why Parties?*: ch. 7
Fenno, *Congressmen in Committees*: ch. 1.
Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*: ch. 5
Knott and Miller, *Reforming Bureaucracy*: ch. 7

Further Reading:

### 7. Oct. 14  Legislative Decision Making

Shepsle and Bonchek: ch. 6, 11, 12.
Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*: ch. 6.
Kingdon, *Congressmen's Voting Decisions* (3rd edition): ch. 1, 9, 10
Hager and Talbert, *Look for the Party Label* (convention paper)

Further Reading:
8. Oct. 21  

**Judicial Behavior: Factors that Influence Decisionmaking**

Shepsle and Bonchek: ch. 15.
Segal and Spaeth, *Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model*: ch. 2.

Further Reading (on the courts’ role in the U.S. structure of government):

Further Reading (on decision making):

9. Oct. 28  

**Judicial Behavior: Factors that Influence Decisionmaking**

**Attributes and Attitudes**
Segal and Spaeth, *Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model*: ch. 5, 6.

**Interest Groups**
Further Reading (Attributes and Attitudes):

Further Reading (Interest Groups):

Further Reading (Public Opinion):

Further Reading (Integrated Models):

Further Reading (Public Opinion):

10. Nov. 4  
**Judicial Behavior: Factors that Influence Decisionmaking**

**Public Opinion**

**Integrated Models**

**Role Orientations**

Additional Topics and Readings on the Judiciary -- not required for PS680 but may be useful for general exams.

**Role Orientations**
Institutional Constraints

Impact, Compliance, and Implementation

11. Nov. 11

**Divided Government**


Further Reading:

12. Nov. 18

**Bureaucracy**

Further Reading:

13. Nov. 25

**Overviews of / Studying the Presidency**


Light, 1982. *The President's Agenda*: ch. 9

Further Reading:

14. Dec. 2

**Presidential Influence and the Public**


Further Reading:

15. Dec. 9

**Review and Prospects**