**Course Description:** This course provides an introduction and overview of the literature on the American political system and its principal institutions and processes. This is **NOT** a course on how American Government is structured or works. Nor is it a course on contemporary American politics. It is assumed that students bring to the course a basic familiarity with these subjects. Rather, this course is concerned with research on American politics. It is intended both to introduce students to the main theoretical currents and controversies in the literature on American politics and to survey some of the important research trends within the various sub-fields of this largest field of political science. Attention throughout the course will focus on both the substance of research and the methodologies (broadly defined) by which it was produced.

**Requirements and Grades:** The course is designed as a seminar. Consequently students are expected to share fully in the burden of seminar discussion. Although there will be an occasional lecture by the professor, the bulk of the seminar will involve directed discussions of the readings and of seminar papers. Requirements for the course include:

1) regular seminar participation (20% of grade);
2) two 8-10 page seminar papers (25% each); and
3) a comprehensive take-home final examination (30%).

**Policy on Incompletes:**
Students are expected to complete the course on time. Incompletes will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances where the student is unable to complete the work for reasons beyond his/her control. If a grade of ‘I’ is assigned the student must complete all work before the beginning of end of the Spring 2005 semester. Any work not completed by then will receive a grade of E and be averaged with the student's other work in computing an overall course grade.

**Seminar Papers**
Seminar papers shall consist of critical bibliographic essays. They should focus on the literature for one of the seminar topics (to be assigned in class) and should summarize, synthesize, and critically, but sympathetically, evaluate the literature for the week. A bibliographic essay is **NOT** a book report or even a series of book reports stuck together. Rather, the essay should focus on the literature as a whole and addresses such questions as: What are the principal questions addressed in the literature? What are the principal approaches, theoretical and methodological, which have been used to address these questions? What are the principal conclusions reached in the literature? What are the main points of agreement and the principal areas of disagreement in the literature? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the literature?
The "literature" for your topic should include all of the required readings plus a survey of the optional readings for the topic and the relevant literature that has been published on the topic since 1990 in the three leading journals in the discipline: the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and *The Journal of Politics*. A list of the relevant articles from those journals should be appended to your paper.

Seminar papers must not exceed 10 pages in length. They must be typed, double spaced, with 1" margins and a font no smaller than that used on this syllabus. They should be stapled in the upper left hand corner -- no plastic binders or paper clips, please. **Papers should be put in my mail box in Rm 315 Social Sciences by 5 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the class in which the paper will be discussed. Students also must submit an electronic copy of the paper to the professor as a PDF file.** The instructor will put the paper on the class web site ([www.u.arizona.edu/~mishler/courses.htm](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~mishler/courses.htm)) where other students in the seminar are required to read it before class.

**Readings:** Readings for each topic are indicated in the outline below. All required books are available for purchase at the university bookstore, although in many cases cheaper copies can be bought on-line at Amazon.com or other similar site. Used copies of most books also are available. Most of these books are classics, however, and probably should be part of your permanent collection. Copies of all articles required in the course either are available through JSTOR or are on reserve in a file cabinet in Social Science 314.

Books available for purchase include:

- Douglas Arnold, *Logic of Congressional Action*
- Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*
- Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*
- David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*
- Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*
- Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public*

Students with little or no background in American politics may want to read a standard undergraduate textbook on American politics in conjunction with the course. Among the better texts available are:

- John Aldrich et al., *American Government: People, Institutions, and Policies* and
- Karen O’Conner and Larry Sabato, *American Government: Continuity and Change*

**Abbreviations used in Outline**

- AJPS American Journal of Political Science
- APSR American Political Science Review
- APQ American Politics Quarterly
- BJPS British Journal of Political Science
- JOP Journal of Politics
- LSQ Legislative Studies Quarterly

**Course Outline:** The course is divided into 14 topics. One topic will be covered each session. Students
are expected to have completed all required reading for a topic before that topic is discussed in class. Supplementary readings are NOT supposed to be read for this course. Rather, they are intended to help you prepare for comprehensive exams and to assist in identifying readings for your two seminar papers. The dates for each topic are tentative and may change as the seminar proceeds.

**August 23: Organizational Session – No Reading**

**August 30: Topic I: Brief History of American Politics**

**Required (Read at your convenience):**
1. Robert Dahl, "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest" *APSR* (December, 1961) [JSTOR](https://www.jstor.org/)
5. James March and Johan Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life" *APSR* (Sept, 1984) [JSTOR](https://www.jstor.org/)
6. R. Douglas Arnold, "Overtilled and Undertilled Fields of American Politics", *Political Science Quarterly* (Spring, 1982) [JSTOR](https://www.jstor.org/)

**Supplementary**
1. Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics*
2. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*
3. David Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science*
4. Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Development of American Political Science*
6. Thomas Wiegele, *Biology and the Social Sciences*
8. James March and Johan Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions*

**September 6 – Labor Day – No Class**
September 13 – Topic II: Democratic Theories of American Politics

**Required**

September 20 – Topic III: Democratic Theories of American Politics (Continued)

**Required**

**Supplementary for both Topics II and III**
2. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*
3. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*
4. Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism*
7. Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets*
8. Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism*
9. Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*
10. Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy*
11. James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, *Calculus of Consent*
12. Samuel Huntington, *The Promise of Disharmony*
September 27 – Topic IV: Political Participation

Required
1. Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, Ch. 14

Supplementary
2. Lester Milbrath and M. Lal Goel, Political Participation, 2nd ed.
3. Robert Lane, Political Life.
4. M. Margaret Conway, Political Participation in the United States, 2nd ed.
5. Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory.
6. Dennis Thompson, The Democratic Citizen.
11. William Crotty, Political Participation and American Democracy.
12. Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, Participation in America
October 4 – Topic V: Public Opinion

Required

Supplementary
October 11 – Topic VI: Elections and Voting

Required

Supplementary
2. Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Maintenance of American Politics*
6. A Campbell et al., *Elections and the Political Order*.
October 18 – Topic VII: Political Parties and Interest Groups

Required

Supplementary
1. V.O. Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*.
5. James Wilson, *Political Organizations*.
10. Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor Peoples' Movements*.
October 27 – Topic VIII: Congress

Required

Supplementary
2. Donald Matthews and James Stimson, *Yeas and Nays*.
3. Larry Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered*.
11. Steven Smith and Christopher Deering, *Committees in Congress*.
14. J. L. Sundquist, *Decline and Resurgence of Congress*
17. David Rhode, *Parties and Leaders in the Post-Reform House*
18. John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. *Congress as Public Enemy: Public Attitudes Toward American Political Institutions*
November 1 – Topic IX: The President and Bureaucracy

Required


Supplementary

2. Theodore Lowi, *The Personal President*.
3. Paul Light, *Setting the President's Agenda*.
15. Paul Brace and Barbara Hinckley, *Follow The Leader*.
17. Lester Seligman and Gary Covington, *The Coalitional Presidency*.

November 8 – Topic X: The Supreme Court

Required
3. William Mishler and Reginald Sheehan, "The Supreme Court as a Countermajoritarian Institution?" *APSR* (June, '93): 87-101 JSTOR

Supplementary
1. Herbert Jacob, *Justice in America*.
5. Alexander Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch*.
7. Martin Shapiro, *Law and Politics in the Supreme Court*.
10. Jeffrey Segal and Harold Spaeth, *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model*.
November 15 – Topic XI: Representation

Required

Supplementary
14. Richard Fenno, Homestyle

November 22 – Thanksgiving Break
November 29 – Topic XII:

TEXTBOOK APPROACHES TO AMERICAN POLITICS (*ALSO FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED*)

A selection of American Politics textbooks will be provided.

December 13 – FINAL EXAMINATION – DUE 12 NOON