

## PS 7900 -- Seminar in American Politics, Spring 2021

Class Time: M 1:30 – 4:20pm  
Classroom: Zoom-land  
Professor: Dr. Kathleen Searles  
E-mail: [ksearles@lsu.edu](mailto:ksearles@lsu.edu)  
Office: Stubbs 213  
Office Hours: Th 2-4pm; sign-up for a time slot via <https://searles-universitycollege.youcanbook.me/>

**Introduction:** Much of what political science and other disciplines consider to be true about American politics has been challenged in the last few years. This disruption makes the study of American politics today exciting, challenging, and vital. In this course we will draw on the classics as well as more recent additions to the canon to ensure we hear from a range of voices and perspectives. We will leverage this period of political turbulence in American politics to glean insights into the institutions – both political and disciplinary – that shape our understanding. We will read a small fraction of an expansive body of work, but in so doing, students will be granted a solid foundation for which to gain mastery in the subfield.

### Readings

Some of our readings are from journal articles, many are books. Where possible I have linked to the article; some pdfs are on Moodle. Access the journal via the library website or via Google Scholar. I have tried to copy chapters of texts when possible. There are some texts where the amount of material required exceeds copyright laws; these are required:

Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.

Settle, Jaime E. *Frenemies: How social media polarizes America*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting soldiers and mothers*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

~~Mansbridge, Jane J. *Beyond adversary democracy*. University of Chicago Press, 1983.~~

Hibbing, John. *The Securitarian Personality*. Oxford University Press. 2020.

White, Ismail and Chryl Laird. *Steadfast Democrats*. Princeton University Press. 2020.

### Evaluation

Final grades in this course are based on your success in 3 areas for a total of 100 points.

1. **Discussion leading (20):** Two times over the course of the semester, you will have responsibility for leading the discussion on readings and distributing

discussion questions at least 24-hours in advance of the seminar. We will coordinate discussion leading during the first week of class. Since on most weeks, we will have two discussants, you should coordinate with your collaborator. Your job as discussion leader is to focus our attention on the following:

- a. In your view, what are some of the major *theoretical* perspectives that structure research in a given area, what are their major strengths and weaknesses, and how do they compare with other perspectives you're familiar with (encountered in the course or elsewhere)?
  - b. In your view, what do you see as some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the *methods* used to investigate the subject? What methodologies, broadly conceived (e.g., basic issues of design, measurement, etc.) do you feel are most appropriate, given the subject of inquiry, and to what degree do you think the substantive conclusions drawn are dependent on the particular methods employed?
  - c. Do the authors engage with each other? Is this engagement fruitful for furthering the field? Would we learn more as scholars by more study in this area? What do we still not know?
  - d. What are the major *implications* of the findings for democratic theory and public policy? What relevance do the studies have for *your interests*? What does the study say about the way in which the American political system operates in practice – does the system live up to its billing as a democracy? According to what expectations and what definition of democracy?
  - e. What are the implications for practitioners in polling, campaigns, and media?
  - f. How can this research be *improved*, in your view? What theories, methods and substantive foci deserve more attention in future research?
2. **Participation (20):** Participation is essential to the functioning of a graduate seminar, and more importantly, to your engagement with the material. I will score each student each time we meet, but will sum the 10 highest participation scores for the final grade. Students who engage inappropriately or minimally will be scored a 0; Students who demonstrate engagement and thought will be scored a 1; students who demonstrate mastery of the material will be scored a 2.
  3. **Reaction papers (20):** Two times over the course of the semester, you are required to turn in (1-2 page) reaction papers on the readings. These papers are due by 5pm each Sunday via email. If you do not receive an email from me to confirm receipt, do not assume I have received it. These papers should offer reactions to the theory, research design, and/or results of the readings. These papers are **not** a summary of the work. The questions listed above are a good starting point. These papers are due during the week you choose.
  4. **Final exam (40):** this will be a take-home, two-hour exam. You will answer two questions: one question will address the course broadly, and then you'll pick from two questions that address specific subjects from course readings (e.g. democracy). This assignment is intended to help you prepare for the department's comprehensive exam in American politics. The exam will be

open books and notes and will be taken on a computer. Exam will be conducted during exam week; date TBD.

University policy is to utilize a plus/minus grading scale. Below is the 10-point +/- grading scale I will use for this class.

### Grading Scale

96.5 and above	A+
93.50 – 96.49	A
90.00–93.49	A-
86.50–89.99	B+
83.50–86.49	B
80.00–83.49	B-
76.50–79.99	C+
73.50–76.49	C
70.00–73.49	C-
69.99 and below*	F
*there are no D grades in grad. courses	

### Class Policies

**ZOOM.** We will be meeting synchronously via Zoom. This is a graduate seminar, which depends on participation and discussion, both of which are difficult in an online environment. To ensure maximum efficacy during unusual times, I ask you to uphold a “camera-on” norm in this course. If there are circumstances which preclude your participation in this norm, please notify me in advance.

**FILMING & RECORDING.** You may not film or record this class without permission.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND HOURS OUTSIDE OF CLASS.** Attendance and participation is integral to your success in this class. Each class will build on preceding class lectures, so it is very important you attend each class. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get notes from a peer. As a general policy, for each hour you are in class, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours preparing for the next class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend around six hours outside of class each week reading or writing assignments for the class.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS.** No late assignments will be accepted.

**MAKE-UP POLICY.** Missing an exam or an assignment will result in a zero grade except under extraordinary circumstances including illness or medical emergency. My expectation is that the student will contact me as soon as possible via email to alert me regarding the emergency. This will ideally be before the student misses the deadline. I reserve the right to make make-up exams or assignments different from the original.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT.** I do not tolerate plagiarizing or cheating of any kind. Such behavior will result in disciplinary action. LSU’s policy on plagiarism is the following: “Plagiarism is defined to include any use of another’s work and submitting that work as

one's own. This means not only copying passages of writing or direct quotations but also paraphrasing or using structure or ideas without citation." Please review the University's guidelines on plagiarism and academic integrity at <http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/> and <http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm>.

**CITATION.** I ask that the structure of your in-text citations be parenthetical rather than footnote, but I do not require a style of citation for this class.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION.** The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course. In order to have any accommodations met, you must be registered with the LSU Office of Disabilities Services. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website:

<http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/ods.nsf/index>

**GRADE REVIEW.** I am willing to review a written request to review a grade submitted no earlier than one-week following receipt of the grade, and no later than 2 weeks after receipt of the grade. If such a request is made, students must be prepared that a review may result in either a lower or higher grade.

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## Course Outline\*

### January 11 - Introduction

### January 18 - MLK Day, NO CLASS

### January 25 - Studying Politics and Power

\*March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. "The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life." *The American political science review* (1984): 734-749.

\*Simon, Herbert. 1985. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 79(2): 293-304.

\*Moe, Terry. 2005. "Power and Political Institutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(2): 215-233.

### February 1- Democracy

\*Dahl, Robert. 1967. Preface to *Democratic Theory*. Chapters 1, 4.

\* Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row, 1957. Chapters 2-3, 11-13.

\* Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realists' View of Democracy in America*. Boston: Wadsworth. Chapter 1.

\*Hacker, Jacob and Paul Pierson. 2014. "After the 'Master Theory': Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis." *Perspectives on Politics*. 12(3):643-662.

### February 1 - Citizenship

\*Mansbridge, 1983. (all)

\*Rigueur, Leah Wright, and Anna Beshlian. "THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF BLACK CITIZENSHIP." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 16, no. 1 (2019): 267-277.

\* Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" 1852.

### **February 8 – Groups**

\* Hibbing, John. 2020. *The Securitarian Personality*. (all)

\* Jardina, Ashley. "In-Group Love and Out-Group Hate: White Racial Attitudes in Contemporary US Elections." *Political Behavior* (2020): 1-25.

\* Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press. Chapter 1.

\* Harris-Lacewell, Melissa V. "The heart of the politics of race: Centering Black people in the study of White racial attitudes." *Journal of Black Studies* 34, no. 2 (2003): 222-249.

\* Jefferson, Hakeem. Respectability of Punishment among Black Americans.

### **February 15– Parties**

\* White, Ismail and Chryl Laird. 2020. *Steadfast Democrats*. (all)

\* Klar, Samara, and Yanna Krupnikov. *Independent politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapters 2, 4.

\* Cohen, Martin, David Karol, Hans Noel, John Zaller. 2016. Party versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. October 2016, Vol. 43 No. 4: 701-707.

\* Green, Donald P., Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. Yale University Press, 2004. Chapters 1-2.

\* Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chapters 1.

\* Groeling, Tim. 2010. *When Politicians Attack*. Chapter 1.

### **February 22 – Public Opinion and Polarization**

\* Baldassarri, Delia, and Andrew Gelman. "Partisans without constraint: Political polarization and trends in American public opinion." *American Journal of Sociology* 114, no. 2 (2008): 408-446.

\* Druckman, James N., Samara Klar, Yanna Krupnikov, Matthew Levendusky, and John Barry Ryan. "Affective polarization, local contexts and public opinion in America." *Nature Human Behaviour* (2020): 1-11.

\* Cramer, Katherine J. *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press, 2016. Chapters 1-2, 5.

\* McGregor, Shannon C. "Social Media as Public Opinion: How Journalists Use Social Media to Represent Public Opinion." *Journalism* 20, no. 8 (August 2019): 1070–86.

\* Darr, Joshua P., Matthew P. Hitt, and Johanna L. Dunaway. "Newspaper closures polarize voting behavior." *Journal of Communication* 68, no. 6 (2018): 1007-1028.

\* Bishin, Benjamin G., Thomas J. Hayes, Matthew B. Incantalupo, and Charles Anthony Smith. "Opinion backlash and public attitudes: Are political advances in gay rights counterproductive?" *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 3 (2016): 625-648.

### **March 1 – Voters**

\* Settle, 2018. (all)

\* Andersen, Asger Lau, David Dreyer Lassen, and Lasse Holbøll Westh Nielsen. 2020. "Irresponsible Parties, Responsible Voters? Legislative Gridlock and Collective Accountability." *PLoS ONE* 15 (3): 1–19. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0229789.

\*Arceneaux, Kevin, and Ryan Vander Wielen. (2017). *Taming Intuition: how Reflection Minimizes Partisan Reasoning and Promotes Democratic Accountability*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1.

\* Carter, Niambi M., and Pearl Ford Dowe. "The racial exceptionalism of Barack Obama." *Journal of African American Studies* 19, no. 2 (2015): 105-119.

\*Phoenix, Davin. 2020. *The Anger Gap*. Chapters 1, 4.

### **March 8 – Elections and Voting**

\*Gimpel James G., Kaufmann Karen M., and Pearson-Merkowitz Shanna. 2007.

"Battleground States versus Blackout States: The Behavioral Implications of Modern Presidential Campaigns." *The Journal of Politics* 69 (3): 786. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00575.x.

\* Margolis, Michele F. *From politics to the pews: How partisanship and the political environment shape religious identity*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. Chapters 1, 3.

\* White, Ariel. "Misdemeanor Disenfranchisement? The demobilizing effects of brief jail spells on potential voters." *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 2 (2019): 311-324.

\*Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. *The American Voter*. University of Chicago Press, 1980. Chapters 1-2, 6.

\* Christopher H., Achen and Larry M. Bartels. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton University Press, 2016. Chapter 1.

\* Coppock, Alexander, Seth J. Hill, and Lynn Vavreck. "The small effects of political advertising are small regardless of context, message, sender, or receiver: Evidence from 59 real-time randomized experiments." *Science advances* 6, no. 36 (2020).

### **March 15 – Presidency**

\*Milkis, Sidney M., Daniel J. Tichenor, and Laura Blessing. "The historical presidency: "Rallying force": The modern presidency, social movements, and the transformation of American politics." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2013): 641-670.

\* Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William Howell and David E. Lewis. 2008. "Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis." *Journal of Politics* 70(1): 1-16.

\*Neustadt, Richard. 1960. *Presidential Power*. Chapters 1.

\*Howell, William G. 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Chapters 1-2.

\*Kernell, Samuel. Going Public. Chapter 1.

### **March 22 – Policy and Bureaucracy**

\*Skocpol, 1992. (all)

\*Mettler, Suzanne. *The submerged state: How invisible government policies undermine American democracy*. University of Chicago Press, 2011. Chapters 1-2.

\*Troustine, Jessica. "Segregation by Design." (2018). Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2, 10. (Book online)

\* Lewis, Angela K., Pearl K. Ford Dowe, and Sekou M. Franklin. "African Americans and Obama's domestic policy agenda: a closer look at deracialization, the federal stimulus bill, and the affordable care act." *Polity* 45, no. 1 (2013): 127-152.

### **March 29 – Congress**

- \*Lee, 2016. Chapters 1, 5.
- \* Mayhew, 1974. (all)
- \* Grimmer, Justin. 2013. "Appropriators not Position Takers: The Distorting Effects of Electoral Incentives on Congressional Representation." 2013. *American Journal of Political Science*: 624-640.
- \* Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Chapter 1.
- \*Harbridge, Laurel. (2015). *Is Bipartisanship Dead?* Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1.
- \* Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2020. "Women's Underrepresentation in the U.S. Congress." *Daedalus* 149 (1): 40–55. doi:10.1162/daed\_a\_01772.
- \*Binder, Sarah. 2015. "The Dysfunctional Congress," *Annual Review of Political Science*.

### **April 5 – Courts**

- \*Clark, Tom S. "The separation of powers, court curbing, and judicial legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 4 (2009): 971-989.
- \*Epstein Lee, Lindstädt René, Segal Jeffrey A., and Westerland Chad. 2006. "The Changing Dynamics of Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees." *The Journal of Politics* 68 (2): 296. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00407.x.
- \*Epstein, Lee, and Jack Knight. "Reconsidering judicial preferences." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16 (2013).
- \* Keck, Thomas M. 2007. "Party, Policy, or Duty: Why Does the Supreme Court Invalidate Federal Statutes?" *American Political Science Review* 101: 321-338.
- \*Bonica, Adam, and Maya Sen. 2017. "Judicial Reform as a Tug of War: How Ideological Differences Between Politicians and the Bar Explain Attempts at Judicial Reform." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 70 (6): 1781-1811.
- \*Hall, Melinda Gann. "State supreme courts in American democracy: Probing the myths of judicial reform." *American political Science review* (2001): 315-330.

### **April 12 – Race**

- \*Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2016. "The Political Legacy of American Slavery." *Journal of Politics* 78 (3): 621-641.
- \*Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4.
- \* Hajnal, Zoltan L., and Jeremy D. Horowitz. "Racial winners and losers in American party politics." *Perspectives on Politics* (2014): 100-118.
- \* Weaver, Vesla. 2007. "Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy." *Studies in American Political Development* 21: 230-265.
- \*DeSante, Christopher D., and Candis Watts Smith. "Less Is More: A Cross-Generational Analysis of the Nature and Role of Racial Attitudes in the Twenty-First Century." *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 3 (2020): 000-000.

### **April 19 – Gender**

- \*Corder, J. Kevin, and Christina Wolbrecht. *Counting Women's Ballots*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapters 1, 4-5.

\*Karpowitz, Christopher F., Tali Mendelberg, and Lee Shaker. (2012). "Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation." *American Political Science Review*. 106: 533-547.

\* Dowe, Pearl K. Ford. "Resisting marginalization: Black women's political ambition and agency." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53, no. 4 (2020): 697-702.

\* Osborn, Tracy, Rebecca J. Kreitzer, Emily U. Schilling, and Jennifer Hayes Clark. "Ideology and Polarization Among Women State Legislators." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2019): 647-680.

\* Bauer, Nichole M. "Shifting standards: How voters evaluate the qualifications of female and male candidates." *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 1 (2020): 1-12.

\*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and syllabus.