

778:750
Seminar: American Political Behavior
(Fall 2021)

Professor: Thomas M. Holbrook
Email: holbroot@uwm.edu
Office Hours: Virtual, by appointment

Note: Some of the reading assignments may be subject to change.

This seminar is designed with two purposes in mind. First, it introduces students to a number of the important substantive and methodological issues in the study of American political behavior. Second, the course provides students with an opportunity to explore these issues in greater depth in the form of a research paper.

Although it is impossible to organize a seminar so that it covers all potential topics, the assigned readings should provide a solid basis for understanding the major currents of research in American political behavior. Of course, this only works if the students keep up with the readings. Therefore, it is expected that students in this seminar will read the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss them. Quantity of discussion is not nearly as important as quality of discussion.

I see my role as that of discussion facilitator. My job is to encourage the students to speak up, whether to test their ideas, offer criticisms or insights, or to ask questions that might help themselves and others gain a better understanding of the material. I will try to keep our discussion as open and unstructured as possible while still staying on message. Students can make valuable contributions by asking themselves the following (and other) questions as they prepare for class. What did I learn? What are the important areas of agreement and disagreement among the assigned readings? Were there important methodological or conceptual problems? What are the theories and related hypotheses being tested? What are the important concepts, and how are they measured? Was there anything that impressed me as particularly clever or innovative? What are some interesting related avenues of research that I could explore? Students should consider these questions seriously prior to class.

To help facilitate discussion, students are required to submit short “reactions” to each of the weekly set of readings by **Monday at noon of each week**, and to respond to the reactions of one of the other students in the class, **by 2pm on the day of class**. These reactions should be more than just summaries of the readings. Instead, I want to know what you thought about the readings (some of the questions listed above would be a good place to start). You do not have to cover all of the readings. In fact, it would be fine if you focused your attention on just a couple of them, if that seems right in a particular week. These reactions don’t have to be long, just thoughtful.

In addition to being prepared for discussion, students must submit “mini” research papers for **ten of the weekly** topics. These papers must be brief (no more than three pages), data-based analyses of topics related to the week’s readings. I encourage students to use the American National Election Study (NES), the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, or the General Social Survey (GSS) as their data sources for these papers. Of course, any number of other data sources are available and may suit your needs better than those I’ve mentioned. First-year students might feel more comfortable using the Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA) web site at <https://sda.berkeley.edu/>.

This requirement serves two important functions. First, it forces students to start working with data sources that are widely used by scholars of political behavior. Second, it helps students to think more clearly about research questions that flow from the weekly readings. These mini papers are due one hour before each class period (see course Canvas site). You should bring electronic versions of tables or graphs and be prepared to discuss your findings in class. I cannot emphasize enough how important I think this part of the class is.

A modest research paper is also required for this class. You should think of this paper as an opportunity to explore a topic of interest to you in greater detail. Given the other requirements of this course, however, I am limiting this paper to something like a research update, a replication, a research note, or a pilot study. You should begin thinking about potential topics right away. Several different papers written for this seminar have found their way into print over the years, so I encourage you to think about papers you’d like to develop into a potential publication. This might be a good place to do some preliminary work on something you are thinking about doing as a dissertation.

Your course grade will be determined in the following manner.

Class Participation (every meeting)	10%
Reaction Papers (every week)	20%
Mini papers (ten weeks)	40%
Final Paper (due December 20)	30%

The following books should be purchased as soon as possible. I suggest using an online vendor to get the best deal possible.

Books

Bethany, Albertson, and Gadarian Kushner Shana. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kinder, Donald R, and Nathan P Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative*. (University of Chicago Press).

Oliver, J Eric, and Thomas J Wood. 2020. *Enchanted America*. University of Chicago Press.

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

SCHEDULE

Many of the assigned can be accessed via JSTOR, Web of Science, or Worldwide Abstracts of Political Science (all available through the UWM Library). In addition, a number of book chapters are available via the course Canvas page.

9/7 First Meeting, no assigned readings.

9/14

AAPOR Report on Polling Error in the 2020 election. *Read the executive summary and skim the rest. Find something that interests you.*

https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/MainSiteFiles/AAPOR-Task-Force-on-2020-Pre-Election-Polling_Report-FNL.pdf

Ansolabehere, Stephen and Eitan Hersh. 2012. Validation: What big data reveal about survey misreporting and the real electorate. *Political Analysis* 20, no. 4: 437-459

Kane, J. V. & Barabas, J. No Harm in Checking: Using Factual Manipulation Checks to Assess Attentiveness in Experiments. *Am J Polit Sci* **63**, 234–249 (2019).

Mondak, Jeffery. 2001. “Developing Valid Measures of Knowledge Scales.” *American Journal of Political Science* 45:224-238.

Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. “A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences” *American Journal of Political Science*, 36: 579-616. (*Skim closely enough to get the point*)

Berinsky, Adam J. 1999. The two faces of public opinion. *American Journal of Political Science* 43:1209-1220

Keeter, Scott, Courtney Kennedy, Michael Dimock, Jonathan Best, and Peyton Craighill. 2006. Gauging the impact of growing nonresponse on estimates from a national RDD telephone survey. *Public opinion quarterly* 70:737-758. (*Skim closely enough to get the point*)

9/21

Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined. *The Journal of Politics* 71, (3) (July): 782-799

Lauderdale, Benjamin E, Chris Hanretty, and Nick Vivyan. 2018. "Decomposing Public Opinion Variation into Ideology, Idiosyncrasy, and Instability." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (2): 707–12. <https://doi.org/10.1086/695673>.

Kraft, Patrick W., Nicholas R. Davis, Taraleigh Davis, Amanda Heideman, Jason T. Neumeyer, and Shin Young Park. 2021. "Reliable Sources? Correcting Misinformation in Polarized Media Environments." *American Politics Research*.

Margolis, Michele F. 2018. "How Politics Affects Religion: Partisanship, Socialization, and Religiosity in America." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (1): 30.

Mazumder, Soumyajit. 2018. "The Persistent Effect of U.S. Civil Rights Protests on Political Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (4): 922–35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12384>.

Zaller, John. 1991. "Information, Values, and Opinions." *American Political Science Review* 85:1215-38.

9/28

Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. **Chapters 11-13**.

Lau, Richard, and David Redlawsk. 2001 "Advantages and disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 45:951-971.

Ahler, Douglas J, and Gaurav Sood. 2018. "The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (3): 964–81.

Groenendyk, Eric, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2021. "What Motivates Reasoning? A Theory of Goal-Dependent Political Evaluation." *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (1): 180–96.

Peterson, Erik, and Shanto Iyengar. 2021. "Partisan Gaps in Political Information and Information-Seeking Behavior: Motivated Reasoning or Cheerleading?" *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (1): 133–47.

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2011. "Rethinking the Role of Political Information." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75, no. 1: 42-64.

Kraft, Patrick. 2017. "Let's Talk Politics: A Naive Approach for Measuring Political Sophistication."

10/5

Oliver, J Eric, and Thomas J Wood. 2020. *Enchanted America*. University of Chicago Press.

10/12

Tajfel, Henri. 1970. "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination." *Scientific American* 223(5): 96–102.

Banks, Antoine J., and Heather M. Hicks. 2019. "The Effectiveness of a Racialized Counterstrategy." *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (2): 305–22

Boudreau, Cheryl, Christopher S. Elmendorf, and Scott A. MacKenzie. 2019. "Racial or Spatial Voting? The Effects of Candidate Ethnicity and Ethnic Group Endorsements in Local Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (1): 5–20.

Gilens, Martin. 1996. "Race Coding" and White Opposition to Welfare." *American Political Science Review* 90:593-604.

Crowder-Meyer, Melody. 2021. "How Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Their Intersections Shape Americans' Issue Priorities." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 1–15.

Klar, Samara. 2018. "When Common Identities Decrease Trust: An Experimental Study of Partisan Women." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (3): 610–22.

10/19

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

10/26

Kinder, Donald R, and Nathan P Kalmore. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative*. University of Chicago.

Ellis, Christopher, and James A Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America*. Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 5**

11/2

Hopkins, Daniel J, and John Sides. 2015. *Political Polarization in American Politics*. Bloomsbury Academic. **Chapters 1, 4, 6-8, 10, 12, 14-17, 19, 20** (Skim the rest of the chapters).

Baldassarri, Delia, and Barum Park. 2020. "Was There a Culture War? Partisan Polarization and Secular Trends in US Public Opinion." *The Journal of Politics* 82 (3): 809–27.

Mason, Lilliana. "A Cross-Cutting Calm: How Social Sorting Drives Affective Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80: 351–77.

Levendusky, Matthew S., and Jeremy C. Pope. "Red States vs. Blue States: Going Beyond the Mean." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (June 2011): 227-248.

11/9

Bethany, Albertson, and Gadarian Kushner Shana. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marcus, George, John Sullivan, Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, and Sandra Wood. *With Malice Toward Some*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 4 & 7**

11/16

Greene, Steven. 1999. "Understanding Party Identification: Social Identity Approach." *Political Psychology* 20(3): 393-403.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. chpts. 5

Bartels, Larry. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:35-50.
With update by Shin Young Park

Weinschenk, Aaron. 2010. "Revisiting the Political Theory of Party Identification." *Political Behavior* 32, no. 4: 473-494.

Weinschenk, Aaron C. 2012. "Partisan Pocketbooks: The Politics of Personal Financial Evaluations." *Social Science Quarterly* 93 (4): 968-987.

11/23 TBA

11/30 TBA

12/07 Research Presentations

12/14 Research Presentations