

# American Political Institutions

MIT | 17.202 | Spring 2023 | Th 10:00–12:00 | E53-485  
<https://canvas.mit.edu/courses/18628>

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## Course Description

This is the foundational graduate course on American political institutions. Whereas other courses in the PhD sequence focus on American political development (17.270) and the positive political theory of institutions (17.212), this one emphasizes classic theoretical and descriptive texts, though exemplary recent work is represented as well. The readings draw on a variety of theoretical frameworks, especially historical and rational-choice institutionalism, and a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

## Expectations and Assignments

I expect students to attend each class having completed all the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them. Please read them in the order in which they appear on the syllabus. Student will also write four reading responses (2–3 double-spaced pages) apiece over the course of the semester (I will divide up the class so that that every session is covered). They will post their responses to the course website **24 hours in advance**, and before class the other students are expected to read and comment on them. In addition, there will be a take-home final designed to simulate a comprehensive exam. In total, responses will compose 60% of the course grade, comments and participation 15%, and exam 25%.

## Readings

All of the assigned texts are available as PDFs or ebooks and can be downloaded from the course website. Please read them in the order in which they appear on the syllabus.

## Semester Overview

- 1 Theoretical Foundations (February 9)
- 2 Comparative and Historical Perspectives on the US State (February 16)
- 3 Collective Action and Organized Interests (February 23)
- 4 Electoral Institutions and Political Parties (March 2)
- 5 Congress I: Members as Individuals (March 9)
- 6 Congress II: Organization and Rules (March 16)
- 7 Congress III: Lawmaking (March 23)
- SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS (March 30)
- 8 Presidency I: Context and Development (April 6)
- 9 Presidency II: Strategic Interactions (April 13)
- 10 Bureaucracy (April 20)
- 11 Law and Courts (April 27)
- 12 State, Local, and Intergovernmental Politics (May 4)
- 13 Policymaking and Policy Feedback (May 18)

# Course Schedule

## 1 Theoretical Foundations (February 9)

### Required Reading (142 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 1–24 (chap. 1)
  - Systematic institutional comparison between the United States and thirty other democracies (introduction)
- [PDF](#) Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–957
  - Historical, rational-choice, and sociological variants of “new institutionalism”
- [PDF](#) Daniel Diermeier and Keith Krehbiel, “Institutionalism as a Methodology,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15, no. 2 (2003): 123–144
  - Rational-choice perspective on institutional theories and theories of institutions
- [PDF](#) Terry M. Moe, “Power and Political Institutions,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (2005): 215–233
  - Institutions are mechanisms of coercion as well as cooperation.
- [PDF](#) Adam Sheingate, “Institutional Dynamics and American Political Development,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014): 461–477
  - A review of approaches to institutional durability and change in the field of American political development.
- [PDF](#) Julia R. Azari and Jennifer K. Smith, “Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies,” *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (2012): 37–55
  - Typology of informal institutions
- [PDF](#) Jacob S. Hacker et al., “The American Political Economy: Markets, Power, and the Meta Politics of US Economic Governance,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25, no. 1 (2022): 197–217
  - Bringing political economy into the study of American politics

## Recommended Reading

- Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–267
- Kathleen Thelen and James Conran, “Institutional Change,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*, ed. Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falletti, and Adam Sheingate (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 60–77
- Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” chap. 1 in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3–37
- Kenneth A. Shepsle, “Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, no. 2 (1989): 131–147
- Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Margaret Levi, “A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis,” in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 19–41
- Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–32 (chapter 1)
- Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 369–404
- Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004)
- Charles M. Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 69–82 (chapter 3)

## 2 Comparative and Historical Perspectives on the US State (February 16)

### Required Reading (233 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 25–167 (chap. 2–5)

- The Constitution, federalism, and electoral system of the United States in comparative perspective
- [PDF](#) Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Modernization: America vs. Europe,” *World Politics* 18, no. 3 (1966): 378–414
  - Classic work on political development, emphasizing the United States’ combination of modern society and “antique” political institutions
- [PDF](#) Theda Skocpol, “State Formation and Social Policy in the United States,” chap. 1 in *Social Policy in the United States: Future Possibilities in Historical Perspective* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 11–36
  - State structure as an explanation for America’s distinctive social policies
- [PDF](#) Suzanne Mettler and Andrew Milstein, “American Political Development from Citizens’ Perspective: Tracking Federal Government’s Presence in Individual Lives over Time,” *Studies in American Political Development* 21, no. 1 (2007): 110–130
  - Shifts focus from policies’ enactment to their impact on citizens’ lives
- [PDF](#) Kimberly J. Morgan and Andrea Louise Campbell, “Delegated Governance in the Affordable Care Act,” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 36, no. 3 (2011): 387–391
  - Obamacare as an illustration of the distinctive features of the American state

## Recommended Reading

- Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006)
- Charles Stewart III and Barry R. Weingast, “Stacking the Senate, Changing the Nation: Republican Rotten Boroughs, Statehood Politics, and American Political Development,” *Studies in American Political Development* 6 (Fall 1992): 223–271
- Robert A. Dahl, *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003)
- Andrea Louise Campbell and Kimberly J. Morgan, *The Delegated Welfare State: Medicare, Markets, and the Governance of American Social Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013)

- Sean Gailmard, “Building a New Imperial State: The Strategic Foundations of Separation of Powers in America,” *American Political Science Review* 111, no. 4 (2017): 668–685
- Russell Hardin, “Why a Constitution?,” in *The Federalist Papers and the New Institutionalism*, ed. Bernard Grofman and Donald Wittman (New York: Agathon Press, 1989), 100–120
- Barry R. Weingast, “Political Stability and Civil War: Institutions, Commitment, and American Democracy,” chap. 4 in *Analytic Narratives*, ed. Robert H. Bates et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 148–193
- William J. Novak, “The Myth of the ‘Weak’ American State,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (2008): 752–772
- Stephen Skowronek and Karen Orren, “Pathways to the Present: Political Development in America,” chap. 2 in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, ed. Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert C. Lieberman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27–47, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199697915.013.19>
- Desmond King and Robert C. Lieberman, “The American State,” chap. 12 in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, ed. Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert C. Lieberman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 231–258
- Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009)

### 3 Collective Action and Organized Interests (February 23)

#### Required Reading (262 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 168–199 (chap. 6)
  - US parties and interest groups in comparative perspective
- [PDF](#) E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America* (1960; Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1975), 1–46 (chapters 1–2)

- The importance of how politics is organized
- [PDF](#) Mancur Olson Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 6–22 and 33–52 (nontechnical parts of chapter 1)
  - Interest groups and collective-action problems
- [PDF](#) Jack L. Walker, “The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America,” *American Political Science Review* 77, no. 2 (1983): 390–406
  - Why do some interest groups exist but not others?
- [PDF](#) Dara Z. Strolovitch, “Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender,” *Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (2006): 894–910
  - Intersectionality in interest representation
- [PDF](#) Sarah F. Anzia, *Local Interests: Politics, Policy, and Interest Groups in US City Governments* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2022), 1–113 (chap. 1–4)
  - A policy-focused perspective on interest groups in local politics

## Recommended Reading

- Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady, *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012)
- Theda Skocpol, Marshall Ganz, and Ziad Munson, “A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States,” *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (2000): 527–546
- John Mark Hansen, *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991)
- Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder Jr., “Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 105–130
- Dara Z. Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)

## 4 Electoral Institutions and Political Parties (March 2)

### Required Reading (263 Pages)

- [PDF](#) John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties? A Second Look* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3–66 (chapters 1–2)
  - Parties as endogenous institutions created by ambitious politicians to solve certain persistent problems
- [PDF](#) Kathleen Bawn et al., “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 3 (2012): 571–597
  - Parties as durable coalitions of policy demanders
- [PDF](#) Eric Schickler, *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 1–26 (chap. 1), 81–100 (chap. 4), 150–175 (chap. 7), and 211–236 (chap. 9)
  - Partisan realignment driven by activists and organized groups working within multilevel party institutions
- [PDF](#) Jonathan A. Rodden, *Why Cities Lose: The Deep Roots of the Urban-Rural Political Divide* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 1–14 (introduction), 15–38 (chap. 1), and 165–196 (chap. 6)
  - Consequences of the interaction between political geography and winner-take-all elections
- [PDF](#) Gerald C. Wright, “Charles Adrian and the Study of Nonpartisan Elections,” *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2008): 13–16
  - Nominally an essay honoring Charles Adrian, this article provides a succinct overview of research on the consequences of nonpartisan elections.

### Recommended Reading

- V. O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949; Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 298–311 (chapter 14)
- James M. Snyder Jr. and Michael M. Ting, “Roll Calls, Party Labels, and Elections,” *Political Analysis* 11, no. 4 (2003): 419–444
- Devin Caughey, *The Unsolid South: Mass Politics and National Representation in a One-Party Enclave* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018)

- Bernard Grofman, “Downs and Two-Party Convergence,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 25–46
- V. O. Key Jr., “A Theory of Critical Elections,” *Journal of Politics* 17, no. 1 (1955): 3–18
- Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957)
- Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989)
- David R. Mayhew, *Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986)
- Walter Dean Burnham, “Party Systems and the Political Process,” in *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development*, ed. W. N. Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 277–307
- David R. Mayhew, “Electoral Realignments,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (June 2000): 449–474
- Nolan McCarty and Eric Schickler, “On the Theory of Parties,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 175–193
- Marty Cohen et al., “Political Parties in Rough Weather,” *The Forum* 5, no. 4 (2008): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.2202/1540-8884.1214>
- Karol David, *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Raymond J. La Raja, “Richer Parties, Better Politics? Party-Centered Campaign Finance Laws and American Democracy,” *The Forum* 11, no. 3 (2013): 313–338
- Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, “The Hollow Parties,” chap. 6 in *Can America Govern Itself?*, ed. Frances E. Lee and Nolan McCarty (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 120–152

## 5 Congress I: Members as Individuals (March 9)

### Required Reading (217 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 200–226 (chap. 7)

- The US Congress in comparative perspective
- [PDF](#) Gary Jacobson, “The Electoral Connection: Then and Now,” chap. 3 in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties and Political Representation in America*, ed. Alan S. Gerber and Eric Schickler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 35–64
  - The relevance of David Mayhew’s *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (1974) in today’s more polarized environment
- [PDF](#) Richard F. Fenno Jr., “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration,” *American Political Science Review* 71, no. 3 (1977): 883–917
  - What do MCs see and do in their districts?
- [PDF](#) Tracy Sulkin, *Issue Politics in Congress* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–42 (chapters 1–2)
  - How incumbents respond to challengers’ campaigns
- [PDF](#) Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff, “Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy,” *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 1 (2006): 69–84
  - Lobbyists subsidize the legislative participation of their congressional allies.
- [PDF](#) Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Ideology and Congress* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2007), 1–31 (chapters 1–2) and 78–113 (chapter 4)
  - Representing legislators’ preferences in low-dimensional space

## Recommended Reading

- David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (1974; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004)
- Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, “Constituency Influence in Congress,” *American Political Science Review* 57, no. 1 (1963): 45–56
- Nelson W. Polsby, *How Congress Evolves: Social Bases of Institutional Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Carol Stokes, “Introduction,” in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan Carol Stokes, and Bernard Manin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–26
- Brandice Canes-Wrone, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan, “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members’ Voting,” *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 1 (2002): 127–140

- Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder Jr., and Charles Stewart III, “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections,” *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (2001): 136–159
- Joshua Clinton, Simon Jackman, and Douglas Rivers, “The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data,” *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 355–370
- David A. Bateman, Joshua D. Clinton, and John S. Lapinski, “A House Divided? Roll Calls, Polarization, and Policy Differences in the U.S. House, 1877–2011,” *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2016): 698–714

## 6 Congress II: Organization and Rules (March 16)

### Required Reading (247 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62, no. 1 (1968): 144–168
  - Development of Congress as a durable, distinct, coherent institution
- [PDF](#) Barbara Sinclair, “The New World of U.S. Senators,” chap. 1 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th ed., ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2017), 1–26
  - Evolution of the Senate since the 1950s
- [PDF](#) Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast, “Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1994): 149–179
  - Rational-choice institutionalist theories of congressional organization (distributive, informational, partisan)
- [PDF](#) John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde, “Lending and Reclaiming Power: Majority Leadership in the House Since the 1950s,” chap. 2 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th ed., ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2017), 29–60
  - Conditional party government
- [PDF](#) Gary W. Cox and Matthew D. McCubbins, *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–49 (chapters 1–3) and 201–30 (chapters 10–11)
  - Theory of party government in Congress, emphasizing (unconditional) negative agenda control

- [PDF](#) Frances Lee, “Legislative Parties in an Era of Alternating Majorities,” chap. 6 in *Governing in a Polarized Age: Elections, Parties and Political Representation in America*, ed. Alan S. Gerber and Eric Schickler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 115–142
  - How the combination of partisan polarization and insecure majorities affects the incentives of congressional parties
- [PDF](#) Ruth Bloch Rubin, “House Parties, Divided: Intraparty Organization in the Contemporary Congress,” chap. 8 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 12th ed., ed. Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2021), 225–250
  - How within-party factions surmount collective-action problems

## Recommended Reading

- Richard F. Fenno Jr., “The House Appropriations Committee as a Political System: The Problem of Integration,” *American Political Science Review* 56, no. 2 (1962): 310–324
- Richard F. Fenno Jr., *Congressmen in Committees* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), *xii–xvii* (introduction), 1–14 (chapter 1), and 81–138 (chapter 4)
- David W. Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991)
- Keith Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991)
- Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)
- David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005)
- Richard L. Hall, *Participation in Congress* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- David R. Mayhew, “Actions in the Public Sphere,” chap. 3 in *The Legislative Branch*, ed. Paul J. Quirk and Sarah A. Binder, *Institutions of American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63–108

- John H. Aldrich, Mark M. Berger, and David W. Rohde, “The Historical Variability in Conditional Party Government, 1877–1994,” in *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress: New Perspectives on the History of Congress*, ed. David Brady and Mathew D. McCubbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 23–51
- David W. Rohde, “Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Politics* 75, no. 4 (2013): 849–864
- Gary W. Cox, Thad Kousser, and Mathew D. McCubbins, “Party Power or Preferences? Quasi-Experimental Evidence from American State Legislatures,” *Journal of Politics* 72, no. 3 (2010): 799–811
- Justin Grimmer and Eleanor Neff Powell, “Congressmen in Exile: The Politics and Consequences of Involuntary Committee Removal,” *Journal of Politics* 75, no. 4 (2013): 907–920
- Gregory J. Wawro and Eric Schickler, *Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the U.S. Senate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006)
- Frances E. Lee, *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)
- Peter Hanson, “The Endurance of Non-Partisanship in House Appropriations,” chap. 13 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th ed., ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2017), 285–310
- Ruth Bloch Rubin, *Building the Bloc: Intraparty Organization in the U.S. Congress* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

## 7 Congress III: Lawmaking (March 23)

### Required Reading (276 Pages)

- [PDF](#) R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 3–148 (chap. 1–6)
  - How the anticipation of electoral sanctions affects the design of legislation
- [PDF](#) Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3–75 (chapters 1–3)
  - Congressional lawmaking in terms of ideological locations of the pivotal voters
- [PDF](#) Sarah Binder, “Legislating in Polarized Times,” chap. 8 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th ed., ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (Thousand Oaks,

CA: CQ Press, 2017), 189–206

– Is Congress dysfunctional? Kinda.

- [PDF](#) James M. Curry and Frances E. Lee, “Congress at Work: Legislative Capacity and Entrepreneurship in the Contemporary Congress,” chap. 8 in *Can America Govern Itself?*, ed. Frances E. Lee and Nolan McCarty (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 181–219
  - Congress today is not so much dysfunctional as adapting to new conditions.

### Recommended Reading

- David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005)
- David R. Mayhew, *Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011)
- Thomas J. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism* (New York: Basic Books, 2012)
- Barbara Sinclair, “Partisan Polarization and Congressional Policy Making,” in *Congress and Policy Making in the 21st Century*, ed. Jeffery A. Jenkins and Eric M. Patashnik (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 48–72
- Richard L. Hall and Frank W. Wayman, “Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees,” *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (1990): 797–820

## SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS (March 30)

### 8 Presidency I: Context and Development (April 6)

#### Required Reading (264 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 227–281 (chap. 8)
  - The US presidency in comparative perspective
- [PDF](#) Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, rev. ed. (1960; New York: Free Press, 1990), 29–72 (chapters 3–4)

- For modern presidents, presidential power is the power to persuade.
- [PDF](#) Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, “Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?,” *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 1 (1999): 99–114
  - How changes in the media environment have undermined presidents capacity to appeal directly to the public
- [PDF](#) Stephen Skowronek, “Presidential Leadership in Political Time,” chap. 4 in *The Presidency and the Political System*, 8th ed., ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2006), 89–135
  - Categorizes and analyzes presidents according to their place in partisan regime cycles
- [PDF](#) John A. Dearborn, *Power Shifts: Congress and Presidential Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), *ix–xii* (preface), 1–48 (chap. 1–2), 72–102 (chap. 4), and 183–205 (chap. 8)

## Recommended Reading

- Juan J. Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990): 51–69
- Sidney M. Milkis, “The Presidency and Political Parties,” in *The Presidency and the Political System*, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2014), 304–348
- Robert A. Dahl, “Myth of the Presidential Mandate,” *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 355–372
- Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1997)
- Lyn Ragsdale and John J. Theis III, “The Institutionalization of the American Presidency, 1924–92,” *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 4 (1997): 1280–1318
- Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*, rev. ed. (1993; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997)
- Aaron Wildavsky, “The Two Presidencies,” *Trans-Action* 4 (December 1966): 7–14, Reprinted in *Society*, 35 (2): 23–31, 1998

## 9 Presidency II: Strategic Interactions (April 13)

### Required Reading (199 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Charles M. Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–32 (chap. 1) and 178–202 (chap. 7)
  - The president and Congress
- [PDF](#) Brandice Canes-Wrone, *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 19–50 (chap. 2)
  - Presidential opinion leadership
- [PDF](#) David E. Lewis, *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11–50 (chap. 2) and 141–171 (chap. 6)
  - Presidents and the bureaucracy
- [PDF](#) Christina M. Kinane, “Control without Confirmation: The Politics of Vacancies in Presidential Appointments,” *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 599–614
  - Interim appointments and intentional vacancies as presidential strategies
- [PDF](#) Kenneth Lowande and Jon C. Rogowski, “Presidential Unilateral Power,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24, no. 1 (2021): 21–43
  - The president’s power of unilateral action

### Recommended Reading

- William G. Howell, *Power Without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1–75 (chap. 1–3)
- Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell, “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1999): 850–873
- Tim Groseclose and Nolan McCarty, “The Politics of Blame: Bargaining before an Audience,” *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (2001): 100–119
- Brandice Canes-Wrone and Kenneth W. Shotts, “The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion,” *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004): 690–706

- Andrew Reeves and Jon C. Rogowski, “Unilateral Powers, Public Opinion, and the Presidency,” *Journal of Politics* 78, no. 1 (2016): 137–151
- Rui J. P. de Figueiredo Jr., Tonja Jacobi, and Barry R. Weingast, “The New Separation-of-Powers Approach to American Politics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, ed. Barry R. Weingast and Donald A. Wittman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 199–222
- Charles Cameron and Nolan McCarty, “Models of Vetoes and Veto Bargaining,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7, no. 1 (2004): 409–435
- Andrew Rudalevige, *Managing the President’s Program: Presidential Leadership and Legislative Policy Formulation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Charles M. Cameron and Jonathan P. Kastellec, “Are Supreme Court Nominations a Move-the-Median Game?,” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 4 (2016): 778–797

## 10 Bureaucracy (April 20)

### Required Reading (277 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Terry M. Moe, “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure,” in *Can the Government Govern*, ed. John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1989), **267–85 only**
  - Bureaucratic structure as a product of political conflict and compromise
- [PDF](#) Kathleen Bawn, “Political Control Versus Expertise: Congressional Choices about Administrative Procedures,” *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 1 (1995): 62–73
  - Administrative structures involve trade-offs between political control and bureaucratic expertise.
- [PDF](#) Martha S. Feldman, *Order Without Design: Information Production and Policy Making* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989)
  - An interpretive perspective on the activities of bureaucratic analysts
- [PDF](#) Rachel Augustine Potter, *Bending the Rules: Procedural Politicking in the Bureaucracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 1–84 (chap. 1–3)
  - How bureaucrats use the rule-making process to influence policy

- [PDF](#) Hye Young You, “Ex Post Lobbying,” *Journal of Politics* 79, no. 4 (2017): 1162–1176

– Why a lot of lobbying happens after legislation is passed

## Recommended Reading

- Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review* 63, no. 3 (1969): 689–718
- Mathew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control,” *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization* 3, no. 2 (1987): 243–277
- Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms,” *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (1984): 165–179
- Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, 30th anniversary expanded edition (1980; New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2010)
- David Epstein and Sharyn O’Halloran, *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999)
- John D. Huber and Charles R. Shipan, *Deliberate Discretion?: The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002)
- Jonathan Bendor and Adam Meirowitz, “Spatial Models of Delegation” 98 (2 2004): 293–310
- Sean Gailmard and John W. Patty, *Learning while Governing: Expertise and Accountability in the Executive Branch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1–136 (chapters 1–4)
- Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- Daniel Carpenter, *Reputation and Power: Organizational Image and Pharmaceutical Regulation at the FDA* (Princeton University Press, 2014)

## 11 Law and Courts (April 27)

### Required Reading (244 Pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 282–308 (chap. 9)
  - The US judiciary in comparative perspective
- [PDF](#) Robert A. Dahl, “Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker,” *Journal of Public Law* 6, no. 2 (1957): 279–295
  - Vulnerability of courts and rarity of judicial review
- [PDF](#) Keith E. Whittington, “‘Interpose Your Friendly Hand’: Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (2005): 583–596
  - Why do the elected branches tolerate, or even encourage, judicial review?
- [PDF](#) Jeffrey A. Segal and Harold J. Spaeth, *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–43 (chap. 1) and 86–114 (chap. 3)
  - Judges are motivated by policy, not the law.
- [PDF](#) Howard Gillman, “What’s Law Got to Do with It? Judicial Behaviorists Test the ‘Legal Model’ of Judicial Decision Making,” *Law & Social Inquiry* 26 (2001): 465–504
  - Critical response to Segal and Spaeth
- [PDF](#) Robert A. Kagan, “Adversarial Legalism and American Government,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 10, no. 3 (1991): 369–406
  - The consequences of judicialized regulation
- [PDF](#) Gerald N. Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1–36 (introduction and chapter 1)
  - The limitations of judicial policymaking

### Recommended Reading

- Mila Versteeg and Emily Zackin, “Constitutions Unentrenched: Toward an Alternative Theory of Constitutional Design,” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 4

(2016): 1–18

- Emily Zackin, *Looking for Rights in All the Wrong Places: Why State Constitutions Contain America's Positive Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013)
- Lee Epstein and Jack Knight, “Reconsidering Judicial Preferences,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 16, no. 1 (2013): 11–31
- Mark A. Graber, “The Nonmajoritarian Difficulty: Legislative Deference to the Judiciary,” *Studies in American Political Development* 7, no. Spring (1993): 35–73
- Sean Farhang, *The Litigation State: Public Regulation and Private Lawsuits in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010)

## 12 State, Local, and Intergovernmental Politics (May 4)

### Required Reading (216 Pages + 1 Hour)

- [PDF](#) Martha Derthick, “How Many Communities?,” chap. 1 in *Keeping the Compound Republic: Essays on American Federalism* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2001), 9–21
  - The evolving relations among states, localities, and the national government
- [PDF](#) Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 3–38 (chapters 1–2)
  - How competition among municipalities constrains local politics
- [PDF](#) Robert S. Erikson, Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver, “Political Parties, Public Opinion, and State Policy in the United States,” *American Political Science Review* 83, no. 3 (1989): 729–750
  - State parties as mediators of policy representation
- [PDF](#) Jessica Trounstein, “The Geography of Inequality: How Land Use Regulation Produces Segregation,” *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 2 (2020): 443–455
  - Zoning and segregation
- [PDF](#) Julia A. Payson, “The Partisan Logic of City Mobilization: Evidence from State Lobbying Disclosures,” *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 3 (2020): 677–690
  - Relations between cities and states

- Matt Grossman and Alex Hertel-Fernandez, “Have Conservatives Transformed the States?,” Niskanen Center, September 25, 2019, <https://www.niskanencenter.org/have-conservatives-transformed-the-states/> (listen or read transcript)
  - Conversation between two scholars with differing views regarding conservative efforts to roll back liberal policies in the states
- [PDF](#) Jacob Grumbach, *Laboratories against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics*, vol. 182 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022), 1–70 (chap. 1–3) and 151–94 (chap. 7–8)
  - Critique of federalism and of Republican-led “democratic backsliding” in the states

## Recommended Reading

- Devin Caughey and Christopher Warshaw, *Dynamic Democracy: Citizens, Parties, and Policymaking in the American States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022)
- Paul E. Peterson, *The Price of Federalism* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1995)
- Margaret Weir, “States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism,” *Studies in American Political Development* 19, no. 2 (2005): 157–172
- Jacob M. Grumbach and Jamila Michener, “American Federalism, Political Inequality, and Democratic Erosion,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 699, no. 1 (2022): 143–155
- James M. Buchanan, “Federalism as an Ideal Political Order and an Objective for Constitutional Reform,” *Publius* 25, no. 2 (1995): 19–27
- Jessica Trounstine, “Dominant Regimes and the Demise of Urban Democracy,” *Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (2006): 879–893
- Sarah F. Anzia, *Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014)
- Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 2nd ed. (1961; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005)
- Robert S. Erikson, Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver, *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in the American States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- Jeffrey R. Lax and Justin H. Phillips, “The Democratic Deficit in the States,” *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 1 (2012): 148–166

- Elizabeth R. Gerber, “Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives,” *American Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 1 (1996): 99–128
- Daniel Béland, Philip Rocco, and Alex Waddan, *Obamacare Wars: Federalism, State Politics, and the Affordable Care Act* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016)
- Matt Grossmann, *Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019)
- Alex Hertel-Fernandez, *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Robert W. Mickey, *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America’s Deep South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015)

## 13 Policymaking and Policy Feedback (May 18)

### Required Readings (236 pages)

- [PDF](#) Steven L. Taylor et al., *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 309–359 (chap. 8)
  - Policy consequences of the United States’s distinctive institutional mix
- [PDF](#) Deborah A. Stone, “Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas,” *Political Science Quarterly* 104, no. 2 (1989): 281–300
  - The definition of problems—and thus the creation of policies to address them—requires the elaboration causal stories attributing responsibility and blame.
- [PDF](#) Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, “Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems,” *Journal of Politics* 53, no. 4 (1991): 1044–1074
  - Punctuated equilibrium model of policymaking
- [PDF](#) James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson, “Dynamic Representation,” *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 543–565
  - Dynamic equilibrium between the public’s mood and government policymaking
- [PDF](#) Paul Pierson, “When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change,” *World Politics* 45, no. 4 (1993): 595–628
  - How policies affect politics

- [PDF](#) Chloe N. Thurston, “Policy Feedback in the Public–Private Welfare State: Advocacy Groups and Access to Government Homeownership Programs, 1934–1954,” *Studies in American Political Development* 29, no. 2 (2015): 250–267
  - The submerged state from the perspective of those excluded from it
- [PDF](#) Jamila Michener, *Framgedmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–59 (chap. 1–3)
  - How federalism affects the experiences of Medicaid recipients

## Recommended Readings

- John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, updated second edition, with an epilogue on health care (1984; New York: Pearson, 2011)
- Sarah F. Anzia and Terry M. Moe, “Do Politicians Use Policy to Make Politics? The Case of Public-Sector Labor Laws,” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 4 (2016): 763–777
- Devin Caughey and Christopher Warshaw, “Policy Preferences and Policy Change: Dynamic Responsiveness in the American States, 1936–2014,” *American Political Science Review* 112, no. 2 (2018): 249–266, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000533>
- Andrea Louise Campbell, “Policy Makes Mass Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (2012): 333–351
- Vesla M. Weaver and Amy Lerman, “Political Consequences of the Carceral State,” *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 4 (2010): 817–833
- Eric M. Patashnik and Julian E. Zelizer, “The Struggle to Remake Politics: Liberal Reform and the Limits of Policy Feedback in the Contemporary American State,” *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (2013): 1071–1087
- Theodore Lowi, “American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory,” *World Politics* 16, no. 4 (1964): 677–715
- Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd ed. (1993; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)
- Jacob S. Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States,” *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 243–260

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- . "House Parties, Divided: Intraparty Organization in the Contemporary Congress." Chap. 8 in *Congress Reconsidered*, 12th ed., edited by Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans, 225–250. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2021.
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