Course Description
This seminar will introduce you to classic as well as contemporary research in American politics. We will discuss the literature both in political institutions (e.g., Congress) and in political behavior (e.g., voting). By covering an array of topics in these areas, the course will provide a foundation for developing a comprehensive understanding of the field and the various directions in which it is now moving.

Requirements
You should do all the readings for each week’s assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class. Grades will be based on two critical essays on the readings (5-10 pages), in-class presentations, and general class discussion. The specific assignments will be detailed in class.

Readings
Course readings will be made available under the Reserves link on the course’s Blackboard page, with the exception of starred items which are entire books or multiple chapters from books. These books will be made available on one-day course reserve, and of course you may also purchase them.

Course Meetings

September 14: Introduction

September 21: Congress: The Electoral Connection


September 28: Congress as an Institution: The Committee System


October 5: NO CLASS—UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

October 12: Congress as an Institution: Leaders, Parties, and Rules


*Cox, Gary, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2007. Legislative Leviathan, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, chs. 5-6, 9-10, Conclusion.


October 19: The Presidency


October 26: Courts


November 2: Bureaucracy


November 9: Political Parties and Interest Groups


November 16: Voting in Elections


November 23: Citizen Participation and Public Opinion


November 30: Polarization


December 7: State and Local Politics


