PSC 540
Models in American Politics: Theory & Data
Fall 2010

Course Description
In recent years there has been an upsurge in American politics research that combines formal modeling and data analysis. In this seminar we will critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and explore some of the major contributions to this literature. Topics will include party power, interbranch bargaining, delegation, lobbying, and the role of formal rules.

Readings
Journal articles are available on JSTOR or other online databases accessible through the library. Starred items are multiple chapters from books. These books will be made available on one-day course reserve, and of course you may also purchase them. Other readings will be made available by the instructors.

Course Requirements
In-Class Presentations (30% of grade). Each week students will present some or all of the week’s readings. These presentations, as well as general class participation, are vital to the success of a graduate seminar.

Midterm Essay (35% of grade). This will be handed out on October 8 and will be due on October 22. We will ask you a question or set of questions that require you to apply what you have learned in the course to date.

Final Essay (35% of grade). This will be handed out on December 3 and will be due on December 17. We will ask you a question or set of questions that require you to apply what you have learned in the course to date.
Course Meetings

August 31 (note non-Friday date): Introduction and Overview

September 10: Connecting Models and Data


September 17: Legislatures I


September 24: Legislatures II


October 1: Legislatures III


October 8: Presidency  
***Midterm essay assignment distributed


October 15: Interbranch Bargaining I: Lawmaking


(See Groseclose and Schiavoni for a correction to the formal theory.)


October 22: Wallis Conference (No Class)  
***Midterm Essay Assignment Due

October 29: Interbranch Bargaining II: Appointments


November 5: Judicial Politics


November 12: Bureaucracy
(***To be rescheduled)**


Additional paper to be added later in the semester.

November 19: Interest Groups


November 26: Thanksgiving Break—No Class
December 3: The Value of Political Careers
***Final essay assignment handed out (due December 17)


December 10: State and Local Governments


