

Professor David Primo  
Office: Harkness Hall 318  
Email: david.primo@rochester.edu  
Website: <http://www.sas.rochester.edu/psc/primo/>

Spring 2023, Mon. 2:00 – 4:40 PM  
Office Hours: Tues. 12:30 – 2:30 PM or by appt.  
In-Person: Harkness Hall 318  
Zoom: <https://rochester.zoom.us/j/948872840>

## PSCI 540: American Political Institutions

This Version: January 19, 2023

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide graduate students with a foundation from which to conduct original research on American political institutions. We will survey the theoretical and empirical literature in this area, and in doing so, explore perspectives on the institutions-based approach to research and learn about the "workhorse" models and empirical strategies that practitioners rely upon when conducting research on American political institutions. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions and prepare conversation starters in advance of class to set the stage for class discussion. The central assignment will be the development of a research proposal that demonstrates promise for development into a publishable paper. This course is one of two core courses in the American politics sequence, with the other laying the foundation for conducting original research in American political behavior. The two may be taken in either order. The prerequisites for this class include the first semester of the graduate theory and methods training.

### COURSE MATERIALS

There are no books or materials to purchase for this course. All readings or links to readings will be made available by the instructor.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- **Conversation Starters (25% of Grade):** By 10 AM on the day of class, students should circulate a 1-2 page document reflecting on all of the readings *in ways that open the door to class discussion*. Conversation starters can take many forms, including a specific set of questions the readings raise for the student, a research direction implied by the readings, or puzzles raised by the readings. Conversation starters should *not* summarize the readings. Students should turn in 9 conversation starters over the course of the semester.
- **Class Participation (25% of Grade):** The success of a graduate seminar depends crucially on the active involvement of all students. Students are expected to attend all classes (except, of course, in the case of illness) prepared to contribute to the discussion.
- **Research Design (50% of Grade):** You will be asked to prepare a research design with a clear question and a plan for answering that question. We will discuss details in class. Students will meet with the instructor in late March to discuss ideas for the research design.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty).

Date	Topic	Conversation Starter Due at 10 AM
1/23	Studying Political Institutions	No
1/30	Congress I: The Electoral Connection	Yes
2/6	Congress II: Ideology and Theories of Lawmaking	Yes
2/13	Congress III: Parties	Yes
2/20	Presidency I: Bargaining with Congress	Yes
2/27	Presidency II: Unilateral Action	Yes
3/13	The Bureaucracy	Yes
3/20	No Class (Graduate Recruiting)— Replaced by one-on-one meetings regarding research design	No
3/27	The Judiciary I: Courts as Institutions	Yes
4/3	The Judiciary II: Interbranch Bargaining	Yes
4/10	Interest Groups	Yes
4/17	State Politics	Yes
4/24	Local Politics	Yes
***Research Design Due May 6		

### January 23—Studying Political Institutions

- North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1.
- Riker, William H. 1980. "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 74(2):432-446.
- Diermeier, Daniel, and Keith Krehbiel. 2003. "Institutionalism as a Methodology." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15(2):123-144.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. 2008. "Rational Choice Institutionalism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, eds. Sarah A. Binder, R. A.W. Rhodes, and Bert A. Rockman. New York: Oxford University Press, 23-38.

### January 30—Congress I: The Electoral Connection

- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71(3):883-917.
- Ashworth, Scott. 2012. "Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:183-201.
- Olson, Michael P., and Jon C. Rogowski. 2021. "Legislative Organization and Political Representation." Working Paper.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shiro Kuriwaki. 2022. "Congressional Representation: Accountability from the Constituent's Perspective." *American Journal of Political Science* 66(1):123-139.

### February 6—Congress II: Ideology and Theories of Lawmaking

- Clinton, Joshua D. 2012. "Using Roll Call Estimates to Test Models of Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:79-99.
- Binder, Sarah. 2015. "The Dysfunctional Congress." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18:85-101.
- Chiou, Fang-Yi, and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 2003. "When Pivotal Politics Meets Partisan Politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3):503-522.
- Hitt, Matthew P., Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2017. "Spatial Models of Legislative Effectiveness." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3):575-590.

### **February 13—Congress III: Parties**

- Lee, Frances E. 2015. "How Party Polarization Affects Governance." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18:261-282.
- McCarty, Nolan, and Eric Schickler. 2018. "On the Theory of Parties." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21:175–193.
- Snyder, James M., Jr., and Tim Groseclose. 2000. "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):193-211.
- Snyder, James M., Jr., and Michael M. Ting. 2002. "An Informational Rationale for Political Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1):90-110.

### **February 20—Presidency I: Bargaining with Congress**

- Cameron, Charles, and Nolan McCarty. 2004. "Models of Vetoes and Veto Bargaining." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7:409-435.
- Cameron, Charles M., and Jonathan P. Kastellac. 2016. "Are Supreme Court Appointments a Move-the-Median Game?" *American Political Science Review* 110(4):778-797.  
→Please read erratum also
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2001. "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2):313-329.
- Berry, Christopher R., Barry C. Burden, and William G. Howell. 2010. "The President and the Distribution of Federal Spending." *American Political Science Review* 104(4):783-799.

### **February 27—Presidency II: Unilateral Action**

- Lowande, Kenneth, and Jon C. Rogowski. 2021. "Presidential Unilateral Power." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):1–23.
- Howell, William H. 2003. *Power without Persuasion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ch. 1.
- Chiou, Fang-Yi, and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 2014. "The Elusive Search for Presidential Power." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3):653-668.
- Bolton, Alexander, and Sharece Thrower. 2016. "Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 649–663.

### **March 13—The Bureaucracy**

- Lewis, David E. 2011. "Presidential Appointments and Personnel." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14:47–66.
- Gailmard, Sean, and John W. Patty. 2012. "Formal Models of Bureaucracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:353–377.
- Yackee, Susan Webb. 2019. "The Politics of Rulemaking in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22:37–55.
- Bils, Peter. 2020. "Policymaking with Multiple Agencies." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3):634-648.

### **March 20—No Class (Graduate Recruiting)→One-on-one meetings regarding research design**

### **March 27—The Judiciary I: Courts as Institutions**

- Lax, Jeffrey R. 2011. "The New Judicial Politics of Legal Doctrine." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14:131-157.
- Black, Ryan C., and Ryan J. Owens. 2009. "Agenda Setting in the Supreme Court: The Collision of Policy and Jurisprudence." *Journal of Politics* 71(3):1062-1075.
- Lauderdale, Benjamin E., and Tom S. Clark. 2012. "The Supreme Court's Many Median Justices." *American Political Science Review* 106(4):847-866
- Beim, Deborah, Alexander V. Hirsch, and Jonathan P. Kastellac. 2014. "Whistleblowing and Compliance in the Judicial Hierarchy." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4):904-918.

### **April 3—The Judiciary II: Interbranch Bargaining**

- Barnes, Jeb. 2007. "Bringing the Courts Back In: Interbranch Perspectives on the Role of Courts in American Politics and Policy Making." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10:25–43.
- Clark, Tom S. 2009. "The Separation of Powers, Court Curbing, and Judicial Legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4):971-989.
- Thrower, Sharice. 2019. "Presidential Action and the Supreme Court: The Case of Signing Statements." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31(4):677-698.
- Gardner, Paul J., and Sharece Thrower. 2023. "Presidential Constraints on Supreme Court Decision-Making." *Journal of Politics* 85(1):139-152.

### **April 10—Interest Groups**

- Hall, Richard L., and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review* 100(1):69-84.
- Hirsch, Alexander V., Karam Kang, B. Pablo Montagnes, and Hye Young You. Forthcoming. "Lobbyists as Gatekeepers." *Journal of Politics*.
- De Figueiredo, John M. and Brian Kelleher Richter. 2014. "Advancing the Empirical Research on Lobbying." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:163–185.
- Bertrand, Marianne, Matilde Bombardini, and Francesco Trebbi. 2014. "Is It Whom You Know or What You Know? An Empirical Assessment of the Lobbying Process." *American Economic Review* 104(12):3885–3920.

### **April 17—State Politics**

- Besley, Timothy, and Anne Case. 2003. "Political Institutions and Policy Choices: Evidence from the United States." *Journal of Economic Literature* 41(1):7-73.
- Barber, Michael, Alexander Bolton, and Sharece Thrower. 2019. "Legislative Constraints on Executive Unilateralism in Separation of Powers Systems." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 44(3):515–548.
- Fourinaies, Alexander, and Andrew B. Hall. 2022. "How Do Electoral Incentives Affect Legislator Behavior? Evidence from U.S. State Legislatures." *American Political Science Review* 116(2):662-676.
- Matsusaka, John G. 2018. "Public Policy and the Initiative and Referendum: A Survey With Some New Evidence." *Public Choice* 174(1-2):107-143.

### **April 24—Local Politics**

- Berry, Christopher. 2008. "Piling On: Multilevel Government and the Fiscal Common-Pool." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4):802-820.
- Coate, Stephen, and Brian Knight. 2011. "Government Form and Public Spending: Theory and Evidence from US Municipalities." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 3(3):82-112.
- Beach, Brian, and Daniel B. Jones. 2017. "Gridlock: Ethnic Diversity in Government and the Provision of Public Goods." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 9(1):112-136.
- Goldstein, Rebecca, and Hye Young You. 2017. "Cities as Lobbyists." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(4):864-876.