

POLS 233: Politics and Policy in the United States

Course Schedule/Links — Fall 2026

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may be revised. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. Readings are due on the date listed.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings / Assigned Material
1	8/24	Introduction & Syllabus Overview	—
8/24	8/26	Citizen Competence and Democracy: Self-interest and roving bandits	RAR Ch. 2, <i>Madison's Theory of the Republic</i> ; <i>Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development</i> (Mancur Olson)
2	8/31	Citizen Competence and Democracy: What motivates citizens, party or policy?	<i>Partisan Intoxication or Policy Voting?</i> (Anthony Fowler)
	9/2	APSA Conference — no class	—
3	9/7	Labor Day — no class	—
9/7	9/9	Citizen Competence and Democracy: Are citizens swayed by irrelevant events?	<i>Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance</i> (Healy et al.)
4	9/14	Citizen Competence and Democracy: Are citizens living in different factual worlds?	<i>Economic Behavior and the Partisan Perceptual Screen</i> (Mary McGrath)
	9/16	Campaigns and Participation: Models of vote choice	RAR Ch. 3, <i>Citizen Participation in Politics: An Interest in Self-Interest?</i>
5	9/21	Campaigns and Participation: Why do citizens participate? I	<i>Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment</i> (Gerber et al.)
	9/23	Campaigns and Participation: Why do citizens participate? II	<i>The Causal Effects of Income on Political Attitudes and Behavior: A Randomized Field Experiment</i> (Broockman et al.)
6	9/28	Midterm 1	—
9/28	9/30	Campaigns and Participation: How does election administration affect participation?	<i>Universal Vote-by-mail Has No Impact on Partisan Turnout or Vote Share</i> (Thompson et al.)
7	10/5	Campaigns and Participation: Can political campaigns persuade?	<i>The Effect of Television Advertising in United States Elections</i> (Sides et al.)

continued on next page

Course Schedule (continued)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings / Assignments
	10/7	Representation: Fundamentals of Congress	RAR Ch. 8, <i>Congress: Representation and Power</i>
8 10/12	10/12	Representation: Why are members of Congress so wealthy?	<i>Government By The Privileged</i> (Nicholas Carnes, Ch. 1 of <i>The Cash Ceiling</i>)
	10/14	Representation: Does policy reflect the will of the majority?	<i>Responsiveness Without Representation: Evidence from Minimum Wage Laws in U.S. States</i> (Simonovits et al.)
9 10/19	10/19	Representation: Why is there an incumbency advantage?	<i>Evaluating (In)experience in Congressional Elections</i> (Porter et al.)
	10/21	Influence: Fundamentals of Interest Groups	RAR Ch. 5, <i>Interest Groups and Pluralist Theory: Self-Interest in the Republic Reconsidered</i>
10 10/26	10/26	Influence: How much do campaign donations influence politicians?	<i>Do Campaign Contributions Buy Favorable Policies?</i> (Fouirnaies et al.)
	10/28	Influence: Are lobbyists paid for their expertise or connections?	<i>Revolving Door Lobbyists</i> (Blanes I Vidal et al.)
11 11/2	11/2	Influence: Lobbying over time	<i>The Evolution of Firm Lobbying in American Politics</i> (Hanegraaff et al.)
	11/4	Midterm 2	—
12 11/9	11/9	Polarization: Fundamentals of political parties	RAR Ch. 6, <i>Political Parties: An Alternative to the Republic?</i>
	11/11	Polarization: Why is Congress so polarized? I	—
13 11/16	11/16	Polarization: Why is Congress so polarized? II	<i>Who Wants to Run</i> (Andy Hall, Ch. 1 of <i>Who Wants to Run</i>)
	11/18	Polarization: Do Democrats and Republicans really dislike each other?	<i>The Policy Basis of Measured Partisan Animosity in the United States</i> (Orr et al.)
14 11/23	11/23	Media: Does the media facilitate accountability?	Podcast: <i>The Death of Local News is Killing American Democracy</i> (Deseret News)
	11/25	Reading day — no class	—
15 11/30	11/30	Media; Are we stuck in partisan news bubbles?	<i>Untrustworthy sources on Facebook and Instagram in 2020: Concentrated exposure but no attitudinal effects</i> (Bergeron-Boutin et al.)
	12/2	Review	—
16	12/8	Final exam	—

Optional Papers

Part I: Citizen Competence and Democracy

- Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2004. "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks." Working paper.
- Ashworth, Scott and Anthony Fowler. 2020. "Electoralates versus Voters." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*.
- Bullock, John G., Alan S. Gerber, Seth J. Hill, and Gregory Huber. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs About Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Busby, Ethan C., James N. Druckman, and Alexandria Fredendall. 2017. "The Political Relevance of Irrelevant Events." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Fowler, Anthony. 2020. "Defending Sober Voters against Sensationalist Scholars: A Reply to Rogers." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Fowler, Anthony, and Andrew B. Hall. 2018. "Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Gregory A. Huber. 2009. "Partisanship and Economic Behavior: Do Partisan Differences in Economic Forecasts Predict Real Economic Behavior?" *American Political Science Review*.
- Rogers, Steven. 2020. "Sobering up after 'Partisan Intoxication or Policy Voting?'" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

Part II: Campaigns and Participation

- Ang, Desmond. 2019. "Do 40-Year-Old Facts Still Matter? Long-Run Effects of Federal Oversight under the Voting Rights Act." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.
- Baicker, Katherine, and Amy Finkelstein. 2019. "The Impact of Medicaid Expansion on Voter Participation: Evidence from the Oregon Health Insurance Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Cantoni, Enrico, and Vincent Pons. 2021. "Strict ID Laws Don't Stop Voters: Evidence from a US Nationwide Panel, 2008–2018." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Cascio, Elizabeth U., and Ebonya Washington. 2014. "Valuing the Vote: The Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Enos, Ryan D., and Anthony Fowler. 2014. "Pivotality and Turnout: Evidence from a Field Experiment in the Aftermath of a Tied Election." *Political Science Research and Methods*.
- Enos, Ryan D., and Anthony Fowler. 2018. "Aggregate Effects of Large-Scale Campaigns on Voter Turnout." *Political Science Research and Methods*.
- Fresh, Adriane. 2018. "The Effect of the Voting Rights Act on Enfranchisement: Evidence from North Carolina." *Journal of Politics*.
- Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, and Daron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-Lasting are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review*.

- Green, Donald P. and Lynn Vavreck. 2008. "Analysis of Cluster-Randomized Field Experiments: A Comparison of Alternative Estimation Approaches." *Political Analysis*.
- Grimmer, Justin, and Jesse Yoder. 2021. "The Durable Differential Deterrent Effects of Strict Photo Identification Laws." *Political Science Research and Methods*.
- Grumbach, Jacob M., and Charlotte Hill. 2020. "Rock the Registration: Same Day Registration Increases Turnout of Young Voters." *Journal of Politics*.
- Hall, Andrew B., and Daniel M. Thompson. 2018. "Who Punishes Extremist Nominees? Candidate Ideology and Turning Out the Base in US Elections." *American Political Science Review*.
- Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. 2018. "The Minimal Persuasive Effects of Campaign Contact in General Elections: Evidence From 49 Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review*.
- Krasno, Jonathan S., and Donald P. Green. 2008. "Do Televised Presidential Ads Increase Voter Turnout? Evidence From a Natural Experiment." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Moskowitz, Daniel J., and Benjamin Schneer. 2019. "Reevaluating Competition and Turnout in US House Elections." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Spenkuch, Jörg L., and David Toniatti. 2018. "Political Advertising and Election Results." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Yoder, Jesse, Cassandra Handan-Nader, Andrew Myers, Tobias Nowacki, Daniel M. Thompson, Jennifer A. Wu, Chenoa Yorgason, and Andrew B. Hall. 2021. "How Did Absentee Voting Affect the 2020 US Election?" Working paper.

Part III: Representation

- Feigenbaum, James J., and Andrew B. Hall. 2015. "How Legislators Respond to Localized Economic Shocks: Evidence from Chinese Import Competition." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Fowler, Anthony and Andrew B. Hall. 2016. "The Elusive Quest for Convergence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Sances, Michael W. 2021. "Do District Attorneys Represent Their Voters? Evidence from California's Era of Criminal Justice Reform." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*.
- Tausanovitch, Chris, and Christopher Warshaw. 2014. "Representation in Municipal Government." *American Political Science Review*.

Part IV: Influence

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. De Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in US Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- Fowler, Anthony, Haritz Garro, and Jörg L. Spenkuch. 2020. "Quid Pro Quo? Corporate Returns to Campaign Contributions." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Kaplan, Ethan, Jörg L. Spenkuch, and Haishan Yuan. 2019. "Natural Disasters, Moral Hazard, and Special Interests in Congress." Working paper.
- Li, Zhao. 2018. "How Internal Constraints Shape Interest Group Activities: Evidence from Access-Seeking PACs." *American Political Science Review*.

Part V: Polarization

- Gift, Karen, and Thomas Gift. 2015. "Does Politics Influence Hiring? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment." *Political Behavior*.
- Hall, Andrew B. 2014. "How the Public Funding of Elections Increases Candidate Polarization." Working paper.
- Hall, Andrew B. 2015. "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?" *American Political Science Review*.
- Hill, Seth J., and Chris Tausanovitch. "A Disconnect in Representation? Comparison of Trends in Congressional and Public Polarization." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Hirano, Shigeo, James M. Snyder Jr, Stephen Daniel Ansolabehere, and John Mark Hansen. 2010. "Primary Elections and Partisan Polarization in the US Congress." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
- Huber, Gregory A., and Neil Malhotra. 2017. "Political Homophily in Social Relationships: Evidence from Online Dating Behavior." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129–146.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Klar, Samara, Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. 2018. "Affective Polarization or Partisan Disdain? Untangling a Dislike for the Opposing Party from a Dislike of Partisanship." *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- Masket, Seth E., Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright. 2012. "The Gerrymanderers are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It." *PS: Political Science & Politics*.
- McGhee, Eric, Seth Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, and Nolan McCarty. 2014. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislator Ideology." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Mummolo, Jonathan, and Clayton Nall. 2017. "Why Partisans Do Not Sort: The Constraints on Political Segregation." *The Journal of Politics*.
- Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *Journal of Politics*.

Part VI: Media

- DellaVigna, Stefano, and Ethan Kaplan. 2007. "The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Garz, Marcel, and Gregory J. Martin. 2021. "Media Influence on Vote Choices: Unemployment News and Incumbents' Electoral Prospects." *American Journal of Political Science*.

- Gentzkow, Matthew, and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2011. "Ideological Segregation Online and Offline." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Gerber, Alan S., Dean Karlan, and Daniel Bergan. 2009. "Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.
- Guess, Andrew M., Pablo Barberá, Simon Munzert, and JungHwan Yang. 2021. "The Consequences of Online Partisan Media." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
- Martin, Gregory J., and Joshua McCrain. 2019. "Local News and National Politics." *American Political Science Review*.
- Martin, Gregory J., and Ali Yurukoglu. 2017. "Bias in Cable News: Persuasion and Polarization." *American Economic Review*.
- Tyler, Matthew, Justin Grimmer, and Shanto Iyengar. Forthcoming. "Partisan Enclaves and Information Bazaars: Mapping Selective Exposure to Online News." *Journal of Politics*.
- Wang, Tianyi. 2021. "Media, Pulpit, and Populist Persuasion: Evidence From Father Coughlin." *American Economic Review*.