

**PS119-03: Political Representation in America**  
\*\*\*Last updated 1/4/11\*\*\*

Spring 2011

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*Class meets:* BLOCK 6: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 4:00pm in Jackson 6.

*Office hours:* Mondays, 10:30 – 11:45, Thursdays 3:00 – 4:00, and by appointment.

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**Course Description:**

This seminar examines several aspects of political representation in the United States. Particular attention is given to debates about what constitutes “good” or “effective” representation and proposals for reform. Topics include Congressional redistricting, electoral competition, whether Congress should “look like America,” term limits, the relationship between public opinion and policy making, and how elected officials learn about public opinion. We address democratic theory and study the impact that electoral rules have on public opinion, political behavior, and representation. Assignments include two short papers, one research paper, a midterm report, and weekly discussions.

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss issues raised in the readings. Please read the assigned materials *before class* on the date they are listed. Class participation is an essential component of the course. I expect you to have read the assignments prior to class and to have something to say about them. For weeks in which there is more than one reading listed, please read the items in the order in which they appear on the syllabus. I strongly encourage you to follow current events and to read a national newspaper, such as *The New York Times*, or watch *The PBS News Hour* several times per week. I rely on current political issues and events for illustration, and I welcome your examples and observations in this regard.

Note: This course satisfies the “advanced seminar” requirement for Political Science majors, and is part of the Department’s subfield in American Politics. It falls under the University’s “Social Sciences” distribution. *Prerequisite:* any American politics course.

**Course readings:**

The following books are required reading for the course. They are on sale at the bookstore and on reserve in the library:

1. Mezey, Michael. 2008. *Representative Democracy: Legislators and Their Constituents*. Rowman & Littlefield.
2. Tate, Katherine. 2003. *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the U.S. Congress*. Princeton University Press.
3. Hibbing, John, & Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth. 2002. *Stealth Democracy: Americans’ Beliefs about How Government Should Work*. Cambridge University Press.

4. Kull, Steven, and Destler, I.M. 1999. *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism*. Brookings Institution Press.
5. Brunell, Thomas. 2008. *Redistricting and Representation: Why Competitive Elections are Bad for America*. Routledge.
6. Amy, Douglas. 2002. *Real Choices/New Voices: How Proportional Representation Could Revitalize American Democracy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Columbia University Press.

Several required readings are posted on the course website on Blackboard (B), under “Course Documents” → “Readings.”

**Course Website on Blackboard:**

If you are already registered for PS119, you should have access to the course website on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.tufts.edu>). Follow the log-in instructions. There, you will find the syllabus, some course readings, threads for our weekly discussions, and external links relevant to our course. I will use Blackboard to send emails to the class regarding announcements and possible syllabus changes or updates.

If you haven’t been added to the course site yet, you can view it as a guest by selecting “Course Catalog” from the main Blackboard site and following the appropriate links: “Tufts University Academic Course Sites,” → “School of Liberal Arts” → “Political Science” → “Schildkraut, Deborah.”

The registrar enters your Tufts e-mail address from the directory as the email address associated with your membership in our class. If you would like to change the email address the registrar sets for you, log in to Blackboard and select “Personal information” → “Edit personal information.” It is your responsibility to make sure your correct email address is entered in Blackboard, as you are responsible for receiving and reading emails that I send to the class.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Class participation:	15%
Midterm report:	20%
Reaction papers:	20% (2 papers at 10% each)
Prospectus:	5%
Presentation:	10%
Final paper:	30%

All assignments are graded out of 100 points. Any late submissions receive a 5-point penalty for each day they are late (including weekends). I use the chart below to convert numbers to letters:

97 – 100 = A+
94 – 96 = A
90 – 93 = A-
87 – 89 = B+
84 – 86 = B
80 – 83 = B-
77 – 79 = C+

74 – 76 = C  
70 – 73 = C-  
65 – 70 = D  
Below 65 = F

**Important Dates:**

March 8: Midterm report due in class  
March 22: Spring break: NO CLASS  
March 29: Paper prospectus due in class  
April 28: OPTIONAL: Draft of research paper due by 12 pm (hardcopies only).  
\*\*must include self-assessment statement\*\*  
May 9: Final paper due by 12pm (hardcopies only); deliver to Packard 210.

**Participation:**

Seminars are based on the collective pursuit of understanding. Our class sessions will consist of discussions and workshops. I will rarely lecture. Therefore, your attendance, preparation, and engagement are essential components of the course. Your participation is worth 15% of your course grade. You will be evaluated on your attendance, the quality of your preparation and involvement in discussion, and your diligence in meeting deadlines and posting discussion questions. I hope to see evidence of intellectual curiosity, hard work, the ability to critique ideas thoughtfully, and the ability to re-assess your own assumptions and arguments.

**Reaction papers:**

Each student writes 2 short reaction papers to the readings throughout the semester (4 - 5 pages; double-spaced, 1-inch margins, page numbers, 12 point Times New Roman font or 11 point Calibri font). *\*\*Papers must be submitted to me as an email attachment by 12pm on Monday, the day before we meet.\*\** You may **not** hand in a reaction paper for a week that has already passed. Your paper should include a brief summary of the arguments and evidence used and a critical evaluation of either the method of analysis or the argument itself. You may respond to any or all of the readings for that week—you are not required to write about every reading or chapter assigned. Pick an argument or section that is most interesting or thought provoking to you.

At the start of class, you will be called on to give a short presentation that summarizes the content of your paper in order to get our discussions started. This presentation is informal, though it should explain your ideas with some degree of thoroughness. I expect students *\*not\** writing reaction papers to listen carefully and to respond with thoughtful and challenging questions or reactions of their own so we can delve further into the ideas raised in the papers.

Each reaction paper is worth 10% of your course grade. You will select the weeks for your reactions during the 2<sup>nd</sup> course session. Remember that proper grammar, correct spelling, and appropriate citation of sources are minimum requirements for acceptable papers. An example of a successful reaction paper is available on Blackboard (“Course Documents” → “Related materials”).

### **Weekly discussion questions:**

In weeks when you are not writing a reaction paper, you are expected to post on Blackboard one discussion question from the readings. The goal of this assignment is to encourage you to think critically about course material. Where appropriate, I will incorporate your comments and questions into that week's discussion. Your diligence in regularly completing this assignment will be factored into your grade for class participation. *Questions should be posted no later than 9am the day that class meets.* The earlier you post them, the greater the likelihood that I will be able to incorporate your observations into the discussion. I encourage you to log-in to the course site before class to read the questions your classmates have posted. You can find a guide to writing effective questions posted on Blackboard under "Course Documents." READ IT!

To post a question:

- Log in to PS119 on Blackboard
- Select:
  1. "Discussion board"
  2. The forum for the appropriate week
  3. "Thread"
- Then type your comments/questions and hit "Submit" on the bottom right

### *Optional way to boost participation grade:*

If you are typically shy, or have missed more classes than you had hoped, or if you simply want to work more on class participation, one way to boost your participation grade is to send a short (1 -2 pgs) reflection essay *after* our weekly class meeting. This essay can consist of (1) your reflections on the course discussion for that day, (2) new insights about the readings that emerged after we had a chance to discuss them, or (3) comments you wanted to make in class but did not get a chance to say. If you choose to write a post-class reflection essay, you must send it to me within 24 hours of our class session. Reflections to previous classes should not be sent. Send the essay to me as an email attachment. You may write as many or as few of these essays as you like throughout the semester. As with all written work for our course, proper grammar and citation of sources is required.

### **Midterm report:**

You are to write a short midterm report on the nature of representation of an electoral unit. This report is due in class on **March 8**. For this paper, you are to choose any elected unit in the United States in which you have lived (state, congressional district, city, etc.) and write a report assessing the extent to which it currently provides (or has ever provided) descriptive, substantive, symbolic, and/or casework/earmark representation to its constituency. You may choose the United States House or Senate, the Congressional delegation from just one state, the upper and/or lower houses from any state, etc. You do not need to write about every conceivable demographic group. You can choose to provide an in-depth analysis of one group, or you can analyze multiple groups. The paper should be between 6 and 10 pages.

Your report should not consist entirely of demographic or legislative information obtained from the internet. Successful reports will link what you find from primary sources with research and

concepts covered in class. In other words, you must also use course materials. Connect the information you find with broader debates about different types of representation.

This report is worth 20% of your course grade. It should double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with either 12 point Times New Roman font or 11 point Calibri font. Number your pages. I suspect that you will use a lot of internet sources to complete this assignment. Be sure to cite your sources fully, including the dates you accessed on-line content. Use the author-date system described in the Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide (this and other citation guides are posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”).

Be prepared to talk about your paper for about 5 minutes in class on the day it is due.

### **Final paper:**

Forty-five percent of your course grade will be based on your work for a research paper. The paper itself should be about 15 - 20 pages and is worth 30% of your course grade (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with either 12 point Times New Roman font or 11 point Calibri font). A prospectus is worth 5% of your course grade. A 20-minute presentation of your work is worth 10% of your course grade. The presentations will occur during the last few weeks of class. We will go over what is expected in these assignments in much more detail throughout the semester.

The goal of this paper is to provide a literature review on a topic of your choosing, provided that it relates to one of the weekly themes of our course. The purpose of a literature review is to identify a research question that interests you, determine what existing scholarship has to say about the question, critique that scholarship, and suggest *specific* avenues for future research. Examples of potentially successful topics include:

- The impact of descriptive representation on male/white/etc. voters or legislators.
- Whether certain types of issues are more likely to exhibit constituency leadership and whether other types of issues are more likely to exhibit elite leadership.
- Whether partisan gerrymandering has increased ideological polarization in Congress.
- Whether partisan gerrymandering has decreased electoral competition.
- Whether particular campaign finance reforms should be expected to increase or decrease electoral competition.
- Whether term limits improve or worsen the nature of representation.

A paper prospectus is due in class on **March 29**. This prospectus should include a summary of the main topic and goal of your paper, a plan of action for completing the project on time, and a list of sources consulted to date. It should be at least *3 pages*.

Each student is expected to have at least **two** meetings with me for this assignment: one before the prospectus is due, and one after. I will go over a *complete* draft of your final paper if you wish, but only if you get it to me by **12pm on Thursday, April 28**. If you hand in a draft, you must also include a brief “self-assessment statement” indicating what *you* think about the paper so far (i.e. In what areas would you like the most guidance? Do you have specific concerns you’d like me to address? Which parts of the paper do you think are the strongest?). The paper itself is due by **12pm on May 9**.

Number your pages. Be sure to cite your sources fully, including the dates you accessed on-line content. Use the author-date system described in the Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide (this and other citation guides are posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”).

### **Academic integrity:**

Assignments that you submit for this course will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs if any evidence of academic dishonesty is detected. The Office of the Dean of Students publishes a thorough pamphlet on academic integrity and plagiarism. You can find it at: <http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/Academic%20Integrity%2010-11.pdf> /. When in doubt, cite!

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### **Topics and Readings:**

Week 1; Jan. 25: Introduction

Week 2: Feb. 1: What is representation? Why representation?

Reading:

- PS119 syllabus; think about reaction paper preferences.
- (B) Guide to Writing Effective Discussion Questions.
- Mezey, Michael. 2008. *Representative Democracy: Legislators and Their Constituents*.
  - Chs. 1 – 2 (entire), Ch3 (only to p. 64), and Ch. 7 (to p. 185).
- (B) Pitkin, Hanna. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Ch. 1.
  - The first chapter of a seminal book on theories of representation.
- (B) Madison, James. Federalist papers #10 and #51.
  - Two important essays justifying the nature of American-style representative government, to convince critics to adopt the U.S. Constitution.
- (B) “Lawmakers Face Hostile Groups at Town Halls,” from NPR’s *All Things Considered*, 8/4/09.
- OPTIONAL: (B) Urbinati, Nadia, and Mark Warren. 2008. “The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11: 387 – 412.
  - A review essay that covers many of the major topics of our course.
- No reaction papers this week; everyone should post a discussion question on Blackboard.

**\*\*select reaction paper topics today\*\***

Week 3: Feb. 8: Trustees, Delegates, Responsiveness, and Congruence

Reading:

- Mezey, Michael. 2008. *Representative Democracy: Legislators and Their Constituents*.
  - Ch. 4 (**skim**); Ch. 5 (read entire).
- (B) Monroe, Alan. 1998. “Public Opinion and Public Policy: 1980 – 1993.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62: 6 – 28.
  - An update of a classic study of the ways in which polls and policy do/don’t move in tandem (focuses on collective rather than dyadic representation).

- (B) Aldrich, John, et al. 2006. “Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9: 477 – 502. **SKIM to page 491; read the rest.**
  - A review essay of research on public opinion about foreign policy (focuses on collective rather than dyadic representation).
- (B) Fenno, Richard. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*.
  - Intro & Ch. 1, plus pp. 54 – 61; 136 – 152; 162 – 168; and 232 – 247.
  - Classic book in American politics; author writes about members of Congress at home in their districts rather than in D.C.
- (B) Links on earmarks.
  - Murray, Shailagh. 2010. “In Sudden Reversal, GOP Leader McConnell will back ban on earmarks,” *Washington Post*.
  - Carney, Eliza Newlin. 2008. “The War on Earmarks Moves to the Obama Era.” *National Journal Magazine*.
  - Rauch, Jonathan. 2009. “Earmarks are a Model, Not a Menace,” *National Journal Magazine*.
  - The Club for Growth: 2009 RePORK Card.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 4: Feb. 15: Stealth Democracy

Reading:

- Hibbing, John, and Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth. 2002. *Stealth Democracy: American’s Beliefs About How Government Should Work*. Cambridge University Press.
  - Intro: pp. 1 – 6.
  - Ch 1: pp. 15 – 29.
  - Ch 2: pp. 36 – 48; skim pp. 54 – 59.
  - Ch 3: pp. 65 – 79.
  - Ch 4: pp. 87 – 95;
  - Ch 5: pp. 112 – 128.
  - Ch 6: pp. 129 – 141; 150 – 159.
  - Ch. 7: 170 – 182.
  - Ch. 8: 185 – 191; 196 – 201.
  - Ch. 9: entire.
- (B) Schraufnagel, Scot, and Halperin, Karen. 2006. “Term Limits, Electoral Competition, and Representational Diversity: The Case of Florida.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, v6, n4, pp. 448 – 462.
- OPTIONAL: (B) Nalder, Kimberly. 2007. “The Effect of State Legislative Term Limits on Voter Turnout.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, v7, n2, pp. 187 – 210.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 5: Feb. 22: Redistricting and competition

Reading:

- Brunell, Thomas. 2008. *Redistricting and Representation: Why Competitive Elections are Bad for America*. Routledge.
  - Read entire book except chapter 5.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Film screening in class today: *Can Mr. Smith Still Get to Washington?*

- Film is also on reserve in Tisch: FDV7799

**\*\*Discuss final projects today\*\***

Week 6: March 1: Descriptive representation

Reading:

- Mezey, Michael. 2008. *Representative Democracy: Legislators and Their Constituents*.
  - Ch. 3 (pp. 64 – 84).
- Tate, Katherine. 2003. *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the U.S. Congress*. Princeton University Press.
  - Ch. 1.
  - Ch. 2 (34 – 49).
  - Ch. 4.
  - Chs. 6 – 9.
- (B) Carroll, Susan. 2002. “Representing Women: Congresswomen’s Perceptions of Their Representational Roles,” in *Women Transforming Congress*, edited by Cindy Simon Rosenthal, University of Oklahoma Press.
  - Article with interviews of female members of congress on the topic of “surrogate representation.”
- (B) Wolbrecht, Christina. 2002. “Female Legislators and the Women’s Rights Agenda,” in *Women Transforming Congress*, edited by Cindy Simon Rosenthal, University of Oklahoma Press.
  - Article examining whether female legislators are more likely to introduce and cosponsor legislation on “women’s issues”. Read to pp. 188 only.
- (B) OPTIONAL: Barreto, Matt, et al. 2004. “The mobilizing effect of majority-minority districts on Latino turnout,” *American Political Science Review*, 98: 65 – 75.
  - Note: the statistics used in this reading are complex. If you read it, focus on the concepts and hypotheses the authors use and on the implications of their findings.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 7: March 8: Finding primary and secondary sources

Reading:

- (B) Knopf, Jeffrey. 2006. “Doing a Literature Review,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, pp. 127 – 132.

- (B) Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide: In Blackboard, “Course Documents” → “Citation Guides.”
  - Be prepared to talk for about 5 minutes about your paper.
- \*\*Midterm report due in class today\*\***

Week 8: March 15: What do political elites think of public opinion?

Reading:

- Kull and Destler: Misreading the Public
  - Study showing that members of the “policy community” had misperceptions about public opinion on the US’s role in the world after the Cold War.
  - Ch1: entire. Ch2: pp. 35-38, 42-45, 55-57.
  - Ch3: pp. 59-63, 67-71.
  - Ch4: entire. Ch5, pp. 113-128.
  - Ch7: pp. 153-160, 167-178.
  - Chs 9 & 10: entire. Ch1: pp. 229-239.
  - Ch12: pp. 261-265.
- (B) Herbst, Susan. 2002. “How State-Level Policy Managers ‘Read’ Public Opinion,” in *Navigating Public Opinion*, edited by Manza, Cook, and Page, Oxford University Press.
  - Study of legislative staffers in Illinois and how they assess public opinion.
- (B) Cook, Barabas, and Page. 2002. “Invoking Public Opinion: Policy Elites and Social Security.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66: 235 – 264.
  - Study examining when/how representatives talk about public opinion during policy deliberations and if they do so accurately.
- (B) Pew Center for People and the Press. 1998. “Public Appetite for Government Misjudged: Washington Leaders Wary of Public Opinion.”
  - Read to page 1- 10 only.
  - Study that examines from where political leaders get their information about public opinion.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 9: March 22: Spring Break: NO CLASS

Week 10: March 29: Bringing the Citizens Back In: Direct Democracy and Deliberation

Reading:

- (B) Smith, Daniel, & Tolbert, Caroline. 2007. “The Instrumental and Educative Effects of Ballot Measures: Research on Direct Democracy in the American States,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 7: 416 – 445.
  - Review essay on the varied impacts of ballot initiatives.

- (B) Gerber, Elisabeth. 2001. “The Logic of Reform: Assessing Initiative Reform Strategies,” in *Dangerous Democracy? The Battle Over Ballot Initiatives in America*, edited by Larry Sabato, et al. Rowman & Littlefield.
  - Chapter describing proposed reforms to direct democracy.
- (B) Bowler, Shaun, Donovan, Todd, & Karp, Jeffrey. 2007. “Enraged or Engaged? Preferences for Direct Citizen Participation in Affluent Democracies.” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Sep., 2007), pp. 351-362.
  - Article testing which people actually \*want\* direct democracy.
- SKIM (B) Bowler, Shaun, and Donovan, Todd. 2002. “Democracy, Institutions, and Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Government,” *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 32, pp. 371-390.
  - Article testing whether citizens exposed to direct democracy have more positive views regarding responsiveness and efficacy.
- Remember to post discussion questions.
- **\*\*paper prospectus due in class\*\***

Week 11: April 5: Alternatives

Reading:

- Amy, Douglas. 2002. *Real Choices/New Voices: How Proportional Representation Could Revitalize American Democracy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Columbia University Press.
  - Introduction: entire.
  - Ch 1: entire
  - Ch 3: pp. 74 – 78.
  - Ch 4: pp. 94 – 107.
  - Ch. 6: pp. 137 – 149.
  - Chs. 7 – 10: entire.
  - Ch 11: pp. 235 – 240.
- (B) Mast, Tory. “The History of Single Member Districts in Congress,” from Fairvote.org.
- (B) Rehfeld, Andrew. 2005. *The Concept of Constituency*, ch9 and epilogue. Cambridge.
  - A though experiment on a somewhat radical proposal.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 12: April 12: Project presentations

Week 13: April 19: Project presentations

Week 14: April 26: Project presentations

Thursday, April 28: Drafts of final papers due by 12pm. Hard copies only! (optional)

**\*\*must include self-assessment statement\*\***

Monday, May 9: Final paper due by 12pm. Deliver hard copy to Packard 210.