Field Seminar in the American Political System  
W 5:45-8:35 pm  
Husted 12

Course Description  
The Field Seminar in the American Political System introduces graduate students to the basic methods, theories, and normative concerns of scholars in American politics. The seminar is organized in two parts. Part I explores theories of power applied to American politics, each encompassing a distinctive approach for studying power, unique assumptions about society, specific techniques for analyzing data, and normative implications for democratic theory and democracy. We will focus on elite theory, pluralism, nondecision-making theory, structuralism, and rational choice. We will also examine readings on American Political development. Part II consists of guest lectures by members of the American Politics sub-field in the Political Science department. Each guest chooses a set of readings that refers to his or her own research. This segment gives students a chance to sample the different styles, approaches, research interests, and normative concerns of professors in the department. The seminar concludes with a review of inequality in the United States and its implications for democracy.

Required Readings  
•  The Antifederalist papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates, Ralph Ketcham, ed. (New American Library, 1986)  
•  The Federalist Papers, Clinton Rossiter, ed., Introduction by Charles R. Kesler (New American Library 1999)  
•  Sally Friedman, Dilemmas of Representation (State University of New York Press, 2007)  
•  J. Eric Oliver, Local Elections and the Politics of Small Scale Democracy (Princeton University Press, 2012)  
•  Blackboard course reader. Readings on Blackboard noted in boldface below.

Office Hours  
MW 10:30am -12:00 noon HU B16; W 4:00-5:00 pm Milne 219. If this schedule does not work for you, please make an appointment with me for a mutually convenient time and day.
Contact information: jcruz@albany.edu I will answer e-mails only M-F during business hours.

**Course Requirements**

**Participation - 20%** Students will be expected to take the lead in our class discussions. To that effect, every week a previously designated student will present a summary of the reading(s) and will present a discussion question(s) to the class.

I will play three roles: learning facilitator, devil’s advocate, and provider of knowledge. As a facilitator I will help students understand the text and I will enforce the rules of the learning process. As a devil’s advocate I will raise questions, suggest counter-arguments, and generally press students to argue their point. As a provider of knowledge I will supplement the information and analysis provided by the required readings, offer my own perspective, and strive to present a balanced view of the issues.

**Reaction Papers - 35%** Every week students will write a short paper (1-3 pages) on the assigned readings for that week. Use the reading "Issue Reaction Papers" on Blackboard as a guide. In cases where we review multiple readings, choose any one and focus your paper on that reading. Reaction papers are due the day of the seminar by e-mail. Make sure that your e-mail and paper clearly identify you by name. Follow this convention when naming the file: your last name_pos 521_Sp13_paper1

**Research Paper - 45%** This paper (15 pages) will be an essay on any one of the topics covered in the seminar. The paper does not have to involve original research. A critical review and synthesis of recent literature in the chosen area is acceptable. A short prospectus including the research question you intend to address and a short preliminary bibliography is required. The date to submit your research prospectus is February 20. Papers will be presented to the class on May 8. The time allotted for presentations will depend on the number of students in the seminar. The evaluation of the presentation will be part of the paper grade. The final version of the paper is due May 15.

**Course Outline**

**Part I**

**January**

23 | Introduction - Discussion of syllabus

**February**

6 | Federalists versus Antifederalists: The Federalist Papers, #6, 9, 10, 11, 15, 23, 47, 48, 51, 63, 68, 70, 78; The Antifederalist Papers, Introduction, pp. 42-49, 86-89, 130-134, 145-156, 165-175, 189-216, 226-309, and the Articles of
Confederation and the Constitution.


March

6 **Rational Choice:**


13 **American Political Development:** Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development*; **Symposium:** *A Cultural Theory of Politics*, PS 44:4 (October 2011): 703-748 (Symposium consists of an editor's introduction and eight separate articles).

Part II

27 **Race and Ethnicity –** José E. Cruz, David Carroll Cochran, "Ethnic Diversity and Democratic Stability: The Case of Irish Americans;” James Jennings,

April
3  Congress and Representation - Sally Friedman, Dilemmas of Representation; Susan J. Carroll, “Representing Women;” John W. Kingdon, “Models of Legislative Voting.”


24  Voting in Local Elections - Anne Hildreth - J. Eric Oliver, Local Elections and the Politics of Small Scale Democracy (Princeton University Press, 2012); PDF article TBD

May
1  Inequality in American Politics: American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality, Report of the American Political Science Association Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004; Frances Fox Piven, "Response to 'American Democracy in an Age of Inequality;"' Stephen Earl Bennett, "Comment on 'American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality;"' Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz, “Comparative Perspectives on Inequality and the Quality of Democracy in the United States,” Perspectives on Politics 9:4 (December 2011): 841-856

8  Presentation of research papers; early submission of paper; Class evaluation.

15  Final deadline for submission of research paper.