American Political Development (APD) is a growing subfield of American Politics, with important links to other fields of political science such as political theory, public law, and comparative politics. Rich with disagreements and debates about assumptions, approaches, and methods, the scholarship on APD is united by a concern for theoretically-informed study of the dynamics of political order and change across time. It posits an essential turn to political history to understand the patterns and tensions that constitute political life in the present. Rejecting the fragmentation of the field of American Politics into narrow specialties, it links government, politics, culture, and economics in a broad-gauged search for understanding.

This seminar will examine both classic and current scholarship on APD. It will introduce and compare the competing schools of theory and analysis: historical institutionalism, political culture, political economy, gender and racial approaches, etc. Readings will be extensive and challenging, with the goal of providing a strong foundation for further research or application to your particular areas of interest.

The following books are to be purchased. They can be found at Mary Jane Books or they can be purchased on-line.


Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Harvest Books)


David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America’s Destiny* (Cambridge University Press)


Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy* (Cornell University Press)


In addition, you will be asked to obtain one of several books on race and American political development. Articles and book chapters on the syllabus will be available on ERES.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Aug. 28  
**NO CLASS** (I will be at the APSA meeting in Boston)

Sept. 4  
On American Political Development as a new field in political science
Reading: Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development*

Sept. 11  
American political culture and political development
Reading: Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Ch. 1-5, 8-11

Sept. 18  
State-building and the field of APD
Reading: Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, pp. vii-ix, 3-84, 121-211, 248-292

Sept. 25  
Polity-centered analysis and the field of APD
Reading: Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* – on ERES
Theda Skocpol et al., “How Americans Became Civic,” in Morris Fiorina and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* – on ERES
Oct. 2  Constitutional choices and the shape of the American polity  
Reading: David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America’s Destiny*

Oct. 16  Historical institutionalism I: Parties and presidents  
Reading: Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*  
**Short paper due (for all students in the course)**

Oct. 23  Historical institutionalism II: Bureaucrats and state-building  
Reading: Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, Introduction, Ch. 1-8, Conclusion

Oct. 30  Historical institutionalism III: Congress and legislation  
Reading: Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*

Nov. 6  Political economy and institutional dynamics  
Reading: Richard Franklin Bensel, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization*, Preface, Ch. 1, 2 (19-23, 47-56, 83-100 only), 5 (349-354 only), 6, 7, 8

Nov. 13  Race and APD  
Choose one of the following books. You will deliver a brief oral report on the book for this week’s session.  
Richard Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement*  
Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*  
Robert C. Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*  
Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*  
Joseph Lowndes, Julie Novkov, and Dorian Warren, eds., *Race and American Political Development*

Nov. 20  Gender, institutions, and public policy  
Reading: Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens*

Dec. 4  APD and public policy: The case of immigration  
Reading: Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*

Dec. 11  **Fifteen-page paper due (for students receiving four course credits)**

Students taking the seminar for four credits will write a 15 page paper/literature review. Several suggested topics and potential readings for these papers will be found below. All students taking
the seminar will write a 6-8 paper earlier in the semester, comparing political culture and institutional approaches to APD. This assignment will be handed out in class. Participation in seminar discussions is expected and will be a factor in grading.

Some Suggested Topics and Relevant Readings:

**Political Change and Periodization**

Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*
David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*
Bruce Ackerman, *We the People: Foundations*

**Political Culture and Political Development**

Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*
James Morone, *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government*
James Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*
Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*
Michael Paul Rogen, *Ronald Reagan the Movie: and Other Episodes in Political Demonology*
J. David Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion*

**Political Parties and Political Development**

Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*
Scott James, *Presidents, Parties, and the State: A Party System Perspective on Democratic Regulatory Choice, 1884-1936*
John Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996*
Sidney Milks, *The Presidency and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal*
David Plotke, *Building a Democratic Political Order: Reshaping American Liberalism in the 1930s and 1940s*
John J. Coleman, *Party Decline in America: Policy, Politics, and the Fiscal State*
Bruce Miroff, *The Liberals’ Moment: the McGovern Insurgency and the Identity Crisis of the Democratic Party*
Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy*
The Presidency and Political Development

Stephen Skowronek, The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton
Sidney Milkis, The Presidency and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal
Jeffrey Tulis, The Rhetorical Presidency
David A. Crockett, The Opposition Presidency: Leadership and the Constraints of History
Kenneth R. Mayer, With the Stroke of a Pen: Executive Orders and Presidential Power
Keith Whittington, Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy: The Presidency, the Supreme Court, and Constitutional Leadership in U.S. History

Political Economy and Political Development

Elizabeth Sanders, Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917
Richard Franklin Bensel, Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880-1980
Victoria Hattam, Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionism in the United States
Karen Orren, Belated Feudalism: Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States
Brian Waddell, The War Against the New Deal: World War II and American Democracy
Ira Katznelson and Martin Shefter, eds., Shaped by War and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development

Gender and Political Development

Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States
Gwendolyn Mink, The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality and the Welfare State, 1917-1942
Rebecca Edwards, Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era
Christina Wolbrecht, The Politics of Women’s Rights: Parties, Positions, and Change
Patricia Strach, All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy

Public Policy and Political Development

Patricia Strach, All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy
Jacob Hacker, The Divided Welfare State: The Battle Over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States
Christopher Howard, The Hidden Welfare State
Suzanne Mettler, Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation
Andrea Louise Campbell, *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*

Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*