AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

This course is designed to help prepare graduate students to pass the comprehensive exam in the field of American Politics. We shall concentrate on two institutional terrains – Congress and the presidency with passing consideration of courts, the bureaucracy and political parties. Students are required to prepare a short discussion paper on one of each week’s readings and to take a final examination with questions similar to those asked on comprehensive exams.

In the readings listed below, a “*” indicates that everyone should come prepared to discuss the reading in depth, while other readings will be one for which a specific student will sign up to lead the discussion.

We will set up a Dropbox folder for class to which you can place pdf files of readings and your reports. Please let me know promptly if you cannot locate any of the materials. If, by chance, you missed or have forgotten your undergraduate course work on any of these topics, read appropriate chapters of Logic of American Politics (7th edition); this is important since much of the literature is analytical and assumes familiarity with the descriptive features of these institutions.

Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, The Federalist (any edition)
Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins, Legislative Leviathan (1993)
Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (any edition)
Paul Quirk and Sarah Binder, The Legislative Branch (2005)

INTRODUCTION

September 28

*The Federalist, Nos. 10 and 51 (outline and commit to memory)

October 5

CONGRESS

October 12 - History and Development


October 19 - Elections and Constituents


October 26 - Congressional Parties and Committees


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**November 2 - Making Decisions and Policy**


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**THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**November 9 - The Presidency**


*Baum, Matthew and Kernell (1999), “Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?” *APSR*


*Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power* (any edition), chs. 1-7. These chapters include all that was in the original 1960 edition; read as much as the later stuff as you find interesting.

**November 16 - Bureaucratic Politics**


**November 23 – Executive-Congressional Relations**

*Charles Cameron, Veto Bargaining*, 2000.


**THE COURTS**

**November 30**

*Martin Shapiro, Who Guards the Guardians?* (1988)
