

IV. Parties, Elections and Policy-making

Prof. David R. Mayhew

Yale University

Course nature. This is lecture course. It offers 50-minute lectures twice a week, reading assignments, a TA section once a week where readings will be discussed, a bluebook midterm exam, and a bluebook final exam.

Optional term paper. Any student who wishes to do so may write an optional ten-page (approximately) term paper on any topic addressed in the course and approved by the professor. Please pay a visit for advice on topic and sources.

One writing-intensive section. In it, each student will be asked to write multiple drafts of two 8-to-12-page papers instead of taking exams. Limited to 15 students.

Who can take the course? Any freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior is eligible. There are no formal prerequisites. However, a basic grasp of US political history and the contemporary US political scene would help.

The readings. The course doesn't have any "text" in the conventional sense. The readings are interpretive, historical, and theoretical, not text-like.

Course materials. Required books:

John Gerring, Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996

Andrew Gelman, Red State Blue State, Rich State Poor State

Alan Abramowitz, The Disappearing Center (paperback edition 1/24/11)

Gary C. Jacobson, The Politics of Congressional Elections (2009 paperback edition)

David R. Mayhew, Divided We Govern (2005 paperback edition)

Keith Krehbiel, Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking

David R. Mayhew, Partisan Balance (officially published 2/2/11)

Grading. The grading system will be: 30% for the midterm, 20% for participation in section, 50% for the final exam. For optional-paper-writers: 20% for the midterm, 20% for participation in section, 20% for the term paper, 40% for the final exam. For the writing-intensive section: 20% for participation; 80% for the papers.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Organization meeting Party dualism

No required reading

Week 2 – Party ideologies I

Required:

Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (1957), chs. 7 & 8

Philip E. Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” pp. 206-245 (plus endnotes at pp. 256-59) in David Apter (ed.), Ideology and Discontent (1964)

Suggested:

Steven Pinker, The Blank Slate (2002), ch. 16. Another possible “constraint” on belief systems, beyond Converse’s three.

Geoffrey C. Layman & Thomas M. Carsey, “Party Polarization and ‘Conflict Extension’ in the American Electorate,” American Journal of Political Science 46 (October 2002), 786-802. An update, of sorts, of Converse.

Bernard Grofman, “Downs and Two-Party Convergence,” pp. 225-46 in Annual Review of Political Science, vol. 7, 2004. This offers a catalog of various theoretical reasons why Downsian convergence might not occur.

Keith T. Poole & Howard Rosenthal, Ideology and Congress (2007). Dualization in congressional roll call voting, 1790s through today.

Week 3 – Party ideologies II

Required:

John Gerring, Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996 (1998), pp. 3-7 and chs. 4, 6, 7

Christopher Ellis & James A. Stimson, “Symbolic Ideology in the American Electorate,” Electoral Studies 28 (2009), 388-402

Suggested:

Seymour Martin Lipset & Gary Marks, It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States (2000), chs. 1 & 5.

Ronald D. Rotunda, The Politics of Language: Liberalism as Word and Symbol (1986). Where did the current usage of “liberal” and “conservative” come from?

Rhodi Jeffreys-Jones, “Changes in the Nomenclature of the American Left,” Journal of American Studies 44 (2010), 83-100. How did the usage—“left,” “socialism,” etc.—evolve during the 20th century?

Jo Freeman, “The Political Culture of the Democratic and Republican Parties,” Political Science Quarterly 101 (1986), pp. 327-56. Discusses party organizational differences rooted in differing ideologies.

Robert Freedman, “The Religious Right and the Carter Administration,” The Historical Journal 48:1 (2005), 231-60. When and why did the Republicans come to accommodate the modern religious right?

David C. Barker & Christopher Jan Carman, “The Spirit of Capitalism? Religious Doctrine, Values, and Economic Attitude Constructs,” Political Behavior 22 (2000), 1-27. Just why is it that born-again Christians tend to vote Republican?

George Lakoff, “Metaphor, Morality, and Politics, or, Why Conservatives Have Left Liberals in the Dust,” Social Research 62 (summer 1995), no. 2, pp. 177-213. A deconstruction of contemporary ideologies on the cultural/moral front.

Bruce Miroff, The Liberals' Moment: The McGovern Insurgency and the Identity Crisis of the Democratic Party (2007). Sees the McGovernites of 1972 as seedbed of the modern Democratic Party ideology.

Week 4 – Presidential elections: longitudinal patterns

Required:

Larry M. Bartels & John Zaller, “Presidential Vote Models: A Recount,” PS: Political Science and Politics 34 (March 2001), 9-20

Daniel J. Gans, “Persistence of Party Success in American Presidential Elections,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 16 (1986), 221-37.

Suggested:

Ray C. Fair, "Presidential and Congressional Vote-Shares Equations," American Journal of Political Science 53:1 (January 2009), 55-72

James E. Campbell et al., "Symposium: Forecasting the 2008 National Elections," PS: Political Science and Politics 41:4 (October 2008), 679-732. A series of short pieces by forecasters. They did pretty well this time.

Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (1970), chs. 1-2, 7. The leading statement of "realignments" theory.

Helmut Norpoth & Jerrold D. Rusk, "Electoral Myth and Reality: Realignment in American Politics," Electoral Studies 26 (2007), 292-303. There is more stickiness in congressional elections.

Samuel Merrill III, Bernard Grofman & Thomas L. Brunell, "Cycles in American National Politics, 1854-2006: Statistical Evidence and an Explanatory Model," American Political Science Review 102:1 (February 2008), 1-17. Through one technique, there is evidence of cycles in congressional elections.

David R. Mayhew, Electoral Realignment: A Critique of an American Genre (2002).

David R. Mayhew, "Incumbency Advantage in Presidential Elections: The Historical Record," Political Science Quarterly 123:2 (Summer 2008), 2101-28. Covers 1788 through 2004.

David R. Mayhew, "Wars and American Politics," Perspectives on Politics 3:3 (September 2005), 473-93. Covers War of 1812, War with Mexico, Civil War, World Wars I & II.

Michael P. McDonald & Samuel L. Popkin, "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter," American Political Science Review 95 (2001), 963-74. These authors find no (pre-2004) decline in turnout since the 1970s if measurement is done properly.

Week 5 – Presidential elections: demographic patterns

Required:

Andrew Gelman et al., Red State Blue State, Rich State Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do, chs. 1-7

Suggested:

Edward L. Glaeser & Bryce A. Ward, "Myths and Realities of American Political Geography," Journal of Economic Perspectives 20:2 (Spring 2006), 97-118

Stephen Ansolabehere, Jonathan Rodden & James M. Snyder, Jr., "Purple America," Journal of Economic Perspectives 20:2 (Spring 2006), 97-118. Argues that cultural views don't motor regional voting disparities very much.

Harold W. Stanley & Richard G. Niemi, "Partisanship, Party Coalitions, and Group Support, 1952-2004," Presidential Studies Quarterly 36:2 (June 2006), 172-88. Partisan identification is the dependent variable.

Mark D. Brewer & Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Split: Class and Cultural Divides in American Politics (2007). Trends during the last few decades.

Michael Hout et al., "The Democratic Class Struggle in the United States, 1948-1992," American Sociological Review 60 (1995), 8-5-28. Shows a growing partisan cleavage between professionals and business people.

James L. Guth et al., "Religious Influences in the 2004 Presidential Election," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 36:2 (June 2006), 223-42

Week 6 – Polarization**Required:**

Alan I. Abramowitz, The Disappearing Center, chs. 1-6

Suggested:

Morris P. Fiorina with Samuel J. Abrams, Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics (2009). Polarization at the elite level.

Pietro S. Nivola & David W. Brady (eds.), Red and Blue Nation, vol I, Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics (2006). Essays by leading authors on the subject.

Pietro S. Nivola & David W. Brady (eds.), Red and Blue Nation, vol II, Consequences and Correction of America's Polarized Politics (2008). Also.

Gary C. Jacobson, A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People (2007). A polarizing figure.

Tim Groeling, "Who's the Fairest of Them All? An Empirical Test for Partisan Bias on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox News," Presidential Studies Quarterly 38:4 (December 2008), 631-57. The media as helpers of polarization.

Riccard Puglisi, "Being the New York Times: The Political Behavior of a Newspaper," MIT manuscript, March 3, 2006. Available online. Political bias?

Stefano Della Vigna & Ethan Kaplan, "The Fox New Effect: Media Bias and Voting," March 30, 2006 manuscript. Available online. Introducing Fox helped the GOP?

Richard A. Posner, "Bad News," New York Times Book Review, July 31, 2005. Argues that the rise of new media is ideologically polarizing the traditional media.

Week 7 – Congressional elections

Required:

Gary C. Jacobson, The Politics of Congressional Elections (2009 edition)

Suggested:

D. Roderick Kiewiet & Michael Udell, "Twenty-Five Years After Kramer: An Assessment of Economic Retrospective Voting Based upon Improved Estimates of Income and Unemployment," Economics and Politics 10 (1998), 219-48. The most comprehensive econometric analysis of House elections. It covers 51 biennial elections from 1892 through 1992.

Robert S. Erikson, "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss," Journal of Politics 50 (1988), 1011-29. Why does the party controlling the White House routinely lose House seats in a midterm?

Alan Abramowitz, "Explaining Senate Election Outcomes," American Political Science Review 82 (1988), 385-403. The various predictive factors.

Matthew S. Shugart, "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government," American Political Science Review 89 (1995), 327-43. What happens in midterm elections in other countries with presidential systems?

Gary C. Jacobson, "The 1994 House Elections in Perspective," Political Science Quarterly 111:2 (Summer 1996), 203-23. House Democrats who voted for Clinton's budget, crime bill, and NAFTA (as opposed to those who didn't) were hammered in the 1994 election.

John Ferejohn, "A Tale of Two Congresses: Social Policy in the Clinton Years," ch. 2 in Margaret Weir (ed.), The Social Divide (1998). A companion piece to the Jacobson article just above. It addresses the electoral effects of House roll call voting in both the 1994 and 1996 elections.

Gary D. Jacobson, "Referendum: The 2006 Midterm Congressional Elections," Political Science Quarterly 122:1 (Spring 2007), 1-24

Week 8 – Midterm week

Required:

Gary C. Jacobson, "The 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections: Anti-Bush Referendum and Prospects for the Democratic Majority," Political Science Quarterly 124:1 (Spring 2009), 1-30.

Suggested:

David A. Hopkins, "The 2008 Election and the Political Geography of the New Democratic Majority," Polity 41:3 (July 2009), 368-87

James W. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch & John J. Pitney, Jr., Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics (2009)

Michael Nelson (ed.), The Elections of 2008 (2009)

Week 9 – Unified vs. divided party control and lawmaking I

Required:

David R. Mayhew, Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-2002 (2005 edition), chs. 1, 3, 4

Suggested:

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Cycles of American Politics," ch. 2 in Schlesinger, The Cycles of American History (1986). The Progressive era, the New Deal, and the 1960s-70s as eras of max-out policymaking.

James L. Sundquist, "Needed: A Political Theory for the New Era of Coalition Government in the United States," Political Science Quarterly 103 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 613-35. The importance of unified party control of the government.

Sarah A. Binder, Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock (2003). Uses a measure of policy demand as denominator.

John Lapinski & Joshua Clinton, "Measuring Legislative Accomplishment, 1877-1946," American Journal of Political Science 50 (January 2006), 232-49. A good measure of congressional production of laws during that long span.

Week 10 – Unified vs. divided party control and lawmaking II

Required:

Mayhew, Divided We Govern, chs. 5-7 and Epilogue

Keith Krehbiel, Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking (1998), chs. 2, 3

Suggested:

David W. Brady & Craig Volden, Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy from Carter to Clinton (1998). Carries out the gridlock logic as in Krehbiel.

Gregory J. Wawro & Eric Schickler, "Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate," American Journal of Political Science 48 (2004), 758-74. Looking into the past, what is the record of minority obstruction in the Senate?

Paul Frymer, "Ideological Consensus within Divided Party Government," Political Science Quarterly 109:2 (1994), 287-311. The importance of congressional factions like the Blue Dogs.

Morris P. Fiorina, Divided Government (2002). A general treatment.

Week 11 – Partisan balance I

Required:

David R. Mayhew, Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System, Introduction & chs. 1, 2

Suggested:

Robert A. Dahl, How Democratic Is the American Constitution? (2002). A critique of several aspects of the U.S. Constitution on democratic grounds.

Sanford Levinson, Our Undemocratic Constitution: Where the Constitution Goes Wrong (And How We the People Can Correct It) (2006)

Jacob S. Hacker & Paul Pierson, Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy (2006). A stacked deck during the G W. Bush years?

Charles Stewart & Barry R. Weingast, "Stacking the Senate, Changing the Nation: Republican Rotten Boroughs, Statehood Politics, and American Political Development," Studies in American Political Development 6:2 (1992), 223-71. The GOP skew of the U.S. Senate in the late 19th century.

Stephen Ansolabehere & James M. Snyder, Jr., The End of Inequality: One Person, One Vote and the Transformation of American Politics (2008). On the importance of the redistricting revolution of the 1960s.

David Samuels, "The Value of a Vote: Malapportionment in Comparative Perspective," British Journal of Political Science 31 (2001), 651-71. Among the worlds' legislative bodies, the U.S. Senate ranks very high in population inequality across its geographic units.

Ron Johnston, David Rossiter & Charles Pattie, "Disproportionality and Bias in US Presidential Elections: How Geography Helped Bush Defeat Gore but Couldn't Help Kerry Beat Bush," Political Geography 24 (2005), 952-68. The Electoral College favored the Republicans in 2000, the Democrats (although without tipping the result) in 2004.

Stephen Ansolabehere, David Brady & Morris Fiorina, "The Vanishing Marginals and Electoral Responsiveness," British Journal of Political Science 22:1 (1992),

21-38. Why did the Democrats hold the U.S. House for 40 consecutive years through 1994?

Week 12 – Partisan balance II

Required:

Mayhew, Partisan Balance, chs. 3-5

Suggested:

Paul C. Light, The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy through Carter (1982). Authoritative study.

Haynes Johnson & David S. Broder, The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point (1996). Classic study of Clinton's health-care drive in 1993-94.

Barry R. Weingast & William J. Marshall, "The Industrial Organization of Congress, or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, Are Not Organized as Markets," Journal of Political Economy 96:1 (February 1988), 132-63. Congressional committees as fiefdoms.

Gary W. Cox & Mathew D. McCubbins, Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House (1993); followed up by Cox & McCubbins, Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the House of Representatives (2005). A case that majority party "cartels" motor the U.S. House to the detriment, sometimes, of floor majority rule there.

Julian E. Zelizer, On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences, 1948-2000 (2004)

Eric Schickler, Eric McGhee & John Sides, "Remaking the House and Senate: Personal Power, Ideology, and the 1970s Reforms," Legislative Studies Quarterly 28:3 (2003), 297-333

Frances E. Lee & Bruce I. Oppenheimer, Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation (1999).

Week 13 – The current vortex of polarization, legislative obstruction, homeostatic kickback in elections, and “leapfrog representation”

Required:

Abramowitz, The Disappearing Center, ch. 8

Joseph Bafumi & Michael C. Herron, “Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress,” American Political Science Review 104:3 (August 2010), 519-42

Suggested:

Kathleen Bawn & Gregory Koger, “Effort, Intensity and Position Taking: Reconsidering Obstruction in the Pre-Cloture Senate,” Journal of Theoretical Politics 20:1 (2008), 67-92. A theory of intensity.

Catherine Fisk & Erwin Chemerinsky, “The Filibuster,” Stanford Law Review 49:2 (January 1997), 181-254. A good general treatment.

Gregory Koger, Filibustering: A Political History of Obstruction in the House and Senate (2010). A general treatment. What came earlier, and how did the Senate evolve into its tough 60-vote pivot of today?

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen & James A. Stimson, The Macro Polity (2002), ch. 9. The leading source on homeostatic kickback in U.S. elections.

HeeMin Kim, G. Bingham Powell, Jr. & Richard C. Fording, “Electoral Systems, Party Systems, and Ideological Representation,” Comparative Politics 42:1 (January 2010), 167-85. In general, single-member-district systems, of which the U.S.A. is an instance (although it doesn’t figure in this 20-country study) exhibit a particularly large ideological gap between the median voter and the stance of a newly-elected government. That is, election victories tend bring, in an ideological sense, exaggeration.