

Political Science 254  
American Political Development  
Fall 2011

Over the years the phrase, American Political Development, has come to connote a genre of research that addresses a particular set of issues. The principle topic concerns how America's governmental system shifted from a weak system (Frederick Engel observed that Marxism could not root in America because "there is no state there") to a more or less resourceful state. The use of "state" in this description conveys information about the intellectual tradition that underlay much of the early research in APD – namely, European-centric statism. Over the past several decades, APD has become more inclusive. The research agenda of "new institutionalism" actually intersects with many traditional APD topics. (How states and how institutions develop the capacity to deal with uncertain environments, for example, are not that different. )We will devote a fair chunk of time familiarizing ourselves with this literature and considering where it might lead future research.

In a sense the course title is a misnomer, because we will consider how America's past can be enlisted to address a broader set of concerns than those of traditional APD. One set of research questions consists of enlisting the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to test current theories of politics. A third research literature examines historical politics – beyond the APD agenda – theoretically interesting in its own right. Politicians in the early years of the republic had to figure out ways and create institutions to solve collective action problems. Modern study of American politics takes these solutions as givens. Perhaps a better title for our seminar is "Nineteenth Century Politics as a Research Field." All of this topic involve history – a record of a chronological, narrative sequence of causal statements. We will also examine the methodological issues associated with historical narrative.

In selecting topics and readings, I have a couple of objectives. First, I want to familiarize you with the chief research topics in APD. We won't cover any of them exhaustively, and some sessions will resemble the comp-preparing survey of class assigned literature and book reports. Second, I'd like to attract you to American history as a research field. Unlike much of modern congressional and electoral research, America's 19<sup>th</sup> century remains an open research field where you can ask significant questions, rather than filling in the interstices of established analyses and arguments. With this latter objective in mind, I will pose a series of research questions for which I ask you to prepare research designs or arguments that indicate a direction of research. I will also throw data at you a la mud on the wall. There will be no exam, but there will be a 6-8 page research paper, which may extend one of the occasional assigned essays or actually broach analysis.

I suggest you purchase Skowronek's , *Building the New American State*. We will read the historical sections of Aldrich's *Why Parties?* Try amazon or even ebay for cheap used copies. The rest of assignments can be found on JSTOR or pdf copies will be placed in a course drop box.

Schedule and Syllabus  
(DB refers to the Course Dropbox)

**September 23. What APD is and is not.**

**Sept 30. An Overview of Politically Relevant History.**

Bensel, Richard. *Sectionalism and American Political Development...*” chapter 3. DB

Davis, Lance E. 1965. “The Investment Market, 1870-1914: The Evolution of a National Market,” *The Journal of Economic History* 25(3): 355-399.

Kim, Sukkoo. 1998. “Economic Integration and Convergence: U.S. Regions, 1840-1987,” *The Journal of Economic History*. 58(3): 659-683.

Reports: Wiebe, Robert. 1967. *The Search for Order: 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang;

Morton Keller, 1977. *Affairs of State*. Harvard Univ Press. Campbell, James E. 1995. *The*

*Growth of American Government : Governance From the Cleveland Era to the Present*,

Bloomington : Indiana University Press. Bensel, Richard. 2000. *Political Economy of American Industrialization: 1877-1900*.

Exercise assignment: fencing the plains. (sources: folder in DB)

**October 7. Methodology of Historical Analysis**

Fischer, 1970. *Historians' Fallacies*. Selections. DB

Weingast, Barry. 1998. “Political Stability and Civil War ...” in Bates et al *Analytic Narratives*.

DB. Compare to Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.

Boston: Beacon Press. (ch on American development) DB

David, Paul. 1985. “Clio and the Economics of QWERTY.” *American Economic Review*, 75(2)

Pierson, Paul. 2000. “Path Dependence, Increasing Returns, and the Study of Politics,” *American*

*Political Science Review* 94(2): 251–67 and 2000. “Not Just What, but *When*:Timing and

Sequence in Political Processes,” *Studies in American Political Development*, 14: 72-92.

Page, Scott. 2006. “Path Dependence,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 1: 87–115 DB

Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Nelson Polsby ed., 1999. Available at:

<http://polisci.annualreviews.org/cgi/content/full/2/1/369>

Greif, “Historical and Comparative Institutional Analysis” db

Discussion (10/14): fencing the plains

### **October 7 - 14. Core APD**

Skowronek, Steven. 1982. *Building the New American State* CUP.

White, Leonard D. 1958. *The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History 1969-1901*. New York: Free Press. (selected chs tba) DB

Johnson, Kimberly. 2007. *Governing The American State: Congress and the New Federalism, 1877-1929* Princeton. DB.

Special case of post office:

Kernell, Samuel and Michael P. McDonald. 1999. “Congress and America's Political Development: The Transformation of the Post Office from Patronage to Service,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43: 792-811.

Carpenter, Daniel. 2000. “State Building through Reputation Building: Coalitions of Esteem and Program Innovation in the National Postal System, 1883–1913” *Studies in American Political Development*, 14: 121-155.

Kernell-Carpenter exchange. 2001. *Studies in American Political Development*, 15: 103-122.

Exercise assignment (10/7): the growth of the national government (folder in DB).

### **October 21-28. The Transformation of Elections, Political Parties and Politicians**

Discussion (10/21): the growth of the national government

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (first “half” on rationale and historical cases.)

Schattschneider, E.E. 1942. *Party Government*. New York: Rinehart. Chs. 4-6.

Burnham, Walter Dean. 1965. “The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1 : 7-28 ; and his 1974, “Theory and Voting Research: Some Reflections on Converse's ‘Change in the American Electorate,’” *American Political Science Review*, 68: 1002-1023. Fyi: the classic book (not assigned): *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. + chapter from above book on PA elections.

Reports:

Morgan, Wayne. 1969. *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-96*

Discussion (10/28): the growth of government.

#### **November 4. The Electoral System: Reforms, Critical Elections and Nationalization**

Exercise assignment: electoral reforms and/or trends

Electoral reforms:

Engstrom, Erik J. and Samuel Kernell. 2005. "Manufactured Responsiveness: The Impact of State Electoral Laws on Unified Party Control of the Presidency and House of Representatives, 1840-1940," *American Journal of Political Science*. 49: 531-549 .

Rusk, Jerrold G. 1970. "The Effect of Australian Ballot Reform on Split-Ticket Voting: 1876-1908." *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 1220-1238.

Ansolabahere, Stephen et al. 2010. "More Democracy: The Direct Primary and Competition in U.S. Elections," *Studies in American Political Development*, 24:190-205.

Critical elections:

Key, V.O. 1955. "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17: 3-18.

David R. Mayhew, "Electoral Realignment," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Nelson Polsby, ed., 2000. Available at: <http://polisci.annualreviews.org/cgi/content/full/3/1/449>.

Nationalization of Elections:

Kernell, Samuel and Gary C. Jacobson. 1987. "Congress and the Presidency as News in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Politics* 49:1016-1035.

Lynch, Patrick. 1999. "Presidential Elections and the Economy 1872 to 1996: The Times They Are a 'Changin or the Song Remains the Same?'" *Political Research Quarterly* 52: 825-844.

Kawato, Sadafumi. 1987. "Nationalization and Partisan Realignment in Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review* 81: 1235-1250.

Garand, James C. and T. Wayne Parent. 1991. "Representation, Swing, and Bias in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1872-1988." *American Journal of Political Science* 35: 1011-1031.

#### **November 11. Congress: Careers and Elections**

Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. "The institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review*, 62: 144-168.

Kernell, Samuel. 1977. "Toward understanding 19<sup>th</sup> century congressional careers: Ambition, competition and rotation." *American Journal of Political Science*, 21: 669-693.

Carson, J., Engstrom, E. and J. Roberts. 2006. Redistricting, candidate entry, and the politics of nineteenth-century U.S. House elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50: 283-293.

Carson, J., Engstrom, E. and J. Roberts. 2007. Candidate quality, the personal vote, and the incumbency advantage in Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 101: 289-301.

Crook, Sara Brandes and John Hibbing. 1997. "A Not-So-Distant Mirror: The 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment and Congressional Change," *American Political Science Review* 91: 845-853.

Wendy Schiller, "Building Careers and Courting Constituents: U.S. Senate Representation 1889-1924," *Studies in American Political Development*, Fall 2006.

Discussion: electoral reforms and/or trends

## **December 2. Institutional Development: Congress and Presidency**

Presentations of last exercises on elections.

Shepsle, Kenneth. 2001. "A Comment on Institutional Change." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13: 321-325.

Katz, Jonathan N. and Brian R. Sala. 1996. "Careerism, Committee Assignments, and the Electoral Connection." *American Political Science Review*. 90:21-33.

Gamm and Smith ( ). Presidents, Parties, and the Public: Evolving Patterns of Interaction, 1877-1929 DB

Brady, David W. (1985) 'A Reevaluation of Realignment in American Politics: Evidence from the House of Representatives', *American Political Science Review* 79: 28-49.

Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress*, Princeton University Press, 2001, chapters 1 and 4.