

**Y490: Polarization, Gridlock, and American Democracy**  
**Spring, 2014**  
**Tuesday, 2:30-5:00 PM, Room: Woodburn Hall 218**

**Instructor:** Professor Matthew Hayes, Woodburn Hall, RM 308, Email: mh34@indiana.edu

**Office Hours:** 11:00 – 12:00 MW

**Course Description:**

For many, polarization and gridlock are synonymous with modern American democracy. From staunch partisan voters to the government shutdown of 2013, we have seen evidence of heightened polarization among both the mass public and our elected officials. This course investigates these phenomena and how the current levels of polarization and gridlock compare to the past. We will learn about party polarization at the elite and mass level, and the potential consequences of polarization and gridlock for participation, trust, and good governance. This is a writing- and reading-intensive course; students should expect to read several pieces of political science research each week and be prepared to write a substantial original research paper.

**Required texts:** All books below are available for purchase at the IU Bookstore or online

- Abramowitz, A. I. (2010). *The disappearing center: Engaged citizens, polarization, and American democracy*. Yale University Press
- Fiorina, M. P., Abrams, S. J., and Pope, J. (2010). *Culture war?* Pearson Longman New York, third edition
- McCarty, N. M., Poole, K. T., and Rosenthal, H. (2006). *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press Cambridge

*Note: all readings not listed above will be made available as “Resources” on Oncourse.*

**Recommended texts:**

The books below are not required for the course. However, they are very helpful for first-time (or second-, third-, or fiftieth-time) writers of research papers.

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., and Williams, J. M. (2008). *The craft of research*. University of Chicago Press.
- Strunk, W. and White, E. (2007). *The elements of style*. Penguin.

- Turabian, K. L. (2007). *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers*. University of Chicago Press.
- Williams, J. M. (2005). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace*. Longman, eighth edition.

## Course Requirements and Grading:

- 10% — Participation
- 20% — Two short writing assignments (10% ea.)
- 50% — Final research paper
- 20% — Final examination

**Participation (10% of total grade)** This course will require full and active participation by all members of class. As such, 10% of the course grade will be based on participation. You are expected to attend every class section and participate in any in-class activities. You cannot participate if you do not attend; as such, any unexcused absences will yield no participation points for that day.

Full participation does not mean “talking a lot.” Participation entails reading the materials, coming to class prepared to discuss them, and offering thoughtful discussion during class sessions. If you are uncomfortable with classroom discussion, you can supplement your participation grade by attending office hours to ask any questions you might have about the readings.

In addition, you are expected to contribute to the online wiki in OnCourse. The wiki will be developed by you over the course of the semester and will include summaries of the readings and definitions of key concepts and terms. The wiki will serve as your study guide for the exam. I will not be providing a supplemental study guide to help you prepare for the exam, so it is important that you work together to ensure that the information contained in the wiki is as useful and accurate as possible. Wiki assignments should be completed no later than **Monday at 11:59PM** of that week.

Evaluation of participation will be divided equally across attendance, the quality of participation in the classroom, and completion of wiki assignments.

### Short writing assignments (20% of total grade)

You will be expected to complete two short writing assignments during the course of the semester. Each assignment should be around 1,000 words and take the form of an academic blog post that will be posted to the course’s wiki. Each post should focus on a political topic related to partisanship, polarization, or legislative activity. This topic need not be restricted to the United States. You should combine an overview of the issue with analysis informed by relevant political science research. Your first blog post must be completed by **March 11**. Your second blog post must be completed by **April 29**. For examples of what these blog posts should look like, I encourage students to browse <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/>.

### Final research paper (50% of total grade)

The final research paper is comprised of five separate assignments: a paper proposal, a lit review, a rough draft, a final draft, and a peer review. Each of these sub-parts are described below.

- *Paper proposal (5% of total grade)* – For this assignment, you are to submit a 1-page proposal describing the topic of your final paper, the argument you plan to make, and a brief description of some of the literature you will be considering. If you plan to analyze data, describe the data you plan to use and how you will analyze it. Evaluation will be based on having a clear topic defined and some engagement with the relevant literature/data on that topic. **Due date: February 18** .
- *Lit review and bibliography (5% of total grade)* – For this assignment, you are to submit a short review of the literature relevant to your paper topic and include a bibliography of works you plan to cite in your paper. The bibliography and literature review need not be exhaustive at this point; rather, evaluation will be based on how well your lit review lays out the literature and how it relates to the argument you will make in your paper. **Due date: March 11**.
- *Rough draft (10% of total grade)* – For this assignment, you are to submit a full rough draft of your paper. Your rough draft should be approximately 10-15 pages in length. This draft should be polished. That entails having a clear argument, clear and concise writing, and free of spelling/grammatical errors. The closer this draft is to a final draft, the more useful feedback will be. Evaluation of this assignment will be based primarily on the strength of argument you put forward and your appropriate use of the literature and/or data, as well as on writing clarity and style. **Due date: April 1**.
- *Peer review (5% of total grade)* – For this assignment, you are expected to read and provide feedback on another student's written work. You will read another student's rough draft and provide substantial recommendations for revision, proofreading, etc. Your feedback should be written and submitted both to that student and to the instructor, and should be about 1-2 pages in length. Examples of good peer review will be provided in class. **Due date: April 8**
- *Final draft (25% of total grade)* – For this assignment, you are to have a revised version of the paper you submitted as a rough draft, approximately 10-15 pages in length. This revision should have corrected any deficiencies identified on your rough draft, and should demonstrate clear, analytical thinking on the topic of your choice. Evaluation of this assignment will be based primarily on the strength of your argument, use of the literature, and over writing clarity and style. **Due date: April 29**.

### **Final exam (20% of total grade)**

This exam will be held during our assigned exam period during finals week. All material from the course may be included on the final. The final may include multiple choice questions, short written identification of concepts, short answer, and essays. The exact format of the final exam will be discussed in the last course meeting.

### **Paper formatting and late policy**

Each paper assignment must be double-spaced and **submitted in PDF format** via OnCourse. No late work will be accepted for this course. I strongly encourage all students to make full use of cloud storage services to pre-empt any potential last-minute hardware failures. For example, as

an IU student you have access to 50GB of storage at [box.iu.edu](http://box.iu.edu). For more information on this, please see <http://kb.iu.edu/data/bbox.html>.

## Academic Integrity:

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students.

## Disabilities

If any student will require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

## Course Schedule

- **01/14 - Introduction**
- **01/21 - Historical perspectives on parties and polarization**
  - *Federalist nos. 9 & 10.*
  - Brady, D. W. and Han, H. C. (2006). Polarization then and now: A historical perspective. In Nivola, P. S. and Brady, D. W., editors, *Red and Blue Nation*, pages 119–151. Brookings Institution Press.
  - Aldrich, J. H. (1995). *Why parties? The origin and transformation of party politics in America*, volume 15. Cambridge Univ Press. **Chapter 2.**
- **01/28 - Origins of partisanship and ideology in the mass public**
  - Edsall, T. B. (2013). The center cannot hold. *The New York Times*.
  - Alford, J. R., Funk, C. L., and Hibbing, J. R. (2005). Are political orientations genetically transmitted. *American Political Science Review*, 99(2):153–167.
  - Converse, P. E. (2006). The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964). *Critical Review*, 18(1-3):1–74.
  - Carmines, E. G., Ensley, M. J., and Wagner, M. W. (2012). Political ideology in american politics: One, two, or none? *Forum - A journal of applied research in contemporary politics*, 10(3).

- **02/04 - Polarization and public opinion I**

- Iyengar, S., Sood, G., and Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, not ideology a social identity perspective on polarization. *Public opinion quarterly*, 76(3):405–431.
- Bartels, L. M. (2000). Partisanship and voting behavior, 1952-1996. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(1):35–50.
- Shaw, D. (2012). If everyone votes their party, why do presidential election outcomes vary so much? *Forum - A journal of applied research in contemporary politics*, 10(3).

- **02/11 - Polarization and public opinion II**

- Abramowitz, A. I. (2010). *The disappearing center: Engaged citizens, polarization, and American democracy*. Yale University Press, **Chapters 1–6**.

- **02/18 - Realignment, sorting, and party activists**

- Carmines, E. G. and Stimson, J. A. (1986). On the structure and sequence of issue evolution. *The American Political Science Review*, pages 901–920.
- Schattschneider, E. E. (1975). *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Wadsworth Publishing.
- Fiorina, M. P., Abrams, S. J., and Pope, J. (2010). *Culture war?* Pearson Longman New York, third edition. **Chapters 1–4, 9**.
- Layman, G. C., Carsey, T. M., Green, J. C., Herrera, R., and Cooperman, R. (2010). Activists and conflict extension in american party politics. *American Political Science Review*, 104(2):324–346.

- **02/25 - Polarization in government I**

- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York.
- McCarty, N. M., Poole, K. T., and Rosenthal, H. (2006). *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press Cambridge. **Chapter 2**.
- Bafumi, J. and Herron, M. C. (2010). Leapfrog representation and extremism: A study of american voters and their members in congress. *American Political Science Review*, 104(03):519–542.

- **03/04 - Polarization in government II**

- Sinclair, B. (2006). *Party wars: Polarization and the politics of national policy making*, volume 10. University of Oklahoma Press. **Chapters 1–2**.
- Abramowitz, A. I. (2010). *The disappearing center: Engaged citizens, polarization, and American democracy*. Yale University Press, **Chapters 7–8**.

- **03/11 - Legislative gridlock**

- Mayhew, D. R. (2013). The least productive congress in history? *Politico*.
- Desilver, D. (2013). Congress ends least-productive year in recent history. *Pew Research Center*.

- Binder, S. A. (1999). The dynamics of legislative gridlock, 1947-96. *American Political Science Review*, pages 519–533.
- McCarty, N. M., Poole, K. T., and Rosenthal, H. (2006). *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press Cambridge. **Chapter 6**.
- Bafumi, J. (2012). Polarization and the fiscal future of the united states. *Forum - A journal of applied research in contemporary politics*, 10(3).
- **03/18 - SPRING BREAK**
- **03/25 - Polarization and economic inequality**
  - Garand, J. C. (2010). Income inequality, party polarization, and roll-call voting in the us senate. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(04):1109–1128.
  - Ansolabehere, S., Rodden, J., and Snyder, J. M. (2006). Purple america. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(2):97–118.
  - McCarty, N. M., Poole, K. T., and Rosenthal, H. (2006). *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press Cambridge. **Chapter 3–4**.
  - Gilens, M. (2012). *Affluence and influence: Economic inequality and political power in America*. Princeton University Press. **Chapter 3**.
- **04/01 - Polarization, redistricting, and primary elections**
  - Carson, J. L., Crespin, M. H., Finocchiaro, C. J., and Rohde, D. W. (2007). Redistricting and party polarization in the us house of representatives. *American Politics Research*, 35(6):878–904.
  - Kaufmann, K. M., Gimpel, J. G., and Hoffman, A. H. (2003). A promise fulfilled? open primaries and representation. *Journal of Politics*, 65(2):457–476.
  - Brady, D. W., Han, H., and Pope, J. C. (2007). Primary elections and candidate ideology: Out of step with the primary electorate? *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 32(1):79–105.
  - Hirano, S., Snyder, J. M., Ansolabehere, S., and Hansen, J. M. (2010). Primary elections and partisan polarization in the us congress. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 5(2):169–191.
- **04/08 - Polarization and campaign finance**
  - McCarty, N. M., Poole, K. T., and Rosenthal, H. (2006). *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. mit Press Cambridge. **Chapter 5**.
  - Barber, M. (2013). Ideological donors, contribution limits, and the polarization of state legislatures? *Typescript. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University*.
  - Stone, W. J. and Simas, E. N. (2010). Candidate valence and ideological positions in us house elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2):371–388.
- **04/15 - Polarization and the media**
  - Prior, M. (2007). *Post-broadcast democracy: How media choice increases inequality in political involvement and polarizes elections*. Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 7**.

- Snyder Jr, J. M. and Strömberg, D. (2010). Press coverage and political accountability. *Journal of Political Economy*, 118(2):355–408.
- Hopkins, D. J. and Ladd, J. M. (2013). The consequences of broader media choice: evidence from the expansion of fox news. *Work. pap., Georgetown Univ.*
- **04/22 - Student presentations I**
- **04/29 - Student presentations II - Final paper due**
- **05/06 - Final exam - 2:45 - 4:45 PM**

Last updated: January 14, 2014