

Political Science 410
Questions and Controversies in American Politics
Fall 2018

Instructor: Michael Barber

Class Information: Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-4:15 PM, 793 KMBL

Office: 724 KMBL

Office Hours: MW 10:30 – 11:30am, or by appointment

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COURSE PREREQUISITES:

There are two formal prerequisites for this course, **POLI 200 and POLI 328**. You cannot take this course if you have not completed POLI 200. Concurrent enrollment is not sufficient. Concurrent enrollment in POLI 328 is sufficient, however, your experience in this class will be significantly better if you have already completed POLI 328. You will need to invest **significantly more time** in the readings and your paper than a student who has already completed POLI 328. Finally, previous coursework in political science research and methods (**POLI 328**) and American politics (e.g. **POLI 110** and/or **POLI 210**) will be extremely beneficial.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Seminar Discussions

This is an advanced undergraduate course, designed to introduce students to modern empirical research methods in political science and the study of American politics. It will require a significant investment of time and effort on your part. Reading academic research is not like reading a novel. It takes significantly more time and attention. But in my opinion, it is much more interesting. Creating academic research is even more difficult, but even more interesting! In this class, you will be doing both.

By the end of this course you will have gained two skills that will be extremely valuable in whatever career you choose, or advanced schooling you pursue. The first is the ability to analyze and make inferences from data. The world is increasingly full of data and the ability to analyze these data in an intelligent way is a valuable skill that will pay dividends for years to come. Secondly, this class will help you develop your skills as a writer. No amount of data analysis will be useful to you unless you can also communicate your findings to others. Thus, clear and effective writing is an incredibly valuable professional skill.

In this class, we will read a number of “scholarly conversations”. Science is often, incorrectly, seen as a process in which a researcher discovers something, people

take note, and that discovery is unanimously accepted as fact. In reality, science is more like a conversation. A researcher claims a discovery, other scientists investigate this discovery, ask questions, poke holes, point out weaknesses and limitations, and offer suggestions for improvement or refinements of the original discovery. In this way, the scholarly community is constantly speaking with one another about their research.

Each week (or so) we will tackle a different conversation by reading several papers that address the question from a variety of angles. First we will read a paper that claims to find a new and interesting discovery. We will then read a number of articles that critique, refine, or question the original author's findings. You will then offer your own thoughts about which authors' arguments, data, and evidence you find most convincing.

This class is intentionally small, and will be run in a seminar format. Each week participants will take an active part in the class. The first way you will do this is by actively participating in the class by asking questions about parts of the reading you did not understand, or challenging results in the papers you think may be unfounded. The study of politics as a "science" is young, and hardly any of its findings are settled wisdom. **Read everything skeptically.** You shouldn't assume that something is true -- or even believed by a majority of political scientists -- simply because it's in the textbook or accompanied by difficult-looking math. Even if you never intend to study politics again, I hope the course will be productive in developing your critical thinking skills.

As you read each paper, think about what "big question" this paper is trying to address. Also begin thinking about big questions you might have or questions these papers leave unanswered (You can answer these questions in your research paper!). Each week will be centered around a particular topic of inquiry that is certainly too broad to be answered in any one study. Thus, each of these papers is an attempt to answer a piece of the broader question. This is designed to show you that there are a variety of ways to attack a tricky question, and to show you that none of these questions has been completely answered.

While it is expected that you will participate in every seminar with your thoughts and questions, each week I will **randomly** select one student in the class to lead the discussion for that day. Being a discussion leader means introducing the paper, discussing its theory and empirical results, pointing out the limitations of the paper and proposing ways of improving the paper. I will discuss these expectations more in our first meeting. This will constitute a majority of your participation grade, which is 20% of your overall grade. If your name is drawn and you are not prepared to discuss the reading, it will reflect very poorly on your grade. Thus, you need to be prepared to discuss each reading in depth even though it is unlikely that your name will actually be chosen.

Research Paper

In addition to reading existing research in political science, the most visible product of your efforts this semester will be a research paper. Scholarly research is more than just finding ten sources and typing up a summary. Research is creative and adventurous—and therefore sometimes scary. You will be challenged to ask interesting questions and build new understanding. You will move from being a consumer of information to a producer of new knowledge. When you succeed, you will have created something you can always be proud of, and expanded your mind in ways you did not expect.

You will write this paper with another member of the class. After submitting your list of questions, I will read through your questions and pair you with another member of the class who expressed similar interests. I recognize that you probably hate group papers. I did as an undergraduate. However, there is a method to this madness. In your professional lives, most of the work you will do will be collaborative in some way. Professors coauthor papers. Lawyers coauthor courtroom briefs. Investment bankers work in teams. Musicians perform in ensembles. You get the idea. Learning how to effectively work with other people on a project is a valuable skill.

If you would like to collect original data for your paper, you will have the option of fielding questions of your design on a survey that we will conduct as a class through Amazon's Mechanical Turk program. This will allow you to collect original data that could help answer the question that you have decided to study in your paper. We will discuss the logistics of the survey in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

In combination with POLI 200, this course satisfies the university's advanced writing general education requirement. As a part of the advanced writing requirement, you should expect to become proficient in the following learning outcomes related to good writing.

1. Disciplinary Writing. Students will demonstrate rhetorical knowledge by writing clearly; focusing on a well-defined purpose; using conventions of format and structure fitting the discourse community; arguing appropriately; and adopting a voice, tone, and level of formality suited to specialized academic, professional, or public audiences. Students will produce, among other assignments, a substantive single-authored research paper, and they will show rhetorical flexibility by writing at least once for a general audience.

2. Academic Research. Students will use appropriate research tools and processes, including library research. Students will identify and evaluate sources, retrieve and evaluate data, take notes, and follow conventions of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They will cite sources properly and demonstrate

an understanding of ethical issues related to research, including how to avoid plagiarism.

3. Writing Processes. Students will prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and proofread. The course should support these skills with instruction in some of the following processes: collecting data, finding and synthesizing evidence, and creating sound arguments; organizing the material for a paper; writing successive drafts of the same paper; writing collaboratively; peer reviewing; revising; improving style; editing grammar, usage, and punctuation; and using conventional formats. These processes will reflect practice of inquiry within the appropriate discourse community.

4. Oral Communication. Students will effectively give a formal oral presentation that requires public speaking skills, presentation media, and a prepared message. Students will focus on a topic, adapt it to the understanding of a particular audience, organize the main points coherently and support them with adequate detail, and deliver a message effectively using appropriate visuals. The delivery could occur in a poster conference, an in-class presentation, as part of an undergraduate research conference or professional conference, or as part of a public presentation.

5. Knowledge of Conventions. Students will understand the genres, forms, styles, and documentation conventions of writing for their discourse community. They will also gain skills in editing, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Throughout the semester you will have several smaller writing assignments, which will help you work towards the final draft of your original research paper. The following assignments will be due throughout the semester.

List of Questions: 9/17

Project proposal: 10/1

Project proposal revision: 10/15

Results Blog Post: 11/12

First Draft of Paper: 11/26

Peer Review of Papers: 12/3

Research Poster Conference: 12/12

Final Draft and Response to Reviewers: 12/19

GRADING POLICIES:

List of Questions: 3%

Project proposal: 7%

Project proposal revision: 8%

Results Blog Post: 5%

First Draft of Paper: 22%

Peer Review of Papers: 5%

Research Poster: 10%

Final Draft: 20%

Class Participation: 20%

In addition to the following grading schedule, you cannot pass this class unless you complete a final draft of your research paper and receive at least a C grade on said paper. Furthermore, your participation grade will be based on the extent to which you engage with in-class discussion and demonstrate command of the readings. Your participation in lecture is important for you to master the concepts you will need to apply in the final paper. Simply attending class without participating in a productive way will earn you a failing grade in participation. However, even if you haven't prepared the readings for class, it is better for you to come to class and participate in the discussion than to not come at all.

Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

94-100%: A

90-93%: A-

87-89%: B+

84-86%: B

80-83%: B-

77-80%: C+

74-76%: C

70-73%: C-

Too painful to think about...

POLICY ON COMPUTERS (including tablets and smartphones):

This course is primarily a discussion among peers. In my experience, computers are distracting and will lead all of us to not pay close attention to the discussion. However, you are adults and should be able to control your impulses to postpone reading legitimately important and entertaining emails, texts, newspaper articles, and funny cat videos (here's a good one: <http://tinyurl.com/q9zbmdv>). Thus, in our class, you are welcome to use your computer, but your participation grade in the class will suffer dramatically if you are looking at non-class related materials. This is

very easy to gauge. You might think you are doing a good job of hiding it, but trust me, I can tell. Instead, you should use your computer to have the article(s) for each class period marked up with copious notes, questions, critiques, and comments. I promise you that this will make the class much better.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Introductory Concepts

9/5 - Introduction to the course

- No reading
 - I will distribute and we will discuss in class the following article
 - “What It Means To Read An Academic Article”
-

Week 2: A Discussion of Causal Inference

9/10 – **Randomized Controlled Trials**

- *Randomistas*, Ch. 1+
- Read Abstracts of Semester’s Papers
 - Email me.

9/12 – **RCTs and Intro to Regression**

- *Mastering Metrics*, CH2
 - *Randomistas*, Ch. 9
-

Week 3: More on Causal Inference

9/17 - **Due: List of 10 potential research questions**

More Regression

- *Mastering Metrics*, Ch. 2
- *Randomistas*, Ch. 8

9/19 – **Other Methods of Causal Inference**

- *Mastering Metrics*, Ch. 4 & 5
-

Week 4: Voter ID Laws

9/24

- Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson: Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes

9/26

- Grimmer et al: Obstacles to Estimating Voter ID Laws’ Effect on Turnout
- Hajnal et al: We All Agree: Strict Voter ID Laws Disproportionately Burden Minorities
- Burden: Disagreement over ID Requirements and Minority Voter Turnout

- Hillygus: Navigating Scholarly Exchange in Today's Media Environment
-

Week 5: Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Experiments

10/1 – Due: Project Proposal

- Gerber and Green: The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment

10/3

- Imai: Do Get-Out-the-Vote Calls Reduce Turnout? The Importance of Statistical Methods for Field Experiments
 - Gerber and Green: Correction to Gerber and Green (2000), Replication of Disputed Findings, and Reply to Imai (2005)
-

Week 6: Women in Office

10/8

- Smith and Fox: The Electoral Fortunes of Women Candidates for Congress

10/10

- Pearson and McGhee: What It Takes To Win: Questioning “Gender Neutral” Outcomes In U.S. House Elections
 - Karpowitz, Monson, Preece, Gimenez: Selecting for Masculinity: The Double Bind and Women's Representation in the Republican Party
-

Week 7: Polarization in the Public

10/15 – Due: Project Proposal Revision

- Fiorina and Abrams: Political Polarization in the American Public

10/17

- Abramowitz and Saunders: Is Polarization a Myth?
 - Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope: Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings
-

Week 8: Changing Minds

10/22

- LaCour and Green: When Contact Changes Minds: An Experiment on Transmission of Support for Gay Equality

10/24

- Broockman, Kalla, and Aronow: Irregularities in LaCour (2014)
 - LaCour: Response to Irregularities in LaCour and Green (2014)
 - Broockman and Kalla: Durably Reducing Transphobia: A Field Experiment on Door-to-Door Canvassing
-

Week 9: Partisan Economic Behavior

10/29

- Gerber and Huber: Partisanship and Economic Behavior: Do Partisan Differences in Economic Forecasts Predict Real Economic Behavior?

10/31

- McGrath: Economic Behavior and the Partisan Perceptual Screen
-

Week 10: Partisanship in the Public

11/5

- MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson: Macropartisanship

11/7

- Green, Palmquist, and Schickler: Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique
 - Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson: What Moves Macropartisanship? A Response to Green, Palmquist and Schickler
-

Week 11: The Politics of Race in America

11/12 – **Due: Results Blog Post**

- Mendelberg: *The Race Card* [selected chapters]

11/14

- Huber and Lapinski: The “Race Card” Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests
 - Mendelberg: Racial Priming Revived
 - Huber and Lapinski: Testing the Implicit-Explicit Model of Racialized Political Communication
 - Mendelberg: Racial Priming: Issues in Research Design and Interpretation
-

Week 12: Thanksgiving Week

11/19

- No Reading: work on your papers

11/21

- Thanksgiving Holiday
-

Week 13: Shark Week

11/26 – **Due: First Draft of Paper**

- Achen and Bartels: Blind Retrospection: Why Shark Attacks are Bad for Democracy

11/28

- Fowler and Hall: Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence
 - Achen and Bartels: Statistics as If Politics Mattered: A Reply to Fowler and Hall
 - Fowler and Hall: Politics as If Evidence Mattered: A Reply to Achen and Bartels
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Week 14: Political Extremism

12/3 – **Due: Peer Review of Papers**

- Bafumi and Herron: Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress

12/5

- Broockman: Approaches to Studying Policy Representation
 - Ahler and Broockman: The Delegate Paradox: Why Polarized Politicians Can Represent Citizens Best
-

Week 15: A Replication Crisis in Science?

12/10

- Open Science Collaboration: Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science
- Gilbert et al: Comment on “Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological

- Science”
- Open Science Collaboration: Response to Comment on “Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science”

12/12 - Due: Research Poster

No Class

- Present at Political Science Poster Conference
-

Final Exam Period:

December 19th – Due: Final Draft of Paper and Response to Reviewers

Course and University Policies and Resources

Honor Code

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Student Disability

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

Deliberation Guidelines

To facilitate productive and open discussions about sensitive topics about which there are differing opinions, members of the BYU community should: (1) Remember that we are each responsible for enabling a productive, respectful dialogue. (2) To enable time for everyone to speak, strive to be concise with your thoughts. (3) Respect all speakers by listening actively. (4) Treat others with the respect that you would like them to treat you with, regardless of your differences. (5) Do not interrupt others. (6) Always try to understand what is being said before you respond. (7) Ask for clarification instead of making assumptions. (8) When countering an idea, or making one initially, demonstrate that you are listening to what is being said by others. Try to validate other positions as you assert your own, which aids in dialogue, versus attack. (9) Under no circumstances should an argument continue out of the classroom when someone does not want it to. Extending these conversations beyond class can be productive, but we must agree to

do so respectfully, ethically, and with attention to individuals' requests for confidentiality and discretion. (10) Remember that exposing yourself to different perspectives helps you to evaluate your own beliefs more clearly and learn new information. (11) Remember that just because you do not agree with a person's statements, it does not mean that you cannot get along with that person. (12) Speak with your professor privately if you feel that the classroom environment has become hostile, biased, or intimidating. Adapted from the Deliberation Guidelines published by The Center for Democratic Deliberation.
(<http://cdd.la.psu.edu/education/The%20CDD%20Deliberation%20Guidelines.pdf/view?searchterm=deliberation%20guidelines>)

Inappropriate Use Of Course Materials

All course materials (e.g., outlines, handouts, syllabi, exams, quizzes, PowerPoint presentations, lectures, audio and video recordings, etc.) are proprietary. Students are prohibited from posting online or selling any such course materials without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. To do so is a violation of the Brigham Young University Honor Code.

Respectful Environment

"Sadly, from time to time, we do hear reports of those who are at best insensitive and at worst insulting in their comments to and about others... We hear derogatory and sometimes even defamatory comments about those with different political, athletic, or ethnic views or experiences. Such behavior is completely out of place at BYU, and I enlist the aid of all to monitor carefully and, if necessary, correct any such that might occur here, however inadvertent or unintentional. "I worry particularly about demeaning comments made about the career or major choices of women or men either directly or about members of the BYU community generally. We must remember that personal agency is a fundamental principle and that none of us has the right or option to criticize the lawful choices of another." President Cecil O. Samuelson, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010 "Occasionally, we ... hear reports that our female faculty feel disrespected, especially by students, for choosing to work at BYU, even though each one has been approved by the BYU Board of Trustees. Brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be. Not here. Not at a university that shares a constitution with the School of the Prophets." Vice President John S. Tanner, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS,

1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit <https://caps.byu.edu>; for more immediate concerns please visit <http://help.byu.edu>.

Sexual Misconduct

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Brigham Young University prohibits unlawful sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment-including sexual violence-committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of "Sexual Misconduct" prohibited by the university.

University policy requires all university employees in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report all incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention in any way, including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Incidents of Sexual Misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or (801) 422-8692. Reports may also be submitted through EthicsPoint at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by Sexual Misconduct, including the university's Victim Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful. Additional information about Title IX, the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found at <http://titleix.byu.edu> or by contacting the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Resources for Dealing with Sexual Assault

BYU interprets Title IX in a way that classifies most faculty and full-time staff as "responsible employees," which means that they are required to inform the Title IX office if they know of or have reason to suspect any sexual misconduct experienced by or perpetrated by BYU employees, students or visitors, regardless of whether the misconduct happened on or off campus. This means that if you share with a faculty member that you have experienced sexual assault while affiliated with BYU, they are obligated to report it to the Title IX office. The Title IX office will follow-up with you and provide you with resources. New BYU policy prevents the

Title IX office from sharing information with the Honor Code office, except if the individual accused of sexual assault is found guilty of violating the Honor Code. Even then, the names of the victim will be kept confidential and the victim will be granted amnesty for Honor Code infractions surrounding the assault. If you decide you would like to report the assault to the police, the BYU Police (801-422-2222) and Provo Police (801-852-6375 or 911 if you fear you are in physical danger) are well-equipped to handle sexual assault cases.

If you need support but are unsure about whether you are ready to report the assault to the Title IX office or the police, here are some resources that are confidential:

A) The 24-Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (1-888-421-1100). They will provide you with a victim advocate who will compassionately walk you through all of your options. The Hotline has no relationship with either BYU or the police, and they will keep all information you share totally confidential.

B) BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.byu.edu or 801-422-3035 or 1500 WSC). Counseling and Psychological Services is a free and fully confidential resource on campus. They have crisis counselors available 24 hours a day; if you are calling after hours, call the BYU Police (801-422-2222) and ask to speak with the crisis counselor on duty. You do not need to inform the BYU police that you are calling regarding a sexual assault.

C) Domestic Violence Hotline (801-377-5500 or 911 if you fear you are in physical danger). If your assault is related to domestic violence or if you are experiencing physical or emotional abuse (including controlling or degrading words and actions), the Center for Women and Children in Crisis (cwcic.org) has many resources available to help you, including education/support groups and shelter for you and your children.

Please seek help from these sources. They have highly-trained staff who will believe you and support you. Always remember that sexual assault and abuse are not your fault; someone has violated your agency, and in doing so, they have committed a grave sin. You are a beloved child of Heavenly Parents. Please seek out the help that will allow you to begin to heal.