

# PP 313: Representation & Accountability in American Democracy

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

Spring 2024

Seminar: Mondays, 4:00PM-6:50PM (PST)

Course Location: Harper 1 &

Zoom Room [<https://cgu.zoom.us/j/82438810858>]

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**Instructor:** Carlos Algara, Ph.D.

**Office:** 227 McManus Hall

**Office Hours:** Please email me to schedule.

**Course Structure:** 2 hours concurrent seminar workshop (online/in-person) with 1 hour synchronous research component

✉ [carlos.algara@cgu.edu](mailto:carlos.algara@cgu.edu)

🌐 <https://calgara.github.io>

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## **Course Objective: How well do American elites (i.e., politicians, institutions, parties) represent the views of their constituents and are they held to account for poor representation?**

This course is a graduate research workshop surveying the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning broad scholarly inquiry on (1) how political elites (i.e., parties, institutions, individual politicians) provide representation to the citizens that elected them and (2) how citizens engage in holding these political elites accountable at the ballot box.

By first evaluating the principal-agent relationship that structures representation within the American democratic system, this course speaks to the linkage between what constituents “want” (or claim to “want”) and the actions undertaken by their elected representatives. This requires assessing the following questions throughout the course:

- ★ (1) How do we theoretically conceptualize “good” democratic representation and how does this inform both our theoretical and empirical investigations on the topic?
- ★ (2) How, and why, does the mass public influence the actions their elected representatives undertake in-office?
- ★ (3) How do elected representatives respond to the incentives, and constraints, provided to them by their constituents? What factors may cause biases in the quality of representation provided to the mass public by their elected representatives (and, by extension, political parties)?
- ★ (4) What are the key differences between “descriptive”, “valence”, and “ideological” models of democratic representation? How well do elites represent their constituents on these key dimensions?

- ★ (5) Lastly, what role do institutional reforms and the media play in shaping representation (or lack thereof) in the United States?

Taken together, this course will guide us through assessing whether, and how, the preferences of constituents influence the policy-making activities of their elected representatives. In this seminar, particular emphasis will be paid to the representation provided by a rapidly changing, severely partisan, and increasingly polarized United States Congress.

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## Course & Reading Expectations

This course is designed for both Master's-level and Ph.D.-level students, with varying course outcome expectations for each. Master's students will get acquainted with the main findings across various lines of inquiry towards the goal of demonstrating their ability to read, critique, and articulate the state of the research in the field. For doctoral students in this course, the expectation is that many of you are planning to teach courses and conduct original research on American politics. In either case, students are expected to arrive in class prepared to discuss the readings and may be asked to summarize what they read at the beginning of each seminar. I do not expect students to fully understand every detail of the material, particularly those that contain complicated statistical methods or formal models, but I expect students to be prepared to work through these facets of empirical work by coming prepared to understand these questions—which requires initial engagement with the material. This seminar will be taught in a *dynamic* fashion which will require full participation from *everyone* in the seminar.

Lastly, students are expected to **treat each other with respect**, listen attentively when others are speaking, and avoid personal attacks. At the same time, all students should feel comfortable expressing their opinions, political or otherwise, as long as they do so in an appropriate manner.

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## Course Logistics & Requirements

This section of the syllabus serves as a guide for course expectations (both for me and for you) and logistical information such as grade breakdown and course texts.

**Course Texts, Materials, & Announcements:** I will provide all readings for this course. The [Course Canvas Page](#) contains all relevant readings for this seminar.

### **Grade Breakdown & Schedule:**

- ★ 25% Class Discussion Participation
- ★ 25% Weekly Synthesis Papers (Due: Weekly, 12:01am Monday prior to the class meeting)
- ★ 50% Final Research Paper

**Class Discussion Participation (25%):** As a graduate-level substantive seminar, this course requires students to attend class and be active in our collective course discussion. Ideally, I would be speaking very little during most of our seminars. As such, students are expected to shoulder the burden of driving discussions in this course. This means that students need to read the assigned materials every week and be ready to talk about the substantive topics/work discussed in that week's readings. This largely entails:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical model presented in each individual reading for this week? Do these theories "make sense" given what we know from our ongoing discussion about the nature of representation in the United States?
2. What empirical methods and research designs are used to evaluate the theory-driven hypotheses presented in this work? What data sources do these authors rely on to test their hypotheses?
3. What do these readings tell us about the nature of representation and politics in general? What are the limitations of these studies that the authors may have missed and what could be a worthwhile avenue for future work in this area?

**Weekly Synthesis Papers (25%):** Beginning in the second week of the course, students are responsible for turning in a short 2-3 page double spaced synthesis paper **engaging** a given article used in the week's readings via the Canvas assignment portal. These synthesis essays are due at 12:01am Monday, about a half day prior to our class meeting, over the Canvas Portal. These synthesis papers **must** incorporate the main numbered points on the *How to Read Social Science Research Articles* at the end of this syllabus, with these points being:

1. **Assessing Theory:** What is the research's (i.e., article or book section) main argument?
2. **Assessing The Point:** How does this research fit in the overall literature?
3. **Assessing Research Methodology:** What research design is used in this research?
4. **Assessing Research Significance & Quality:** If you had advice for the author(s), what would you suggest?

Students are welcome to complete this exercise for every week during lecture, but note that I will take **the top seven graded synthesis papers** in calculating this grade component. In other words, students need to formally complete seven of these assignments for full credit and need not turn in this assignment every week, but rather every other week. No late work will be accepted on this component given the inherent flexibility in when student's may turn in a synthesis paper.

**Research Project Manuscript (50%):** Prepare a research paper in "short article" format that is **no more than 4,000 words**. The research paper should include: (1) very brief motivation of the research question, (2) very brief theoretical argument and hypotheses to be investigated, (3) a detailed description and justification of the method being used, (4) and a full presentation of the model results (i.e., interpretation of model specification, post-estimation of relevant effects of interests, model fit) used for assessment of hypotheses. For examples of this "short article" format, consult any article published in [Research & Politics](#).

This course is designed to give students the foundation to foster their *independent* research agendas. As such, the final project will be a short research paper, or research design, on a topic related to the study of representation in the United States, or comparatively, depending on the research program of the individual student. Note that many of the theoretical frameworks discussed in this course are not unique to the United States and may be, or have been, applied comparatively.

1. Research papers with original data analysis should include: (1) very brief motivation of the research question, (2) very brief theoretical argument and hypotheses to be investigated, (3) a detailed description and justification of the research design being used (i.e., how you will conduct your hypothesis testing that touches on what data sources you would draw upon, how you would operationalize/measure key explanatory & dependent variable(s) of interest, and how you plan to analyze such data.), & (4) and if conducting original data analysis a full presentation of the model results (i.e., interpretation of model specification, post-estimation of relevant effects of interests, model fit) used for assessment of hypotheses.
2. Research papers without original data analysis will take the form of a research design that should include: (1) very brief motivation of the research question, (2) very brief theoretical argument and hypotheses to be investigated, (3) a detailed description and justification of the research design being used (i.e., how you will conduct your hypothesis testing that touches on what data sources you would draw upon, how you would operationalize/measure key explanatory & dependent variable(s) of interest, and how you plan to analyze such data.), & (4) and how you will plan in the future to leverage the research design to test your theoretical argument towards answering the research question (i.e., how/where will you collect data, what's the unit of analysis).

Each project must stress how the research contributes towards our scholarly understanding of the topic under investigation. Replication papers are accepted as long as they go beyond the original analysis in some significant way by applying theories and techniques learned in the course. Students need to meet the following milestones for their project:

- ★ Late January to late February (Week 1 - Week 5): Start thinking about possible topic and exploring data sources. You are encouraged to skim the articles on the syllabus to get the sense of possible topics. ***You will be asked to run your ideas by your instructor in the form of an initial 1-2 page double-spaced research proposal describing the research question & dataset to be analyzed with identification of relevant variables will be due on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Note that I would expect that students completed the department's methods training to undertake empirical research papers.***
- ★ April 15<sup>th</sup> (Week 12): Turn in a brief description of the theoretical argument and your research design. If conducting an empirical paper, by this date you need to have acquired the data you plan to use and completed a descriptive analysis of the data (e.g., simple summary statistics, cross-tabulations and plots articulating distributions). For research designs, you should have a sense of what datasets are available that could be used to evaluate your theoretical design. You may be asked to revise and resubmit the proposal.

- ★ May 6<sup>th</sup> (Week 15): *Students will give presentations during the last seminar meeting to present their research projects.* These mandatory presentations are not graded and are an opportunity to get feedback from the class. Presentations should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length and will be oral accompanied by electronic slides, much like presentations at major academic conferences such as APSA and MPSA. If you are looking to present independent conference research in the spring, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.
- ★ May 10<sup>th</sup>: Please turn in the final version of your research paper by the end of the day.<sup>1</sup> Note that no late final paper submissions will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Of course, if some extraneous circumstance arises that requires more time to complete this assignment, please make arrangements with the instructor as soon as you can for accommodations and note that documentation may be required in these rare cases.

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<sup>1</sup> *The final is that finished research projects should be suitable for presentation at an annual political science conference.*

## Claremont Graduate University Course Grading Scheme

Letter Grade Grade	Grade Point	Grade Description	Learning Outcome
A	4.0	<i>Complete mastery of course material and additional insight beyond course material</i>	<i>Insightful</i>
B	3.0	<i>Complete mastery of course material</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
C	2.0	<i>Gaps in mastery of course material; not at level expected by the program</i>	<i>Developing</i>
U	0	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>

*Note that grades may contain pluses or minus designations as appropriate.*

### Course Attendance, Ethics, & Accommodations

**Course Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are unable to attend class must seek permission for an excused absence from the course director or teaching assistant. Unapproved absences or late attendance for three or more classes may result in a lower grade or an “incomplete” for the course. If a student has to miss a class, he or she should arrange to get notes from a fellow student and is strongly encouraged to meet with the teaching assistant to obtain the missed material. Missed assignments will not be available for re-taking unless *prior arrangements are made with the course instructor*.

**Academic Dishonesty & Ethics:** This course is about developing critical thought and developing personalized skill-sets necessary to examine politics in a systematic and rigorous way. Thus, it is important to develop your own arguments and work to hone in analytical skills. Academic dishonesty is not only a serious breach of ethics in the university community, but it is also detrimental to your scholarly growth. Ethics breaches, such as cheating and plagiarism, will be referred to appropriate avenues. Students may refer to the [University’s Academic Integrity Archived Bulletin](#) for further clarification or may contact the instructor for any specific questions.

**Course Accommodations:** Claremont Graduate University is committed to offering auxiliary aids and services to students with verifiable disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. To ensure that their individual needs are addressed, students with special needs are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office as early as possible. Additional resources can be found on the linked page: [CGU Disability Services](#).

**CGU Mental Health Resources:** The Claremont Colleges Monsour Counseling & Psychological Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For addi-

tional information, please see: <https://services.claremont.edu/mcaps/>.

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# Course Road-Map

1. Week (1/22/2024): Introduction to the Course

## Foundational Models of Representation

2. Week 2 (1/29/2024): Why democratic Representation, in dyadic and collective terms? Madisonian Democracy & The Integral Role of Policy in Dyadic Representation

- ★ Madison, James. 1787. “Federalist 10.” In [United States Congress Resources](#)
- ★ Madison, James (or Alexander Hamilton). 1788. “Federalist 51.” In [United States Congress Resources](#)
- ★ Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. “Rethinking Representation?” *The American Political Science Review* 97(4):515-528.
- ★ “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties.” 1950. *The American Political Science Review* 44(3), 1-96.

### *Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Wickham-Jones, Mark. 2018. “This 1950 political science report keeps popping up in the news. Here’s the story behind it.” In [The Washington Post: Monkey Cage](#).
- ★ Urbinati, Nadia & Mark E. Warren. 2008. “The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1):387–412.
- ★ Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, & Susan Carol Stokes. 1999. “Elections and representation.” In Adam Przeworski, Susan Carol Stokes, and Bernard Manin (Eds.), *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (pp.29-55). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- ★ Ansolabehere, Stephen, & Philip E. Jones. 2011. “Dyadic Representation.” In George C. Edwards III, Frances E. Lee, & Eric Shickler (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress* (pp. 293–314). Oxford University Press.

### *Professionalization readings about research pipeline management (we will discuss, please skim):*

- ★ Mansbridge, Jane. 2014. “What is Political Science For?” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(1):1-17.
- ★ Stimson, James A. 2018. “Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly opinionated Essay.”
- ★ Lebo, Matthew J. 2016. “Managing Your Research Pipeline.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(2): 259-264.

3. Week 3 (2/5/2024): Revisiting the principal-agent relationship in democratic representation: what makes for “good” ideological representation?



- ★ Bafumi, Joseph, & Michael C. Herron. 2010. “Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress.” *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519–542.
- ★ Stokes, Donald E. 1963. “Spatial Models of Party Competition.” *American Political Science Review* 57(2): 368–377.
- ★ Achen, Christopher H. 1977. “Measuring Representation: Perils of the Correlation Coefficient.” *American Journal of Political Science* 21(4): 805–815.
- ★ Broockman, David E. 2016. “Approaches to Studying Policy Representation.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41(1): 181–215.
- ★ Ahler, Douglas J., & David E. Broockman. 2018. “The Delegate Paradox: Why Polarized Politicians Can Represent Citizens Best.” *The Journal of Politics* 80(4): 1117–1133.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Mill, John Stuart. 1862. “That the ideally best form of government is representative government.” In J. S. Mill, *Considerations on representative government* (pp. 55–80). New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.
- ★ Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2015. “From Mass Preferences to Policy.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 18(1): 147–165.

## **Elite Behavior in Models of Representation**

4. Week 4 (2/12/2024): Correcting for “poor representation?” When do electoral elites choose to enter the electoral arena and what are the consequences of strategic entry?
  - ★ Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. “Ideological moderates wont run: How party fit matters for partisan polarization in Congress.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 786–797.
  - ★ Maestas, Cherie D., Sarah A. Fulton, L. Sandy Maisel, & Walter J. Stone. 2006. “When to Risk It? Institutions, Ambitions, and the Decision to Run for the U.S. House.” *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 195–208.
  - ★ Jacobson, Gary C., & Samuel Kernell. 1983. “Strategy & Choice in Congressional Elections.” Hartford, CT: Yale University Press.
  - ★ Hall, Andrew B. 2015. “What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?” *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 18–42.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Jane Mansbridge. 2009. “A ‘Selection Model’ of Political Representation.” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17(4): 369–398.

5. Week 5 (2/19/2024): Elected officials as “antelopes”: the consequences of how representatives strategically adapt (or fail to) in the face of representational demands back at home

- ★ Brandice Canes-Wrone, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of step, out of office: Electoral accountability and House members' voting." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127–140.
- ★ Koger, Gregory, & Matthew J. Lebo. 2012. "Strategic Party Government and the 2010 Elections." *American Politics Research* 40(5): 927–945.
- ★ Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, & Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543–565.
- ★ Yoshinaka, Antoine, & Christian R. Grose. 2011. "Ideological Hedging in Uncertain Times: Inconsistent Legislative Representation and Voter Enfranchisement." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(4): 765–794.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Manza, Jeff, Fay Lomax, & Benjamin I. Page (Eds.). 2002. In *Navigating Public Opinion: Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy* (pp. 54-75, 76-86). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- ★ Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, & Charles Stewart III. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 136–159.

**★ Initial 1-2 page research proposal describing the research question & dataset identifying key variables due February 19<sup>th</sup>★**

6. Week 6 (2/26/2024): Bringing the party back in: what role do political parties play in representation and the electoral arena? Do the Democratic and Republican parties "represent" the general mass public?

- ★ Hassell, Hans J. G. 2018. "Party control of party primaries: Party influence in nominations for the U.S. Senate." *The Journal of Politics* 78(1): 75-87.
- ★ Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." *The American Political Science Review* 95(3): 619–631.
- ★ Maestas, Cherie & L. Sandy Maisel, & Walter J Stone. 2005. "National Party Efforts to Recruit State Legislators to Run for the U.S. House." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30(2): 277–300.
- ★ Stone, Walter J., Atkeson, Lonna R., & Rapoport, Ronald B. 1992. "Turning On or Turning Off? Mobilization and Demobilization Effects of Participation Nomination Campaigns." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 665–691.
- ★ Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, & John Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571–97.
- ★ Collitt, Samuel, & Benjamin Highton. 2021. "The Policy Polarization of Party Activists in the United States." *American Politics Research* 49(4): 386-399.

7. Week 7 (3/4/2024): Party government through a representational lens: how parties engage in collective representation and shape institutional representation

- ★ Robert S. Erikson, Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver. 1989. "Political Parties, Public Opinion, and State Policy in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 83(3): 729-750.
- ★ Caughey, Devin & Christopher Warshaw. 2018. "Policy Preferences and Policy Change: Dynamic Responsiveness in the American States, 1936-2014." *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 249-266.
- ★ Algara, Carlos. 2021. "Congressional Approval and Responsible Party Government: The Role of Partisanship and Ideology in Citizen Assessments of the Contemporary U.S. Congress." *Political Behavior*.
- ★ Coleman, John J. 1999. "Unified government, divided government, and party responsiveness." *American Political Science Review* 93(4): 821-835.
- ★ Caughey, Devin, Christopher Warshaw, & Yiqing Xu. 2017. "Incremental democracy: The policy effects of partisan control of state government." *The Journal of Politics* 79(4): 1342-1358.
- ★ Caughey, Devin. 2014. "Representation without Parties: Reconsidering the One-Party South." *Working Paper*.<sup>2</sup>

★ CGU Spring Break from March 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> ★

## Models of Mass-Elite Linkages in Representation

8. Week 8 (3/18/2024): How do we measure policy congruence between citizens and their elected representatives? What are some of the methodological hurdles in empirically assessing the link between representatives and their constituents?

- ★ Matsusaka, John G. 2017. "When do legislators follow constituent opinion? evidence from matched roll call and referendum votes? Evidence from Matched Roll Call and Referendum Votes." *USC CLASS Research Paper No. CLASS15-18*.
- ★ Hare, Christopher D., David A. Armstrong III, Ryan C. Bakker, Royce Carroll, & Keith T. Poole. 2015. "Using Bayesian Aldrich-McKelvey Scaling to Study Citizens' Ideological Preferences and Perceptions." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3): 759-774.
- ★ Struthers, Cory L., Christopher D. Hare, & Ryan Bakker. 2019. "Bridging the pond: Measuring policy positions in the United States and Europe." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8(1): 677-691.
- ★ Jessee, Stephen A. 2016. (How) Can We Estimate the Ideology of Citizens and Political Elites on the Same Scale? *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 1108-1124.

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<sup>2</sup>Note that this working manuscript is a precursor to a larger book of the same title published by Princeton University Press.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2015. "From Mass Preferences to Policy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18(1): 147–165.

9. Week 9 (3/25/2024): Evaluating representation in "descriptive terms": the role of race and class in shaping the quality of representation in the United States

- ★ Gay, Claudine. 2002. "Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship Between Citizens and Their Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4):717–733.
- ★ Grumbach, Jacob M. 2015. "Does the American dream matter for members of congress? Social-class backgrounds and roll-call votes." *Political Research Quarterly* 68(2): 306-323.
- ★ David E. Broockman. 2013. "Black Politicians Are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks' Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3):521–536.
- ★ Butler, Daniel & David E. Broockman. 2011. "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3):463-477.
- ★ Lowande, Kenneth, Melinda Ritchie, & Erinn Lauterbach. 2019. "Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress: Evidence from 80,000 Congressional Inquiries." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3): 644-659.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Bernard L Fraga. Candidates or districts? Reevaluating the role of race in voter turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1):97–122, 2016

10. Week 10 (4/1/2024): Evaluating representation in "descriptive terms": the role of gender in shaping the quality of representation in the United States

- ★ Thomsen, Danielle M. 2015. "Why so few (Republican) women? Explaining the partisan imbalance of women in the US Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40(2):295–323.
- ★ Anastasopoulos, Lefteris. 2016. "Estimating the gender penalty in house of representative elections using a regression discontinuity design." *Electoral Studies* 43(1):150–157.
- ★ Anzia, Sarah F. & Christopher R Berry. The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen? *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 478–493.
- ★ Ferreira, Fernando & Joseph Gyourko. 2014. "Does gender matter for political leadership? The case of US mayors." *Journal of Public Economics* 112(1): 24–39.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Holman, Mirya M. 2014. "Sex and the city: Female leaders and spending on social welfare programs in US municipalities." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36(4): 701–715.

- ★ Bernhard, Rachel & Justin de Benedictis-Kessner. 2021. “Sex and the city: Female leaders and spending on social welfare programs in US municipalities.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118(26): 1-5.

11. Week 11 (4/8/2024): Do voters care about the intrinsic personal qualities of their representatives? Evaluating the “valence” model of representation and when voters are forced to make a choice between “good policy” and “good valence” representation.

- ★ Buttice, Matthew K., & Walter J. Stone. 2012. “Candidates Matter: Policy and Quality Differences in Congressional Elections.” *The Journal of Politics* 74(3): 870–887.
- ★ Stone, Walter J., & Elizabeth N. Simas. 2010. “Candidate Valence and Ideological Positions in U.S. House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 371–388.
- ★ Stokes, Donald E. 1963. “Spatial Models of Party Competition.” *American Political Science Review* 57(2): 368–377.
- ★ Goren, Paul. 2002. “Character Weakness, Partisan Bias, and Presidential Evaluation.” *The Journal of Politics* 46(3): 627-641.
- ★ Butler, Daniel M., & Eleanor N. Powell. 2014. “Understanding the Party Brand: Experimental Evidence on the Role of Valence.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(2): 492–505.
- ★ Mondak, Jeffery J. 1995. “Competence, Integrity, and the Electoral Success of Congressional Incumbents.” *The Journal of Politics* 57(4): 1043-1069.

12. Week 12 (4/15/2024): The role of retrospective evaluations in shaping representation: do voters hold representatives accountable for their performance in office and are they up to the task to “operate the instrument of democracy?”

- ★ Healy, Andrew, & Neil Malhotra. 2010. “Random events, economic losses, and retrospective voting: Implications for democratic competence.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 5(2): 193-208.
- ★ Huber, Gregory A., Seth J. Hill, & Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. “Sources of bias in retrospective decision making: Experimental evidence on voters’ limitations in controlling incumbents.” *American Political Science Review* 106(4): 720-741.
- ★ Algara, Carlos, Sharif Amlani, Samuel Collitt, Isaac Hale, & Sara Kazemian.. 2021. “Nail in the Coffin or Lifeline? Evaluating the Electoral Impact of COVID-19 on President Trump in the 2020 Election.” *Political Behavior*.
- ★ Garz, Marcel & Gregory J. Martin. 2020. “Media Influence on Vote Choices: Unemployment News and Incumbents’ Electoral Prospects.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 65(2): 278-293.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Sances, Michael W. 2017. “Attribution Errors in Federalist Systems: When Voters Punish the President for Local Tax Increases” *The Journal of Politics* 79(4): 1286-1301.
- ★ Anderson, Christopher J. 2007. “The End of Economic Voting? Contingency Dilemmas and the Limits of Democratic Accountability.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10(1): 271–296.

★ **Brief project description of empirical argument and research design due April 15<sup>th</sup>** ★

13. Week 13 (4/22/2024): The Media & Representation: Does the fourth estate plays a role in shaping democratic accountability in the United States?

- ★ Hayes, Danny & Jennifer L Lawless. 2015. "As Local News Goes, So Goes Citizen Engagement: Media, Knowledge, and Participation in US House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*, 77(2):447–462.
- ★ Snyder Jr., James M. & David Strömberg. 2010. "Press Coverage and Political Accountability." *Journal of Political Economy* 118(2):355–408.
- ★ Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson, Reñe Lindstädt, & Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2016. "The Influence of News Media on Political Elites: Investigating Strategic Responsiveness in Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):5–29.
- ★ Arceneaux, Kevin, Johanna Dunaway, Martin Johnson, & Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2020. "Strategic candidate entry and congressional elections in the era of Fox News." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(2): 398-415.
- ★ Martin, Gregory J. & Ali Yurukoglu. "Bias in cable news: Persuasion and polarization." *American Economic Review*, 107(9):2565–99, 2017
- ★ Moskowitz, Daniel J. 2017. "Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections." *American Political Science Review*, 115(1):114–129.

14. Week 14 (4/29/2024): Do institutional reforms lead to "better" outcomes in the representation provided to the mass public by their elected elites? Is representation in the United States biased and unequal in favor of resource-rich groups?

- ★ Olson, Michael P. & Jon C. Rogowski. 2020. Legislative term limits and polarization. *The Journal of Politics* 82(2): 572-586.
- ★ Anzia, Sarah F. 2011. "Election timing and the electoral influence of interest groups." *The Journal of Politics* 73(2): 412-427.
- ★ Broockman, David E. & Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 542–563.
- ★ Page, Benjamin I. 2009. "Perspectives on Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age." *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 148-151.
- ★ Titiunik, Rocio. 2016. "Drawing your senator from a jar: Term length and legislative behavior." *Political Science Research and Methods* 4(2) 293-316.

*Recommended optional readings:*

- ★ Clark, Jennifer Hayes & Lucas R. Williams. 2014. "Parties, term limits, and representation in the US states." *American Politics Research* 42(1): 171-193.
- ★ McGhee, Eric, Seth Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, & Nolan McCarty. 2014. "A primary cause of partisanship? Nomination systems and legislator ideology." *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (2): 337-351.

- ★ Grose, Christian R. 2020. "Reducing legislative polarization: Top-two and open primaries Are associated with more moderate legislators." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* 1(2): 267-287.

15. Week 15 (5/6/2024): **No new course module readings**

★ **10-15 Minute PP 313 Research Project Presentations on May 6<sup>th</sup>** ★

★ **CGU Final Exam Week from May 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>** ★

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# How to Read Social Science Research Articles

Spring 2024

CARLOS ALGARA

Many students may not have prior experience to reading substantive social science research. To mitigate these concerns, I prepared the following questions that students may rely on to assess and critique the political science research that we will encounter in this course. This guide can also be used to identify key components of articles that can then be used to develop the thesis statement required for your response paper and final essay exam. I **strongly** recommend using this template to assess the literature that we are assessing in this course and more generally across the social sciences.

1. **Assessing Theory:** What is the research's (i.e., article or book) main argument?

- ★ What political phenomena does the article or book **ask** try to explain/address? (i.e., what is the research question?)
- ★ What is the theoretical model advocated by the book in terms of the main **independent variable(s)** and **dependent variable(s)**.
- ★ What is the main causal mechanism(s) argued in the piece with respect to how the **independent variable(s)** exerts an effect on the **dependent variable(s)**.

2. **Assessing The Point:** How does the research fit in the overall literature?

- ★ What standing literature in political science does the piece try to speak to?
- ★ How well does this research add to our collective understanding of this literature?
- ★ Are there any implications of this research that speak to a **broader literature** within political science?

3. **Assessing Research Methodology:** What research design is used in this research?

- ★ What is the **dependent variable(s)** in the study?
- ★ How well is the **dependent variable(s)** measured?
- ★ How do the authors **operationalize** the **dependent variable(s)** in the survey? For example, on what scale is the dependent variable derived from a survey question measured?
- ★ What are the **independent variable(s)** in the study and how well are they measured?
- ★ What are the main **independent variable(s)** in the study as opposed to simple "control" **independent variable(s)**?
- ★ Does the research design try to make a **causal** argument or a **correlational** argument in terms of inference?
- ★ What specific **method** (i.e., specific statistical model? causal identification? qualitative methods?) is used in the research design?
- ★ What data is used to assess the research design outlined in the work?



- ★ Is the method appropriate given the research question asked, any strengths or weaknesses?

4. **Assessing Research Significance & Quality:** If you had advice for the author(s), what would you suggest?

- ★ Are there any shortcomings to the study in terms of the **theoretical argument** or **research design**?
- ★ Are there alternative explanations to the research findings of this work and are these alternative explanations accounted for in this researcher?
- ★ What are the implications of this research?
- ★ Are there any future avenues of research that this study points us to?
- ★ Should this study be replicated, either in terms of **theoretical argument** or **research design**, in other contexts?