

New York University
Wilf Family Department of Politics
Fall 2007

**Theoretical and Empirical Notions of Representation
in American Politics
(G53.3300)
Professor Patrick Egan**

Overview

To what extent do those who run democratic governments follow the will of the people when they make policy? This semester, we will carefully examine this question through the lenses of positive political theory and empirical analysis in the context of American politics. Our focus will be both substantive (measuring and assessing representation in the U.S.) and methodological (the questions that remain, and how scholars should go about answering them). Of course, in the background will lurk important normative questions about representation as well.

Among the topics we'll cover in this seminar are:

- What is representation, and what aspects of this notion are particularly amenable to study by political scientists?
- What sorts of expectations does positive theory provide us about the relationship between elected officials and their constituents?
- How do we empirically measure this relationship given the data at hand, and what do we know about the representative relationship?
- What role can elections play in strengthening representation?
- Under what conditions (if any) are the preferences of elected officials able to become the “independent variable” in the representative relationship—that is, when can leaders persuade their constituents to change their minds about policy?

Logistics

class meetings:	Thursdays, 4 – 6 pm 19 W. 4 th Street, Room 325
contact info:	email (best way to reach me): patrick.egan@nyu.edu office phone: (212) 992-8078
office hours:	Tuesdays, 4 to 6 pm (and by appointment, if necessary) 19 W. 4 th Street, Room 327

Prerequisites

Familiarity with game theoretic treatments of politics. Successful completion of American Government and Politics core seminar (or concurrent enrollment) is encouraged.

Requirements

- Attendance and active participation in seminar.
- Presentations (to be assigned) of readings in seminars held Oct. 11 through Nov. 29.
- A final research paper that advances your own scholarship on a relevant topic. This paper is due Friday, December 21. You will present your research in seminar on December 6. The topic of the paper must be approved by me no later than October 18. Please see me in office hours to discuss.

List of topics and readings

As this is a small seminar, I'm open to adjusting the syllabus to fit the interests of students. We'll discuss this in the first session.

We are reading enough of the following texts that you may want to consider purchasing them:

- Rebecca Morton (1999). *Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini (2000). *Political Economics: Explaining Economic Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds. (1999). *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sept. 6 Overview and introductions.

Sept. 13 Formal tools review I: Aggregating preferences and electoral competition.

- Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini (2000). *Political Economics: Explaining Economic Policy*. (P&T) Cambridge: MIT Press. Chs. 2 and 3.

Sept. 20 Formal tools review II: Rent-seeking and partisan politicians.

- P&T, Chs. 4 and 5.

For additional treatments of the material covered in the Sept. 13 and Sept. 20 seminars, you may find helpful (in rough ascending order of technical sophistication):

- Grofman, Bernard. 2004. "Downs and Two-Party Convergence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 25-46.
- James Adams, Samuel Merrill III, and Bernard Grofman (2005). *A Unified Theory of Party Competition*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.
- Martin J. Osborne (1995). "Spatial models of political competition under plurality rule." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 95:261-301.
- John Roemer (2001). *Political Competition: Theory and Applications*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chs. 1-7 and Section 8.1

Sept. 27

Mandates vs. independence, mandates vs. accountability; and pre-election vs. post-election politics: ways of thinking about elections and representation.

- Hanna Fenichel Pitkin (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 7.
- Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes (1999). "Introduction" and "Elections and Representation." in Przeworski, Adam, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- James Fearon (1999). "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance." in Przeworski, Adam, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- P&T, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Oct. 4

Models and data.

- Rebecca Morton (1999). *Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Acquaint yourself with entire text; focus for today on Chs. 4-8.

Oct. 11

Empirics I: Dyadic representation in Congress.

- Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes (1963). "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 57 (March) 45-56.
- Christopher H. Achen (1978). "Measuring Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 22 (August) 475-510.
- Larry M. Bartels (1991). "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making: The Reagan Defense Buildup." *American Political Science Review* 85 (June) 457-474.
- Joshua Clinton (2006). "Representation in Congress: Constituents and Roll Calls in the 106th House." *Journal of Politics* 68: 397-409.

Oct. 18

Empirics II: One polity, one policy: representation of citizens' preferences on a national scale.

- Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro (1983). "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77 (March) 175-190.
- Christopher Wlezien (2004). "Patterns of Representation: Dynamics of Public Preferences and Policy," *Journal of Politics* 66: 1-24.
- Brandice Canes-Wrone, Michael Herron, and Ken Shotts (2001). "Leadership and Pandering: A Theory of Executive Policymaking." *AJPS* 45: 532-550.
- Brandice Canes-Wrone and Ken Shotts (2004). "The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 690-706.

Oct. 25

Public opinion as dependent variable.

- Benjamin I. Page, Robert Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey (1987). “What Moves Public Opinion?” *American Political Science Review* 81: 23-44.
- William Meyer (1992). *The Changing American Mind*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. selections.
- Christopher Wlezien (1995). “The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending,” *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 981-1000.
- John R. Zaller (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 3 and 7.
- Pew Research Center (2007). “Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1987-2007.” Read Summary of Findings, skim full report if interested. Online at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=312>

Nov. 1

Elections and representation.

- David R. Mayhew (1975). *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Selections.
- Wayne L. Francis, Lawrence W. Kenny, Rebecca B. Morton and Amy B. Schmidt (1994). “Retrospective Voting and Political Mobility.” *AJPS* 38: 999-1024.
- Steven Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder Jr. and Charles Stewart, III. (2001). “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections.” *AJPS* 45: 136-159.
- Sanford C. Gordon and Gregory A. Huber (2007). “The Effect of Electoral Competitiveness on Incumbent Behavior.” *QJPS* 2: 107-138.

Nov. 8

Case study I: Representation of political minorities.

- Nathaniel Persily, “Forty Years in the Political Thicket: Evaluating Judicial Review of the Redistricting Process since Reynolds v. Sims.” In Thomas E. Mann and Bruce E. Cain, eds., *Party Lines: Competition, Partisanship and Congressional Redistricting*. Washington: Brookings.
- Elisabeth R. Gerber, Rebecca B. Morton, and Thomas A. Rietz (1998). “Minority Representation in Multimember Districts.” *APSR* 92: 127-144.
- David Epstein and Sharyn O’Halloran (1999). “Measuring the Electoral and Policy Impact of Majority-Minority Voting Districts.” *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (April): 367-95.
- Kenneth Shotts (2001). “The Effect of Majority-Minority Mandates on Partisan Gerrymandering.” *AJPS* 45: 120-135.

Plus, have a look at:

- U.S. Census Bureau (2007). “Members of Congress: Selected Characteristics.” *Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 2007*. Table 395. Online at: <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0395.xls>
- American National Election Studies (2007). “Party Identification, 3-Point Scale 1952-2004.” *ANES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior*. Table 2A.2. See breakdown by race here: http://electionstudies.org/nesguide/2ndtable/t2a_2_1.htm
- U.S. Census Bureau (2001). *Mapping Census 2000: The Geography of U.S. Diversity*. Selections. Online at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/atlas.html>

Nov. 15

Case study II: Parties and representation.

- James M. Snyder and Michael M. Ting (2002). “An Informational Rationale for Political Parties.” *APSR* 46: 90-110.
- James M. Snyder and Michael M. Ting (2003). “Roll Calls, Party Labels, and Elections.” *Political Analysis* 11: 419-444.
- James Adams, Samuel Merrill III, and Bernard Grofman (2005). *A Unified Theory of Party Competition*. New York: Cambridge University Press. selections.
- John Roemer (2001). *Political Competition: Theory and Applications*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Ch. 8.

Nov. 22

Thanksgiving.

Nov. 29

Case study III: Valence advantages.

- Donald E. Stokes (1963). "Spatial Models of Party Competition." *American Political Science Review*. 57:368-377.
- Stephen D. Ansolabehere and James Snyder (2000). "Valence Politics and Equilibrium in Spatial Models." *Public Choice* 103: 327-336.
- Timothy Groseclose (2001). "A Model of Candidate Location When One Candidate Has A Valence Advantage." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 862-886.
- Norman Schofield (2003). "Valence Competition in the Spatial Stochastic Model." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. 15:371-384.
- Patrick J. Egan (2007). "Issue Ownership and Representation." Ph.D. diss, University of California, Berkeley. Selections.

Dec. 6

Presentations of student research papers. Finale.

- Jeff Manza and Fay Lomax Cook (2002). "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: The State of the Debate." In Jeff Manza, Fay Lomax Cook and Benjamin I. Page, eds., *Navigating Public Opinion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Paul Burstein (2003). "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda." *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (March): 29-40.