

## SS376: American Political Development

***NOTE: This is a SAMPLE syllabus, made available for reference purposes only. The actual course syllabus may vary depending on semester and instructor.***

### Course Description

American Political Development (APD) is a relatively new, yet flourishing subfield of the study of American politics that focuses on how politics and institutions in the United States change and develop over time. As such, APD scholars pay close attention to the intersections of ideas, institutions, and policy as they emerge in the context of history. In assessing the continuity and change in American politics, APD scholars often use a methodological approach that is historical and comparative. While some works use quantitative methods, most APD works are based on qualitative research, using primary and secondary source material to provide detailed historical accounts that explain policy outcomes, institutional development, and political puzzles.

This course will begin with an overview of APD, examining its purpose and methods. In Block II, students will examine several competing foundational ideas that scholars have advanced as a way of explaining America's unique pattern of politics and development. Block III focuses on institutional development and on the various functions and roles of the American state in the areas of welfare, regulation, and national security. Block IV provides a chronological overview of American political history, and in the process explores issues such as how American political traditions have changed over time, the rise of the two-party system, the development of the American state, and the critical junctures and various periodization schemes APD scholars use to study American politics.

### Course Goals

1. Explain how American political institutions change and develop over time using APD methods such as path dependence, intercurrency, critical junctures, and periodization.
2. Describe how key events and personalities in American political history have influenced the development of ideas, institutions, and policy to produce the contemporary American political system.
3. Describe and trace the evolution of American political traditions such as liberalism, republicanism, ascriptivism, and populism through American political development.
4. Describe how American political development has influenced the development of a professional, non-partisan military.
5. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate APD literature and communicate ideas through clear and effective academic writing.

### Learning Philosophy

Cadets are *primarily* and *directly* in command of their own intellectual and professional development. Instructors facilitate this development through an interactive classroom environment, advice, coaching, and mentorship.

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Productive class discussion requires strong advance preparation: this includes critical reading of assigned texts as well as unassigned materials such as cadets' own library of scholarly publications and current events articles from reputable news sources. **Completion of readings for each class is essential and non-negotiable.** The seminar atmosphere of the course encourages different points of view and allows all participants to express their ideas. Everyone is expected to contribute to the efforts of the group.

## Required Materials

Morone, James A. *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998)

- Available online through the USMA Library, on JSTOR
- Link:  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt32bpwc?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=democratic%20wish%20james%20monroe&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Ddemocratic%2Bwish%2Bjames%2Bmonroe%26so%3Drel&ab\\_segments=0%2Fbasic\\_search\\_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3Aabc9f8eefbe1638f61ded8b9021d6a467](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt32bpwc?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=democratic%20wish%20james%20monroe&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Ddemocratic%2Bwish%2Bjames%2Bmonroe%26so%3Drel&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3Aabc9f8eefbe1638f61ded8b9021d6a467)

Additional readings will be posted on the SS376 BlackBoard page: <http://usma.blackboard.com>

## Writing Assignments

As the designated WiM course for American Politics majors, writing is an important component of SS376. Graded events are designed to test and improve various aspects of your writing skills, all of which will be essential for your success in the Social Sciences. Detailed instructions and prompts for each paper will be given separately.

### APD Paper [Requirements throughout the semester]

You will spend a large portion of the semester writing a 10-15 page report explaining a particular aspect of American political development. You will identify an APD subject (ex: an idea, institution, or policy) and trace its development and importance. Your paper is due on 14 NOV (LN25). You will be given the opportunity to receive peer and instructor feedback on the paper before you submit a revised paper on 9 DEC. The revised paper submission constitutes your Signature Writing Event (SWE) for the WiM program.

### Policy Memo [09 DEC @ 1700]

In lieu of a Term End Exam, you will submit a Policy Memo based off of your revised APD Paper. The Memo will force you to take the findings of your historical development from the Paper and apply it to a policy recommendation for Congress or the president. This assignment will test your ability to prepare a short, succinct document to be read by a senior leader.

**SS376: American Political Development – An Overview**

Date	LN	Class	Blocks
18-Aug	1	Course Intro	<b>Block 1: What is APD?</b>
23-Aug	2	Intro to APD I	
25-Aug	3	Intro to APD II	
30-Aug	4	Liberalism	<b>Block 2: American Political Traditions</b>
		<b>Paper 1 Due in Class</b>	
2-Sep	5	American Exceptionalism?	
6-Sep	6	Republicanism	
8-Sep	7	Ascriptivism	
13-Sep	8	Populism	
16-Sep	9	<i>Writing Workshop – Primary Sources</i>	
		<b>Research Question and Term Paper Topic Due in Class</b>	<b>Block 3: Functions of the State and Institutional Development</b>
20-Sep	10	APD in War, Foreign Policy, and the Army	
		<b>Paper 2 Due in Class</b>	
22-Sep	11	The Army and APD – Post Civil War	
27-Sep	12	The Army and APD – Progressive Era	
30-Sep	13	Regulatory State	
4-Oct	14	Welfare State	
6-Oct	15	Political Parties	
		<b>Term Paper Outline + Annotated Bibliography Due in Class</b>	
11-Oct	16	Congress	
13-Oct	17	Judiciary	
18-Oct	18	Presidency	
21-Oct	19	<i>Writing Workshop – Term Paper Outline Peer Review</i>	<b>Block 4: Periodization and American Political History</b>
25-Oct	20	Revolution	
		<b>Paper 3 Due in Class</b>	
27-Oct	21	Constitutional Debates	
1-Nov	22	Age of Jackson	
4-Nov	23	Civil War and Reconstruction	
8-Nov	24	The Progressive Era	
10-Nov	25	<i>Term Paper Drop</i>	
14-Nov	-	<b>Term Paper Submission Due at 1700</b>	
15-Nov	26	<i>Writing Workshop: Term Paper Peer Review + Policy Memos</i>	
18-Nov	27	The New Deal	
		<b>Peer Review Worksheet Due in Class</b>	
22-Nov	28	The “Critical Era” of the 1960s	
29-Nov	29	Reagan Revolution and the Rise of Modern Conservatism	
1-Dec	30	<i>Course Closeout and AAR</i>	
		<b>Paper 4 Due in Class</b>	
9-Dec		<b>Paper Revision and Policy Memo Due</b>	

## Course Schedule and Weekly Reading Assignments

*Note: Readings are subject to change*

### **Block I: What is APD?**

#### **Lesson 1—18 August: Course Introduction**

- Rogan Kersh, “The Growth of American Political Development: The View from the Classroom,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (2005): pp. 335-345
- Video on QWERTY: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8f6us-Sjlo>

#### **Lesson 2—23 August: Introduction to APD I**

- Suzanne Mettler and Richard Valelly, “Introduction: The Distinctiveness and Necessity of American Political Development,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, pp. 1-23.
- Adam Sheingate, “Institutional Dynamics and American Political Development,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2014), pp. 461-477

#### **Lesson 3—25 August: Introduction to APD II**

- John Gerring, “APD from a Methodological Point of View,” *Studies in American Political Development*, 17 (April 2003): pp. 82-102

### **Block II: American Political Traditions**

#### **Lesson 4—30 August: Liberalism**

- Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-32)
  - **READ:** 3-27
  - **SKIM:** 27-32
- James Kloppenberg, “In Retrospect: Louis Hartz’s ‘The Liberal Tradition in America,’” *Reviews in American History*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2001), pp. 460-478
  - **READ:** 460-464 and 472-476
  - **SKIM:** 464-472
- **Paper 1 Due in Class**

#### **Lesson 5—02 September: American Exceptionalism (?)**

- Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword*, (1996), Introduction (pp. 17- 28)
- William J. Novak, “The Myth of the ‘Weak’ American State,” *American Historical Review*, 113 (2008): pp. 752-772.

#### **Lesson 6—06 September: Republicanism**

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Introduction (pp. 1-19)
  - **READ:** 1-9, 14-19 (Focus on “Rival Views of American Political Development”)
  - **SKIM:** 9-14 (Section titled “Dynamics of the Democratic Wish”)
- Gordon S. Wood, “Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution,” *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, vol. 66, no. 1 (1990), pp. 13-38

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### Lesson 7—08 September: Multiple Traditions and Ascriptive Forms of Americanism

- Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 87, no. 3 (1993), pp. 549-566
  - READ: 549-552 and 557-566
  - SKIM: 552-557
- James A. Morone, “Storybook Truths about America,” *Studies in American Political Development* 19 (2005): pp. 216-226
- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Introduction (pp. 19-24)

### Lesson 8—13 September: Populism

- Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Introduction (pp. 1-7)
- Terri Bimes and Quinn Mulroy, “The Rise and Decline of Presidential Populism,” *Studies in American Political Development*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2004), pp. 136-159

### Lesson 9—16 September: Writing Workshop – Primary Sources

- **Research Question and Term Paper Topic Due in Class**

## **Block III: Functions of the State and Institutional Development**

### Lesson 10—20 September: The APD Approach to War, Foreign Policy, and the Army

- Robert P. Saldin, *War, The American State, and Politics since 1898*, Cambridge University Press: NY (2011), Introduction (pp. 3-27)
- William D. Adler and Jonathan Keller, “A Federal Army, Not a Federalist One: Regime Building in the Jeffersonian Era,” *Journal of Political History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2014), pp. 167-183
- **Paper 2 Due in Class**

### Lesson 11—22 September: The Army and APD - Post Civil War

- Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, Ch. 4 (pp. 85-120)

### Lesson 12—27 September: The Army and APD - Reform in the Progressive Era

- Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, Ch. 7 (pp. 212-247)
- Andrew J. Polsky and William D. Adler, “The State in a Blue Uniform,” *Polity*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2008), pp. 348-354

### Lesson 13—30 September: The Regulatory State

- Michael Nelson, “A Short, Ironic History of American National Bureaucracy,” *Journal of Politics*, vol. 44, no. 3 (1982): 747-778
  - READ: 747-749 and 768-778
  - SKIM: 750-768
- Samuel DeCanio, *Democracy and the Origins of the Regulatory State*, Ch 1 (pp. 13-24) and Ch. 12 (pp. 222-237)

### Lesson 14— 04 October: The Welfare State

- Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (pp. 1-12, 40-41)

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- Daniel Beland and Jack S. Hacker, “Ideas, Private Institutions and American Welfare State ‘Exceptionalism’: The Case of Health and Old-Age Insurance, 1915-1965,” *International Journal of Social Welfare*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2004), pp. 42-54

### Lesson 15—06 October: Political Parties

- David Karol, “Political Parties in American Political Development,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, ed. Richard M. Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert C. Lieberman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), [16 pgs]
- John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?: A Second Look*, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-26)
  - READ: 3-8, 16-26
  - SKIM: 8-16 (Skim Section on “Previous Approaches to the Study of American Political Parties”)
- **\*Paper Outline and Annotated Bibliography Due\***

### Lesson 16—11 October: Congress

- Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress*, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-26)
- David R. Mayhew, “Congress as a Handler of Challenges: The Historical Record,” *Studies in American Political Development*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2015), pp. 185-212
  - READ: 185-189, 208-212 (Intro, “Response to Impulses,” “Launching the New Nation,” and “Discussion” Sections)
  - READ: Choose TWO additional sections/time periods, and read for class
  - SKIM: Everything else

### Lesson 17—13 October: Judiciary

- Justin Crowe, *Building the Judiciary: Law, Courts, and the Politics of Institutional Development*, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-22) and Ch. 8 (270-280)
- Mark A. Graber, “The Nonmajoritarian Difficulty: Legislative Deference to the Judiciary,” *Studies in American Political Development*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1993), pp. 35-73
  - READ: 35-37, 70-73 (From the start up until “The Structure of Legislative Deference,” then starting back up with “The Countermajoritarian Difficulty Revisited”)
  - SKIM: 37-70

### Lesson 18—18 October: Presidency

- Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time* Ch. 1 (1-26) and Ch. 2 (27-44, 76-78)

### Lesson 19—21 October: Writing Workshop – Term Paper Outline Peer Review

## **Block IV: Periodization and American Political History**

### Lesson 20—25 October: The Revolution

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Introduction (pp. 9-14) AND Ch. 1 (pp. 33-56)
  - REVIEW: 9-14 (Section titled “Dynamics of the Democratic Wish”)
- Samuel Adams, “The Rights of the Colonists” *The Report of the Committee of Correspondence to the Boston Town Meeting*, Nov. 20, 1772
- **Paper 3 Due in Class**

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### Lesson 21—27 October: Constitutional Debates

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Ch. 1 (pp. 56-73)
- Herbert J. Storing, *What the Anti-Federalist Were For*, Ch. 3 (pp. 15-23)
- *Federalist* 10 ([Review from SS202](#))
- Brutus I, *Antifederalist Papers*

### Lesson 22—01 November: Age of Jackson

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Ch. 2 (pp. 75-96)
- Stephen Skowronek, *Building a new American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, Ch. 2 (pp. 19-35)
- SKIM: Andrew Jackson, Bank Veto Message

### Lesson 23—04 November: Civil War and Reconstruction

- Richard Benschel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter 1 (pp 1-17)
- Eric Foner, "The New View of Reconstruction," *American Heritage*, vol. 34, no. 6 (1983) [7 pages]
- SKIM: Abraham Lincoln, "Cooper Union Address," 1860

### Lesson 24—08 November: The Progressive Movement

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Ch. 3 (pp. 97-128)
- SKIM: Woodrow Wilson, "What is Progress?" *The New Freedom*, 1913
- Recording: Theodore Roosevelt, "The Right of the People to Rule," 1912, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99391599>

### Lesson 25—10 November: Paper Drop

**14 November @ 1700hrs: \*Term Paper Submission Due\***

### Lesson 26—15 November: Writing Workshop – Term Paper Peer Review + Policy Memos

### Lesson 27—18 November: The New Deal

- James Morone, *The Democratic Wish*, Ch. 4 (pp. 129-142)
- Anthony Badger, "The Limits of Federal Power and Social Politics, 1910-1955" in *Contesting Democracy*, pp. 181-196
- Supplemental:
  - Franklin Roosevelt, "Commonwealth Club Address" (1932)
  - Video: Franklin Roosevelt, "Second Bill of Rights" (1944), [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EZ5bx9AyI4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EZ5bx9AyI4)
- **Peer Review Worksheet Due in Class**

### Lesson 28—22 November: The "Critical Era" of the 1960s and the Decline of the "Modern Mass Party"

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- John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, Ch. 8 (pp. 255-292)
  - SKIM: 255-266
  - READ: 266-292 (starting with “The Emergence of Candidate Centered Elections in the 1960s”)

### **Lesson 29—29 November: The Emergence of Modern Conservatism in the Republican Party**

- James Reichley, *The Life of the Parties: A History of American Political Parties*, Ch. 16 (pp. 261-275)
- Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, Ch. 5 (pp. 187-216)
- Supplemental:
  - Sharon Statement, 1960
  - Video: Barry Goldwater, “1964 Republican National Convention”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--375PlwiCw>
  - Video: Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing” (1964)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXBswFfh6AY>

### **Lesson 30—01 December: Course Closeout and AAR**

- **Paper 4 Due in Class**

**09 December @ 1700hrs: \*Paper Revision and Policy Memo Due\***