

## **Department of Political Science American Politics Field Statement**

Paul Sniderman  
American Politics Field Convenor  
2009-10

A hallmark of the study of American Politics is diversity of subject, approach, and method. It comprises, among other things, analysis of Congress, the bureaucracy, interest groups, the Presidency, voting, public opinion and participation, race and ethnicity; includes, among other perspectives, rational choice, historical, and behavioral perspectives; and encompasses, among other methods, quantitative analysis of aggregate data, qualitative fieldwork, survey research and randomized experiments.

No single department can represent fully this diversity. But the department faculty in American Politics (together with colleagues in the Graduate School of Business) comes remarkably close. The core graduate sequence in American Politics – PS 420A, B, and C – accordingly, introduces students whose first or second field is American Politics to the gallery of both faculty and research in American Politics. PS 420A surveys an array of approaches, pluralism, the new (and the old) institutionalism, economic, sociological, psychological and historical approaches, and a preview of the developments in the making. PS 420B focuses on analysis of individual behavior while PS 420C focuses on analysis of political institutions.

### *Requirements for American Politics as a field:*

Students who wish to designate American Politics as a first or second subfield must take at least three graduate level courses listed under the American Politics section of the University Bulletin. Students are strongly encouraged to take the PS 420A, B, and C sequence.

### *Workshop*

The American Politics Workshop (PS 422) is an important forum for students to engage with new and exciting American Politics research. It also offers students an opportunity to further integrate themselves into a professional community comprised of Stanford faculty, scholars from other institutions, and most importantly, of student peers at all stages of doctoral work. Students who enroll in the Workshop for credit are required to present a paper in the Workshop in any quarter (and not necessarily the one in which they are enrolled). All American Politics students are strongly encouraged to attend the Workshop regularly.

### *Comprehensive Examination:*

Students are encouraged to take the comprehensive examination at the end of their first year or the beginning of their second year so they can go on to advanced course work and research.

The exam in American Politics requires students to demonstrate knowledge of concepts and research findings on major political phenomena at the level of individuals and institutions.