Field Description
The POIR Program features a distinguished faculty in the field of American politics, whose work covers a broad range of topics in the study of political behavior, political institutions, and other topics. Faculty research specialties include congressional and legislative politics; electoral behavior; judicial politics; political communication; political institutions; political psychology; public law and courts; public opinion; race, ethnicity, and politics; rationality and politics; and voting behavior.

The graduate course work in American politics includes two core courses that provide an overview of the field and its theoretical and empirical debates, as well as electives on such topics as attitudes and behavior; courts and judicial politics; legislative and executive politics; public law; race and ethnicity in U.S. politics; voting behavior; and other topics. The American politics faculty have published in the top peer-reviewed journals in the discipline, such as the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Perspectives on Politics*. The American politics faculty have also published in the most prestigious academic presses, including Cambridge University Press, Georgetown University Press, Harvard University Press, New York University Press, Oxford University Press, the University of Chicago Press, Stanford University Press, and Yale University Press. In recognition of their contributions to the field, they have won received extensive recognition, including election to the Fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award for the best book in political science; the Pritchett Award for best book in public law; the Swanson Prize for contributions in the field of political communication; the Race and Ethnicity’s Section’s award for best first book; the best book on race, representation, and politics; and the Goodnow Award for lifetime achievement.

The intellectual hallmark of faculty in the American field is investigating political phenomena at the intersection of political institutions and ordinary people. Neither strictly behavioral nor institutionalist, the faculty address research questions that cross the traditional subfields of American politics and political science. While diverse in substance and approach, the research is informed and enriched by broad concerns within democratic theory. In terms of methodology, no single approach predominates and scholars in the American field use experimental methods, observational data, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and survey research methods. Given the nature of their work and their substantive interests, the faculty seek creative and intellectually diverse students. The faculty help students develop analytic tools needed to produce rigorous scholarship.

**Core Faculty**
Jeb Barnes
Dennis Chong
Ann Crigler
Lee Epstein
Christian Grose*
Ange-Marie Hancock
Jane Junn
Alison Dundes Renteln
Jeffery Sellers
Nicholas Weller
* Field Coordinator
Field Requirements

Overview
Students are required to complete three courses in the field prior to taking the qualifying examination, and four courses in the field in total. All students must take a core sequence that consists of POIR 620 and 621, which are designed to reflect the faculty’s commitment to rigorous and thorough training of its students and to place their interests within the broader context of theoretical questions and recurring empirical puzzles in American politics. Students must also minimally take two other courses in the field consisting of either (a) a graduate seminar in the field of American politics or (b) a directed research seminar developed in consultation with the student’s advisor and approved under the Program’s rules. It should be stressed that these are the minimum requirements needed for students to take the qualifying examination. Students are strongly encouraged to take further courses in American politics, work with faculty to generate reading lists in their areas of interest, and develop a research design or substantive paper that can be presented to the core faculty in American Politics prior to their fifth semester.

Students are strongly encouraged to develop the relevant methodological skills needed to read the literature critically, prepare for the qualifying examination, and conduct original research in the field. Students are strongly encouraged to take the core methods sequence and other relevant methods courses.

Core Field Sequence
Every student in American politics will be required to take a core sequence that consists of two seminars. The first semester will provide students an overview of key substantive areas of American politics, such as voting behavior, public opinion, Congress, the Presidency, the courts, the bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, the media and mass movements. The primary goals of this course are to introduce the students to classic works in the field, situate the classics relative to important contemporary works, and provide an overview of approaches to the study of American politics.

The second seminar builds upon the first semester by presenting students with various theoretical approaches to the study of American politics, such as rational choice, political psychology, and behavioral political science. It will then look at enduring problems and questions in American politics with a focus on new and emerging areas of research inquiry.

Drafting and Grading of Qualifying Exams
Prior to the POIR Program’s examination dates, the field coordinator will solicit questions from members of the student’s guidance committee and other faculty in the American field. Exams will be graded by the student’s guidance committee in accordance with university rules.

Reading List
The faculty will maintain a reading list to help students prepare for the qualifying exam. The field coordinator has the responsibility of maintaining and regularly updating the reading list in consultation with the field faculty.
Courses in American Politics Field
POIR 620: American Politics and Policy Processes (Required)
PS 540: Law and Public Policy.
PS 545: Critical Issues in Politics and Policy.
PS 546: Seminar in Environmental Policy.
PS 610: Seminar in Party Politics.
PS 611: Seminar in Executive and Legislative Processes.
PS 612: Seminar in Urban Politics.
PS 618: Seminar in Problems of American Politics
PS 619: Seminar in Supreme Court Politics.
PS 621: Seminar in Public Law.
PS 622: Seminar in Political Attitudes and Behavior.
PS 623: Seminar in American Constitutional Development.
PS 624: Seminar in American Constitutional Law and Theory.

Language Requirement
There is no language requirement in the American politics field. If necessary for their research interests, students are encouraged to develop language expertise but it is not required. If American Politics is not the student’s primary field and language is required in the student’s primary examination field, the student must satisfy the relevant language requirement in the primary field before taking the qualifying examinations.