American Political Development

The following course comes close to a coverage of the APD canon—that is formative works and ideas and/or assorted APSA prize winners. Another principle of selection is that all converge (or, in one case skirt) the period of some fifty years that span the turn of the twentieth century. With a couple of exceptions, they will be read in the order in which they were “written.” This may or not correspond to the dates of publication..

The main purpose of setting the reading up this way is to gain an appreciation of how questions, frameworks, and techniques of analysis in APD have accumulated over time. Another, however, is to think about the ways in which these very different books, on closely related topics, support and undercut each other, both conceptually and empirically, and also the degree to which they might lend themselves to the concept of “intercurrence,” set forth in Orren and Skowronek, The Search for American Political Development. (This book is not on the list, it may prove helpful for students to poke around the index as the quarter proceeds. It is available in the ASUCLA store with the others.)

Requirements of the course are attendance and participation in discussion (40% of the grade) and a take-home final exam (60%)

April 6  Skowronek, Building A New American State
April 13 Sanders, Roots of Reform
April 20 James, Presidents, Parties, and the State
April 27 Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers
May 4       Carpenter, The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy
May 11      Class to be rescheduled. Orren, Belated Feudalism
May 18      Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz”
May 25      Bensel, The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877-1900
June 1      Ackerman, We the People, Vol. 2
June 8      Vallely, The Two Reconstructions