

September 11, 2009

Directions ...



Congress

Take one of the following subfields within congressional scholarship: oversight of the executive, roll call voting, or representation. Describe the state of our knowledge. Draw on diverse scholarship and pay particular attention to any relevant controversies within the subfield.

Scholars debate the current health of parties in government. How do you assess the role and function of party in the modern Congress? How does this compare with some major conclusions of the past? Be sure to focus on positive findings that inform normative judgments.

Presidency

Write a thoughtful essay that spells out the limits and strengths of our collective wisdom in understanding the executive branch of governance in the American system. As you conduct this review, identify the scholarship that accounts for the biggest advances and justify your selection. After reviewing your essay, briefly offer young scholars some guidance as to a meritorious line of inquiry. Justify your choice.

How do studies of presidential power reflect the different concepts of power that political scientists employ? What is the relationship between the concept of power that a scholar employs and the conclusions s/he reaches about the scope of presidential power and the place of the presidency in the political system? In your answer, be sure to draw on classic studies as well as recent research.

Political Behavior

We live in a republican form of democracy that values consent of the governed. Take scholarship from a variety of perspectives within the American politics field and reflect on what we know of the available opportunities for as well as realities of citizen engagement. How do you assess the situation? Use scholarly findings to explain the strengths and weaknesses you see. Draw on diverse scholarship and pay particular attention to any relevant controversies within the subfield.

Compare and contrast at least two different approaches that political scientists use to study interest group behavior. Critically evaluate the benefits and limits of each approach? Include specific examples of the advances produced with each approach and make a judgment about which methods have contributed the most to our understanding of organized interests. Draw on diverse scholarship and pay particular attention to any relevant controversies within the subfield.