Overview. This course provides students in Political Science with the opportunity to participate in the development of cutting-edge scholarly research in the field of American politics. It will expose students to contemporary work in the field and allow them to develop the skills to produce and evaluate such work. Students will learn to provide critical commentary on ongoing work by others and how to present and incorporate feedback on their own research projects. Both skills are critical to acquire before completing doctoral degrees. Most presentations will be by faculty or students at UW-Madison. In addition, several outside speakers will introduce students to new research in the field and model professional scholarly behavior. Students may present stand-alone research papers, portions of their dissertations, job talk papers, and other research that would benefit from the workshop environment. Each class meeting will last 75 minutes. The author will offer a 20-minute presentation of a paper in progress. The paper will be made available on the APW website in advance so that members of the workshop can read it before the presentation. The presentation is followed by group discussion for the remainder of the session. This structure is intended to mimic that used at academic conferences and other formal presentations while providing maximum feedback on the paper to the author. The workshop is expected to be a lively and helpful environment in which members of the American politics community improve each other’s scholarship and develop skills necessary for future success in the profession.

Enrollment. The course is open to doctoral students in political science and to students from other disciplines with instructor permission. It will be especially useful to students whose first or second field is American politics. Faculty and students who are not enrolled in the course are also encouraged to attend. Students may enroll for one or three credits. Students who are not yet ABD should enroll for one credit while those working on their dissertation may enroll for one or three credits. Students earn one credit when they read the papers, attend the weekly meetings, and participate in discussion. Students earn three credits when they also formally present their own research to the workshop once during the academic year and submit one-page reaction papers on the presented research for each APW meeting. Students studying American politics are encouraged to take this course at least once during their graduate careers. It may be taken multiple times.

Evaluation. Students enrolled for one credit will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of their participation in group discussion. Students enrolled for three credits will be evaluated based equally on their weekly participation, reaction papers, and performance in presenting their research. Grading will be “S” (satisfactory) or “U” (unsatisfactory).