

**Report of The Editor
to the Editorial Board of The American Journal of Political Science
and to the Executive Council of
The Midwest Political Science Association
March 22, 2011**

Executive Summary

- New submissions have increased by 58.7%. Submissions have climbed from 479 (2009) to 760 (2010).
- Turn-around time on decisions has declined slightly (by roughly two weeks). Average time to decision is 3.5 months.
- Gains in time to decision have improved partly because almost 24% of all new submissions are desk rejected. Authors of desk-rejected manuscripts are notified in 16 days, on average.
- The reviewer pool has greatly expanded – from 3980 reviewers (2009) to 5828 reviewers (2010). This is helpful, since the number of reviewers drawn on increased from 2654 (2009) to 4029 (2010)
- The AJPS impact factor increased from 2.397 (2008) to 2.554 (2009). This is due to my predecessor's efforts. The 2010 impact factor will not be reported until June 2011.
- AJPS is now operating on all cylinders. In the first half of 2010 I had only two Editorial Assistants. They carried a very heavy load. I now have a full complement of three Editorial Assistants. In October I lost my Assistant to the Editor, Cathy Tipton. By December she had been replaced by Nadia Hamid.

Introduction

This Report of The Editor – the second of four during the 2010-14 editorial term – to the Editorial Board of The American Journal of Political Science and to the Executive Council of the Midwest Political Science Association, has two purposes. The first is to review developments and trends in submissions during the previous year. The second is to describe my editorial goals for the next three years.

I. The Year in Review

Table 1 reports the annual numbers of submissions received as well as the average time-to-decision for the past 11 years. These numbers count new submissions received in the calendar year and do not count revisions. Submissions steadily declined between 2007 and 2009. There was a 58.7% increase in manuscripts in 2010– possibly due to an editor transition. This increase was unanticipated and has helped to generate a backlog.

Table 1.		
AJPS New Submissions and Average Time-To-Decision, 1999-2009		
Year	New Submissions	Time to Decision (days)
2000	530	46
2001	586	39
2002	657	51
2003	803	36
2004	783	36
2005	691	41
2006	694	67
2007	583	130
2008	531	118
2009	479	113.1
2010	760	101.4

The average time-to-decision (that is, from date of submission to date of notification of the Editor's decision) decreased in 2010, averaging 3.5 months. This figure is calibrated in terms of calendar days, including weekends, the four days when the editorial staff attends the annual MWPSA meeting, the four weeks in July and August when the Journal is closed to new submissions, and the last two weeks of December when it is closed for all business. These data are further broken out in Table 4A discussed below.

Figure 1 details the number of manuscripts submitted (new submissions only) by week. The figure gives a rough sense of the workflow (steady) and notes when the journal was closed to new submissions.

Figure 1. Number of manuscripts arriving by week.

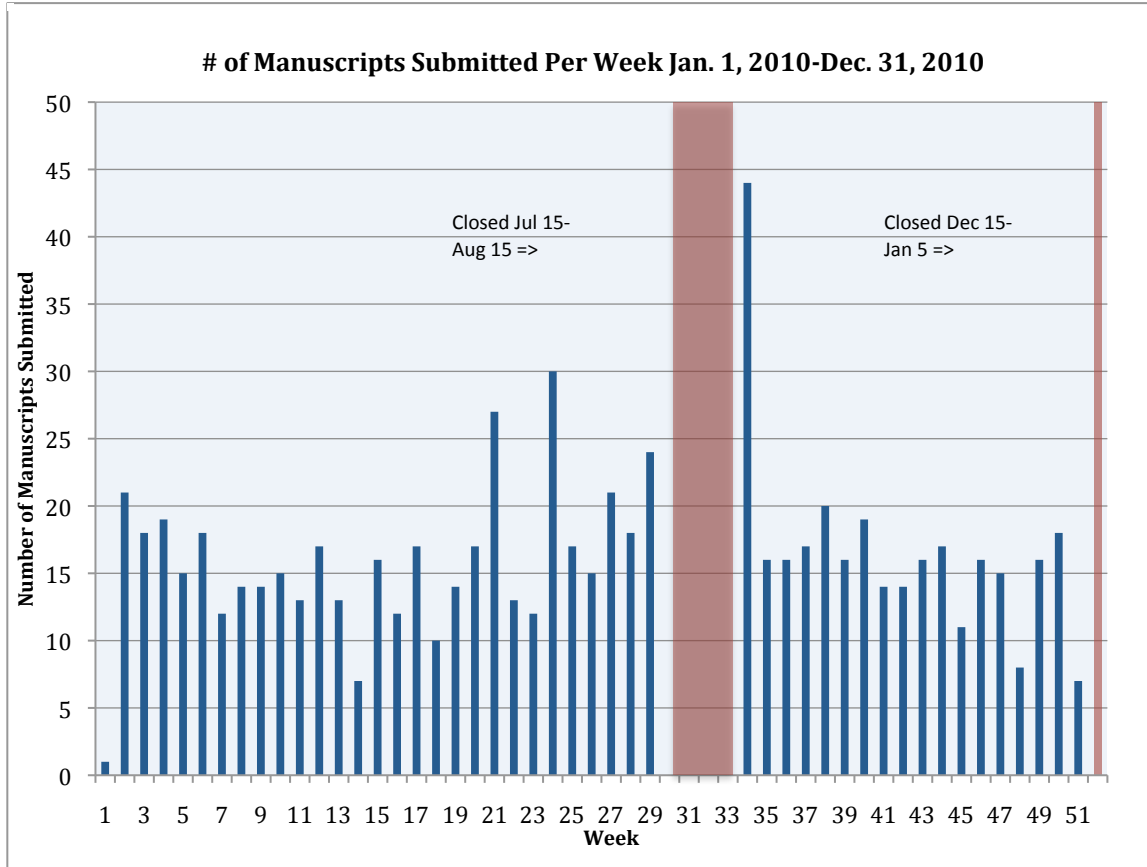


Figure 2 provides a comparison for the number of first submissions for 2009, 2010 and 2011 covering the same period, January 1 through March 15, in each year. It is unlikely that the increase in submissions is only a function of a temporary spike due to an editor transition. From January 1, 2010 – March 15, 2010 a total of 163 manuscripts were submitted. For the comparable dates this year (January 1 – March 15, 2011), a total of 150 manuscripts were submitted. In 2009 117 manuscripts were submitted.

Figure 2. Comparison of the number of new manuscripts submitted, by month, from January 1 - March 15 over the past three years.

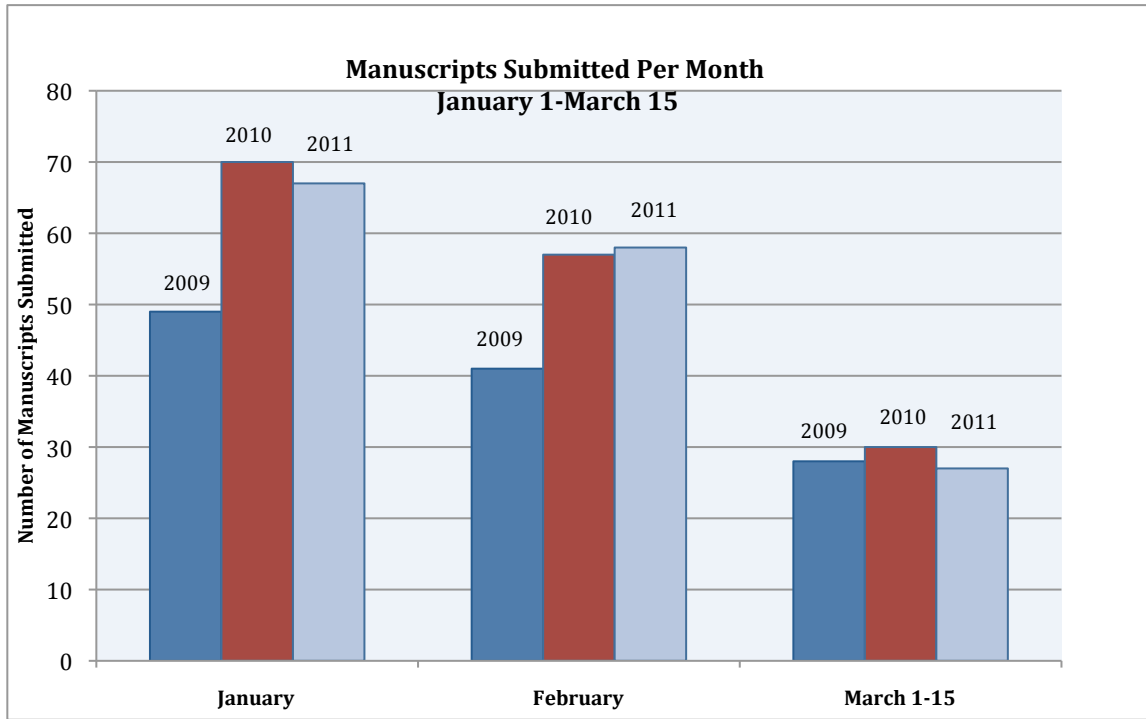


Table 2 indicates the distribution of manuscripts by field for the calendar years 2007 - 2010. These are very rough categories. I used the first category that an author notes to classify an article. Most authors use two or three classifications for their manuscripts. This enables the Journal to better select reviewers, but makes it cumbersome to report all of the categories. What is apparent from this listing is that almost half of the manuscripts fit generally into American Politics (a slight decline from 2009). Comparative politics submissions are up to 31.8 percent, an increase from 2009 but similar to 2008. International Relations submissions continue to decline. Methods and Formal Theory have declined from 2009 levels, but remain above earlier levels. Normative theory submissions have slightly decreased from the level in 2009, returning to rates that are similar to 2007 and 2008.

Table 2. AJPS Manuscript Submissions by First General Classification. Top number is the frequency and the number in parentheses is the column percentage.

Classification	2010 Submiss.	2009 Submiss.	2008 Submiss.	2007 Submiss.
American Behavior	205 (27.0%)	135 (28.5%)	162 (25%)	192 (28%)
American Institutions	139 (18.3%)	102 (21.6%)	135 (20%)	153 (22%)
Comparative	242 (31.8%)	76 (16.1%)	200 (30%)	183 (26%)
International Relations	66 (8.7%)	66 (13.9%)	103 (15%)	88 (13%)
Methods and Formal Theory	63 (8.3%)	56 (11.8%)	36 (5%)	45 (6%)
Normative Theory	45 (5.9%)	38 (8.0%)	28 (6%)	36 (5%)

Table 3 reports on manuscripts submitted for the calendar years 2009 and 2010 and equally weights all classifications used by authors. For example, for a manuscript with three classifications (e.g. American Behavior, American Institutions and Methods and Formal Theory) that manuscript was counted as a third in each general category. Appendix 1 gives the breakdown of all classifications (including sub classifications) for 2009 and 2010. Also included in Table 3 are the weighted classifications of articles accepted in both years. These percentages are given in the italicized percentages. There is some drift between 2009 and 2010 under the change of editors, with fewer comparative politics articles being accepted and more international relations being accepted.

Table 3. AJPS Manuscript Submissions Weighting by Classification. The top percentage is the weighted percentage of manuscripts submitted. The bottom percentage, in parentheses, is the weighted percentage of manuscripts accepted in that calendar year.

Classification	2010 Submiss.	2009 Submiss.
American Behavior	29.6% (21.6%)	27.2% (25.4%)
American Institutions	21.5% (23.4%)	20.2% (21.2%)
Comparative	18.2% (12.8%)	19.6% (16.7%)
International Relations	11.75% (20.9%)	13.6% (10.9%)
Methods and Formal Theory	11.9% (13.5%)	11.5% (18.8%)
Normative Theory	6.0% (6.4%)	7.1% (4.5%)

Table 4A notes the time to decision for manuscripts in 2010. The table is broken out by first submissions, first revisions and second revisions. Typically a manuscript is given only a single chance for a revision. Requests for a second revision generally reflect an acceptance with a minor revision. In each cell the first number indicates the frequency, the second number in parentheses is the percentage and the last number in italics indicates the number of days from submission to decision. The bulk of the manuscripts under first submission (61.3 percent) are declined with an insert. This means that each manuscript in this category gets comments from the editor – usually a paragraph indicating the basis for my decision and often a suggestion as to where the manuscript should be sent. A handful of manuscripts were given a decline without insert. These were at the beginning of the year and were issued by my predecessor. Those manuscripts were declined with a form letter from the editor. Almost 24% of all first submissions are declined without review. These are desk rejections by the editor and include a paragraph or more indicating my reasons for rejection. These desk rejections were turned around in a little over two weeks. By contrast, decisions on reviewed manuscripts are averaging over four months. I will address workflow issues below.

Table 4A. Time to Decision 2010. Each column represents a different stage in the submission process. The first column constitutes all new submissions. The second column reflects decisions for manuscripts that have been given a revision, and the third column are those manuscripts with a second revision. The top number in each cell is the frequency, the number in parentheses is the percentage of the column and the number in italics is the average number of days.

	1st Submission	1st Revision	2nd Revision
	# Decisions (Percent)	# Decisions (Percent)	# Decisions (Percent)
	<i>Time to Decision</i>	<i>Time to Decision</i>	<i>Time to Decision</i>
Accept	0	5 (8.8%)	32 (72.7%)
		<i>89.6</i>	<i>44.9</i>
Accept with Minor Revision	3 (0.5%)	36 (63.2%)	11 (25%)
	<i>133</i>	<i>130.3</i>	<i>52.6</i>
Decline With Insert	407 (61.3%)	9 (15.8%)	1 (2.3%)
	<i>123.4</i>	<i>113.7</i>	<i>152</i>
Decline Without Insert	6 (0.9%)	0	0
	<i>170.8</i>		
Decline Without Review	159 (23.9%)	0	0
	<i>16.7</i>		
Revise and Resubmit	88 (13.3%)	7 (12.3%)	0
	<i>146.9</i>	<i>131</i>	
Total Editor Decisions	664 (100%)	57 (100%)	44 (100%)
	<i>101.4</i>	<i>125.5</i>	<i>49.3</i>

As a basis for comparison I have recompiled the same information in Table 4B for 2009. The data from 2009 and 2010 can be directly compared. Generally, the number of days to decision has declined from 2009 to 2010. The percentage of desk rejections has almost tripled and the number of declines with insert has markedly increased (going from 17.4% to 61.3% of all manuscripts on first submission). The difference in this latter is that I strongly feel authors should hear not only from the reviewers but from the editor as well.

Table 4B. Time to Decision 2009. Each column represents a different stage in the submission process. The first column constitutes all new submissions. The second column reflects decisions for manuscripts that have been given a revision, and the third column are those manuscripts with a second revision. The top number in each cell is the frequency, the number in parentheses is the percentage of the column and the number in italics is the average number of days.

	1st Submission	1st Revision	2nd Revision
	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>	# Decisions (Percent) <i>Time to Decision</i>
Accept	11 (2.6%) <i>206.8</i>	62 (72.1%) <i>171.9</i>	5 (100%) <i>129.4</i>
Decline With Insert	75 (17.4%) <i>160.4</i>	11 (12.8%) <i>165</i>	0
Decline Without Insert	266 (61.7%) <i>107.3</i>	0	0
Decline Without Review	37 (8.6%) <i>35.1</i>	0	0
Revise and Resubmit	42 (9.7%) <i>160.8</i>	13 (15.1%) <i>170.8</i>	0
Total Editor Decisions	431 (100%) <i>118.1</i>	86 (100%) <i>170.9</i>	5 (100%) <i>129.4</i>

The general workflow is as follows. All submitted manuscripts are given a technical check by the Assistant to the Editor to ensure that the manuscript complies with AJPS guidelines for length and anonymity. The average time from electronic submission to completing the technical check is 2.1 days. Once the technical check is completed the manuscript is assigned to the Editor. I read each manuscript and assign it to an Editorial Assistant. The average time from technical check to assignment is 6.3 days. If I do not send on a manuscript (because of a desk reject), the time to decision is 16.7 days from submission. The Editorial Assistants suggest reviewers to me. It takes an average of 26.6 days from submission until the first Reviewer is contacted. I think this time is well worth it. The quality of the reviews that I see is very high. A large part of this is due to the care taken by my Editorial Assistants when selecting reviewers. Although I make some recommendations and

overrule suggestions, the Editorial Assistants perform an important job and do so in an exemplary fashion. I do not believe it is necessary to speed up the first month of the process. Once manuscripts are under review, the Editorial Assistants monitor the progress of the manuscripts assigned to them. They then notify me when a manuscript is ready for a decision.

Table 5 indicates the total number of reviewers used in 2009 and 2010. The top number indicates the frequency for the category and the percentage of this is in parentheses. As can be seen from the table a large number of reviewers were used (several were used more than once). Over half of this set completed their review and I found them to be very high quality. A little over a quarter declined to review, and of this set, many proposed alternate reviewers. Finally, 17 percent of the reviewers were terminated prior to sending in their review. I try to let reviewers off the hook when their review is not needed. Typically this is because the manuscript will be declined and I do not need an additional review.

Table 5. The Reviewer Pool.

	2010	2009
Total number of reviewers invited	4029	2654
Declined to review	1035 (25.7%)	764 (28.8%)
Completed review	2239 (55.6%)	1325 (49.9%)
Terminated by Editor	688 (17.1%)	559 (21.1%)

What these numbers do not show, is that in the past year the reviewer pool has been greatly augmented. At the end of 2009 the reviewer database contained 3,980 reviewers. My predecessor cleaned and augmented that database. Since January 1, 2010, an additional 1,848 reviewers have been added to the database. Part of this is due to the outstanding performance of my Editorial Assistants who are constantly tapping new reviewers – sometimes from outside political science. It also has to do with people who are registering for the Midwest Political Science Association Meeting being sent to register on the AJPS reviewer database.

On average it took 4.7 days for a reviewer to accept or decline the opportunity to review. On average it took 31.1 days to complete the review once the review opportunity was accepted. Over 60 percent of the reviewers who completed a review turned it in early (and thereby were not pestered with a message informing them they were late).

Table 6 indicates the distribution of recommendations for new submissions. One point to note is that reviewers tend to recommend an R&R even when they do not believe it deserves such a recommendation.

Table 6. Reviewer Recommendations.

Reviewer Recommendation Term	Reviews Completed	Frequency of Recommendation
Decline	1008	48.1%
Must publish as is	100	4.8%
Must publish with minor revisions	266	12.7%
Revise and Resubmit	722	34.4%
Total Reviews Completed	2096	100%

II. The Next Three Years

In last year's report, I noted four goals for the future. The first is to maintain the integrity of the journal and to enhance its reputation. The *AJPS* continues to improve its impact factor. It rose from 2.397 (2008) to 2.554 (2009) – the 2010 impact scores will not be reported until summer 2011. Using these impact factors *AJPS* dropped to 4th place, with *Political Analysis* in the top spot (3.76), *APSR* in 2nd place (3.21) and the *Annual Review of Political Science* in 3rd place (2.62). *Journal of Politics* is in 10th place (1.81). *AJPS* seems well positioned given these scores and remains very strong with respect to its reputational ranking. Table 7 provides a list of the top 20 journals in political science by impact scores.

Table 7. The top 20 journals as rated by their impact factors.

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Impact Factor</i>
POLITICAL ANALYSIS	3.756
AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW	3.207
ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLITICAL SCIENCE	2.619
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE	2.554
JOURNAL OF PEACE RESEARCH	2.468
POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY	2.267
SCANDINAVIAN POLITICAL STUDIES	2.186
EUROPEAN UNION POLITICS	1.979
JOURNAL OF POLITICS	1.805
AFRICAN AFFAIRS	1.66
GOVERNANCE-AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION	1.646
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES QUARTERLY	1.625
PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY	1.588
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL RESEARCH	1.518
JOURNAL OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION	1.507
POLITICS & SOCIETY	1.487
BRITISH JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE	1.472
WEST EUROPEAN POLITICS	1.469
COMPARATIVE POLITICAL STUDIES	1.455

Last year's report noted three mid-term goals that I intended to address. The first relates to the "tragedy of the commons" in the reviewer pool. The second relates to an enhanced presence by the Journal. The third involves an increased on-line presence. Each of these is commented on below.

Reviewer Tragedy of the Commons.

These days all editors concede that the reviewer tragedy of the commons is an important concern. We are all chasing after many of the same high quality reviewers and running the risk of burning them out. As noted above, AJPS solicited over 4029 reviewers in the past year (not all of whom were new). To help minimize the "tragedy of the reviewer commons" and to preserve the quality of the reviewer pool, I have:

- Become more assertive in declining inappropriate or incomplete manuscripts without external review. In 2010 almost 24% of the manuscripts were returned without review (159 manuscripts – not including another 10 manuscripts that were declined through technical check failures and the authors were told not to resubmit).
- Worked with Associate Editors who provide advice on troublesome manuscripts. These are manuscripts that show some promise, but need a quick and accurate eye in gauging whether the manuscript holds promise. I am extremely grateful to my Associate Editors. They have been extremely responsive to my concerns and questions. They have taken the burden off of numerous reviewers.
- Used a very large Editorial Board, largely comprised of mid-level scholars. Many of these Editorial Board members have been called on three or more times during the course of the year. They provide important relief for the reviewer pool.
- Pressed my Editorial Assistants to push beyond the current reviewer pool maintained by AJPS. In the past year 1,848 new reviewers have been added to the reviewer pool. Many have been added by my Editorial Assistants. This includes new scholars in political science as well experts from other disciplines outside of political science.
- Provided feedback to reviewers concerning their collective judgment. I write a decision for every manuscript that is submitted to AJPS. Those decisions, and the reviews of other reviewers, are sent out to everyone involved in the process. As well, I have tried to take the time to compliment and encourage new and junior reviewers.

- Worked with Wiley-Blackwell to provide a 30% discount for reviewers who complete their review. In their thank-you letter when completing a review, reviewers are given a link to the Wiley-Blackwell product line and a code they can enter for the discount. This has been ongoing since January 1, 2011.

An Enhanced Presence by the Journal

I continue to work with the Midwest Political Science Association and Wiley-Blackwell to plan how to enhance the reach of the AJPS. These efforts are being expanded, by working with the Association to detail forthcoming articles and by working with Wiley-Blackwell's marketing team to highlight forthcoming publications.

- On going efforts are being made to increasingly use the electronic resources of the MPSA to broadcast the offerings of the AJPS. We will pursue direct links to articles through the MPSA and continued notification of members concerning forthcoming issues and articles.
- I am working with Wiley-Blackwell's marketing Department and Rice's publicity Department to enhance the scientific reach of AJPS. I will be targeting several articles in each issue for press releases with major general science outlets (NY Times, Washington Post, Science and Nature).
- I created a virtual issue of seven articles in September 2010, in conjunction with Wiley-Blackwell and the MPSA, of articles published since 2008 on Congressional elections. That virtual issue was issued prior to the mid-term elections in November 2010. Each article was set free online, the MPSA promoted this campaign to its contacts in the field, and the issue was subsequently mentioned on the Monkey Cage blog. These articles were downloaded over 2,600 times between September 2010 and December 2010. The article accessed the most (1,061 downloads) was: "The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress," by Jamie L. Carson, Gregory Koger, Matthew J. Lebo and Everett Young.
- In 2010 AJPS articles were downloaded 174,881 times from the Wiley-Blackwell platform, an increase of 20% over 2009. This figure includes downloads for articles published between 2003 and the current volume, but does not include usage generated on JSTOR.

An Enhanced Electronic Presence

I am actively working to achieve an on-line presence for AJPS. Several short-term goals have been achieved.

- I have worked with Wiley-Blackwell to provide “early” publication in an on-line format. Articles that are accepted and copy edited will be immediately posted. This will decrease the turnaround to publication by six to eight months.
- I have gotten Wiley-Blackwell to post on-line Supporting Information (SI) for each article. The SI will be permanently attaching to the article (with the link conforming to the Library of Congress DOI standard). The SI contains information that is relevant to the article, but need not be included in the text. This might include formal proofs, additional econometric models, data transformations, computer code, or other information that might be of interest to a very specialized audience. Part of the aim is to decrease the page length of articles and provide an outlet for the specialist to visit to understand the mechanics of the article.
- AJPS has gone “paperless” in embracing Editorial Manager. The staff is not only exploiting Editorial Manager’s system, but we are pressing for improvements in that system.

III. Key Personnel

The AJPS is an intellectual activity and a professional business. A number of people are responsible for making the journal work. A special thanks goes to Cathy Tipton who started with the journal in January 2010 but left the Journal and Houston in October 2010. She is missed, but has been ably replaced by Nadia Hamid. The current group of professionals includes:

Editorial Office – Nadia Hamid, Administrative Assistant; James Hedrick, Marvin McNeese and Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz, Editorial Assistants; Rice University.

Associate Editors – Matt Barreto, University of Washington; Elisabeth Gerber, University of Michigan; Jim Granato, University of Houston; Ashley Leeds, Rice University; John Patty, Washington University at St. Louis Randy Stevenson, Rice University; Michelle Taylor-Robinson, Texas A and M.

Editorial Board – 64 members from Political Science, Economics, and Sociology in the United States, Australia, Canada, Norway, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Aries System Corporation – Nichole Ferree, Editorial Manager.

Midwest Political Science Association – The Executive Council and Will Morgan, Executive Director.

Ohio State University – Susan Meyer, Office of Communications, Assistant Editor/Copy Editor.

Wiley-Blackwell – Michael Streeter, Editor, Journals, and Sharon Scalzo, Associate Production Manager, Journals.

AJPS Editorial Board Members -- 2010

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Nick	Valentino	University of Michigan
Georg	Vanberg	University of North Carolina
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Langche	Zeng	UCSD

Appendix 1.

Breakdown of new manuscripts submitted in 2010. The breakdown is by categories used by authors to identify their subfield(s) to which the manuscript best fits. Authors can choose multiple categories.

	Frequency	%
African-American Politics	7	0.38
African Politics	6	0.33
Ancient	3	0.16
Approaches and Themes	9	0.49
Asian Politics	9	0.49
Bayesian	7	0.38
Canadian Politics	3	0.16
Categorical Data Analysis	1	0.05
Causal Inference	11	0.60
Comparative Politics: Industrialized Countries	33	1.80
Comparative Politics: Political Behavior	47	2.56
Comparative Politics: Political Institutions	70	3.82
Comparative Politics: Transitions Toward Democracy	36	1.96
Comparative Politics: Developing Countries	47	2.56
Computational Methods	2	0.11
Computer Modeling	2	0.11
Contemporary	7	0.38
Discrete Choice Models	1	0.05
Econometrics	3	0.16
Economic Policy	27	1.47
Electoral Campaigns	34	1.85
Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models	36	1.96
Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models	5	0.27
Environmental Politics and Policy	15	0.82
Ethnicity and Nationalism	20	1.09
European Politics	29	1.58
Event Count	1	0.05
Field Experiments	11	0.60
Foreign Policy	18	0.98
Formal Models	54	2.94
Formal/Game Theory	3	0.16
Fuzzy Set Methodology	1	0.05
Game Theory	3	0.16
Gender and Politics	17	0.93
Ideal Point Estimation	4	0.22
International Cooperation and Organization	23	1.25

International Law	8	0.44
International Political Economy	49	2.67
International Relations and Domestic Politics	50	2.73
International Security	57	3.11
Judicial Politics	36	1.96
Latent Variable Models	6	0.33
Latin American Politics and Caribbean Politics	21	1.15
Latino Politics	11	0.60
Legislative Politics: Campaigns and Elections	32	1.74
Legislative Politics: Institutions	78	4.25
Liberalism and Democratic Thought	13	0.71
Mass Media and Political Communication	39	2.13
Maximum Likelihood Estimation	2	0.11
Methodology	49	2.67
Middle East Politics	10	0.55
Modern	14	0.76
Multivariate Methodology	5	0.27
Other	4	0.22
Panel Data	4	0.22
Political Participation and Turnout	53	2.89
Political Parties and Interest Groups	55	3.00
Political Philosophy/Theory	38	2.07
Political Psychology	86	4.69
Political Sociology and Culture	22	1.20
Presidency and Executive Politics	31	1.69
Probit/Logit	1	0.05
Public Law	15	0.82
Public Opinion	109	5.94
Public Policy	47	2.56
Race, Class and Ethnicity	41	2.24
Random Utility Models	2	0.11
Regression	2	0.11
Religion and Politics	24	1.31
Representation and Electoral Systems	46	2.51
Social Policy	23	1.25
Spatial Methods	2	0.11
State and Intergovernmental Politics	35	1.91
Structural Equation Modeling	1	0.05
Survey Methodology	2	0.11
Time Series/Duration Models	6	0.33
Urban and Local Politics	15	0.82
Voting Behavior	85	4.63