

American Journal of Political Science

Mid-Year Report to the Executive Council of the
Midwest Political Science Association

October 2026

Adam Berinsky and Dan Reiter
Co-Editors in Chief

Elizabeth Cohen
Kathleen Cunningham
Christina Davis
Daniel W. Gingerich
Frances Lee
Matt Levendusky
Andrew Little
Ellen Lust
Efrén Pérez
Teppei Yamamoto
Associate Editors

Julia Salvatore
Managing Editor

This editorial report for *American Journal of Political Science* covers journal operations from January 1st through September 3rd of 2026. It also discusses new challenges facing not only *AJPS*, but other academic journals as well—namely, the increased uses of AI and an accompanied sudden increase in submission volume.

Editorial Team

June 1, 2026 marked the one-year anniversary of the current editorial team's tenure. However, this date also brought some changes to the editorial team. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, an Associate Editor for comparative politics, resigned from the journal to take on her new role at Vanderbilt University as Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School. We congratulate her on her new appointment and thank her for her excellent work at *AJPS* during the current team's inaugural year. While she is no longer on the editorial team, Liz is continuing to provide service to the *AJPS* as she has graciously agreed to serve as a member of its editorial board.

Daniel W. Gingerich (University of Virginia) joined the editorial team as a field editor in comparative politics and has been working in that capacity all summer.

June also brought changes to our editorial staff. At the end of the academic year, Anthony Luongo and Clemente T. Sánchez completed their terms as editorial assistants. With their departure, we welcomed Zeyu Li (Emory University) and Mason Reece (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to the team. They will be serving as graduate student editorial assistants during the 2026-2027 academic year. Their primary responsibility is to propose reviewers for submitted manuscripts in all subfields except for political theory. Lior Hamowitz (Boston University), who served as an editorial assistant last year, will continue to propose reviewers for political theory manuscripts.

The Editors-in-Chief continue to interact with scholars and students around the world, making the editorial process more transparent to the community, discussing pertinent policy issues such as AI, and listening to concerns from the community. Since beginning their editorial term, they have made presentations at University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, University of Essex (United Kingdom), London School of Economics, Sciences Po (Paris), Kobe University, Waseda (Tokyo), and Emory University. They have also participated in formal panels and roundtables at conferences such as the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association and American Political Science Association, as well as summer ICPSR program held at the University of Michigan.

Journal Performance

The *AJPS* two-year impact factor (based on citations of papers published in *AJPS* in 2024 and 2025) is 4.7, down from 5.6 last year. This puts it in sixteenth place in relation to other political science journals. For context in relation to other general interest political science journals, this puts *AJPS* behind the *Annual Review of Political Science* (8.6) and the *American Political Science Review* (5.9), which ranked first and fifth, respectively. It also puts *AJPS* ahead of *The Journal of Politics* (3.2), which ranked fifty-seventh.

The AJPS five-year impact factor (based on citations of papers published in *AJPS* between 2021 and 2025) is 7.4 (up from 7.1 last year). Using this metric, *AJPS* is the eighth highest ranked journal in the

discipline. For some context, the *Annual Review of Political Science* (14.9) ranked first, the *American Political Science Review* (9.1) placed third, and *The Journal of Politics* (4.7) was in thirty-sixth place.

The *AJPS* Google Scholar h-5 index has not been updated since July 2025. We had expected an updated score to be released in July 2026, but updated information has not been provided. As we reported in our previous editorial report, since July 2025, *AJPS* has enjoyed an h-5 index score of 69, which indicates that 69 articles have been cited at least 69 times during the five-year period from June 2020 – 2024. This put *AJPS* in third place with regard to other political science journals included in the Google Scholar metric. By comparison, the *American Political Science Review* and *The Journal of Politics* scores are 85 and 64, respectively.

We do not view these fluctuating metrics with concern and there are no reasons to believe that the quality or profile of *AJPS* is in decline in relation to other journals.

Continuing trends that we first saw emerge last year, our social media visibility continues to rise on Bluesky while it declines very slightly on X/Twitter. As of September 22, 2026, *AJPS* had 7789 followers on Bluesky (representing an increase of 3.7% since April 2026) and 18,894 X/Twitter followers (representing a decrease of 31 followers or 0.002% since April 2026). By contrast, while we had seen reported declines in the number of followers on Facebook in recent reports, this trend appears to have reversed course. As of September 21, 2026, we had 6,512 Facebook followers. This represents a 1.4% increase since April 2026. We continue to suspect that these numbers and trends simply reflect the social media usage patterns of people in the discipline.

Submission and Turnaround Time

From January 1 – September 3, 2026, we received a record 1,093 submissions—a 19% increase in submissions year over year. So far this year, we have received an average of 4.9 submissions per day. To provide a couple of points of reference, in 2025 and 2024, respectively, we received 4.6 and 4.1 submissions per day that the journal was open. The increase from 2025 is especially noteworthy because the journal was closed for an additional 17 days in June of 2025 in order to facilitate the editorial transition, so the number of manuscripts received was averaged out over fewer days. As we noted in our most recent editorial report, if we were to count the journal as having been open during this time as it would normally be and as it has been in 2026, the average number of submissions per day would have been 4.3 submissions per day. So, the increase to 4.9 submissions per day is more substantial than it might appear when not accounting for those additional days.

We suspect that most of the increase in submissions is due to authors making use of artificial intelligence in all phases of research and manuscript development. We note that AI policy requires authorial transparency on AI use, and virtually every submitted manuscript contains authorial disclosure of AI use. Some of the increase in submissions can be accounted for by the introduction of two new submission categories: research notes in June 2025 and correspondence articles in March 2026. However, they account for only 31% of the overall increase while 69% of the increase stems from an increase in article submissions. Of the 1,093 submissions received so far in 2026, 95.2% (1,040) were full-length article submissions, 4.2% (48) were research note submissions, and 0.5% (5) were correspondence submissions.[1] In this same period in 2025, we received 921 submissions., 99% of

[1]Holding steady from last year, 90% of research note submissions in 2026 have been desk rejected on grounds of fit. (*AJPS* considers for publication research notes that either pertain to methodology or that use meta-analyses; the vast majority of those 39 submissions did not fall into either of those categories). While in both 2025 and 2026 only 10% of notes submissions were sent out for review, we are happy to report that two research notes submitted in 2025 have since been conditionally accepted pending verification. We have yet to accept a correspondence submission, but four of them have been sent out for review.

which were article submissions (910), and 1% of which were research note submissions (11).

As always, Comparative Politics (37%) and American Politics (24%) dominated the submission pool, with International Relations (16%), Methodology and Formal Theory (11%), and Political Theory (10%) comprising the rest. An additional 2% of submissions were unclassifiable as a subfield of political science. This breakdown is very similar to what we saw in the April report.

Due largely in part to this large increase in submissions, the time it takes to process submissions has increased. The mean turnaround time (submission to first decision) is 36 days.[2] The average time from receiving an author's original submission to sending it out for review has increased from 9 to 15 days and the mean time to decision for desk rejections has increased from 5 to 8 days. While these numbers are all still low, they are all slightly higher than they have been in recent years. As will be discussed below, the editorial team is currently mobilizing to enact changes that will help the journal adapt to these new demands and to keep turnaround times swift for authors.

Table 1. Manuscript Submission and Turnaround Time

Year	Submissions	Turnaround Time
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
2010	760	101
2011	665	91
2012	750	107
2013	696	93
2014	874	73
2015	876	45
2016	928	54
2017	906	54
2018	1,035	55
2019	1,185	46
2020	1,161	43
2021	1,093	46
2022	1,019	44

[2] While this is the same as the average time reported in April's final report, the processing time reported in last year's mid-year report was 29 days. Turnaround time, when calculated for the midyear report is always shorter than it is for the annual report. For the midyear report, only the manuscripts submitted during this period that currently have a decision are counted. Those for which we do not yet have an editorial decision are not yet included in the calculation of the mean and some of those will have a review period that is longer than average. By contrast, the data that are used for the annual report are pulled many months after the period being analyzed and editorial decisions have usually been entered for all manuscripts submitted during that period.

2023	1,187	39
2024	1,317	35
2025	1,362	36
2026	**1,093**	**36**

Note: Turnaround time is reported in days from initial submission to initial decision. The reporting period for 2026 is January 1, 2026 – September 3, 2026.

Editorial Decisions

The decisions made on original submissions between January 1 and September 3, 2026, look very similar to the decisions made on original submissions in 2025. During this time, 48% of original submissions were sent out for review and *AJPS* had an overall rejection rate of 52%.[3] Moreover, the proportion of original submissions rejected after having been sent out for review held steady at 38%, while the proportion of authors being invited to revise and resubmit increased very slightly from 9% to 10%.

By contrast, we have seen some changes in editorial decisions made after a first round of revisions. As can be seen in the second column of Table 2, submissions are now less likely to be accepted after the first revision. While we accepted 75% of revised manuscripts on the first round in 2025, that number has decreased to 55%. Conversely, the proportion of revised submissions receiving a decision of revise and resubmit or decline has increased. The rate at which a second round of revisions is requested has increased from 17% to 28% and the rejection rate on revision jumped from 8% to 17%.

We have also seen changes in the overall acceptance rate at the *AJPS* during this time. It is now 5.1%, which is lower than it has previously been.[4] As of right now, it is challenging to know exactly why this decrease has occurred. However, it appears that there are a couple factors at play.

First, as noted above, there has been a significant increase in submissions that we have received during this timeframe and a corresponding increase in the number of editorial decisions issued. While we made 881 decisions on original manuscripts between January 1 and September 3 in 2025, we made 1075 decisions in this same timeframe in 2026—this represents a 22% increase in decisions made year over year.[5] However, a sudden increase in submissions will inevitably produce a short-term increase in the proportion of rejected papers because we tend to swiftly reject the papers that will not be proceeding to

[3] It might appear that the editorial team is desk rejecting a lower proportion of manuscripts than it was in 2025 because, in April of 2026, we reported that the desk rejection rate for 2025 had been 54%. However, it should be noted that the higher number was partially driven by the previous editorial team's higher rejection rate. Prior to the editorial transition in 2025, the desk rejection rate was 56%. After the editorial transition, it was 51%. So, if we compare the current desk rejection rate to only this editorial team's past performance, it has not decreased and has in fact very slightly increased.

[4] Historically, our overall acceptance rate has hovered at around 7%. However, last year we reported an acceptance rate of 8%. This number was higher than usual because the pre-transition acceptance rate had been at an unusually high 10%. In the April 2026 report, we explained that the reason behind the temporary increase to 10% during the first half of the year was that during that time, the previous team had been strongly encouraging authors with outstanding invitations to revise to promptly resubmit. They had also tightened the rules on granting extensions for revisions as early as Fall 2024. This meant that authors were not sitting on invitations to revise as long as they normally do. In consequence, they were submitting both revised manuscripts and final drafts at abnormally high rates leading to a higher frequency of acceptances than usual during that period.

[5] The acceptance rate is calculated by dividing the number of accepted papers by the total number of decisions we have made in the time period. In consequence, the number of decisions will not neatly correspond to the number of submissions because some of the decisions made in early 2026 were submitted in 2025 and many of the manuscripts submitted in 2026 will not have editorial decisions made for them until 2027.

peer review and most papers rejected after peer review are rejected after only one round of peer review. By contrast, it generally takes two rounds of peer review for a submission to be accepted, so papers being accepted for publication today were generally submitted in 2025 when the baseline number of submissions was significantly lower.

Second (and relatedly), in 2025 the journal added a new submission category – Research Notes – that, as was explained in footnote 1, has a 90% desk-rejection rate. While, this submission category was introduced last year, by September 3rd, we had already received more research notes submissions in 2026 than we had received by the end of 2025.

Right now, with both factors at hand, it is difficult to know what the trajectory will be for our overall acceptance rate. But we are likely to have more information after watching this trend for another year once we have seen how many of the papers that have been submitted over the past few months will be accepted for publication.

Table 2. Editorial Decisions, 2026

	Initial Decision	First Revision	Second Revision
Desk reject	52%		
Reject	38	17%	6%
Revise & Resubmit	10	28	0
Accept	0	55	94
N	1,075	79	18

Reviews and Reviewers

We sent out 2,691 reviewer invitations from January 1 to September 3, 2026—a 12% increase in the number of reviewer invitations sent out in comparison to this same period in 2025. Of the reviewers who responded affirmatively to the invitation, 75.2% completed a review and 5.5% are still working on their review as of September 24, 2026. Nearly a fifth (19.4%) of all reviewers who accepted the invitation were released prior to submitting a review. In most cases they were released because we were able to make a publication decision on the manuscript with two reviews. In a small number of cases, reviewers were released after agreeing to review due to non-responsiveness. Our invitation rejection rate has remained constant (22.4% this year and 22.7% for the same period in 2025).

Despite our reviewer rejection rate staying constant (or possibly *because* it has remained constant in the face of a 12% increase in the number of reviewer invitations being sent out), it should be noted that we have received multiple emails from our regular reviewers reporting that they are experiencing fatigue from the increase in reviewer invitations coming not just from the *AJPS* but from other journals as well.

As the increased use of AI tools in research and manuscript development causes submissions to climb ever higher, we will have to be vigilant about not overtaxing the reviewer pool. The editorial team's practice of releasing the third reviewer when it can make an editorial decision on two reviews, its high desk-rejection rate, and its practice of keeping invitations to revise and resubmit low all work together to minimize the number of reviews needed. However, this is a situation that we will have to watch and re-assess periodically as it continues to rapidly develop.

Regarding reviewer performance, on average, reviewers took 2 days to respond to reviewer invitations and they took 35 days to complete a review after having received our invitation. This is a day longer than we have seen previously.

Below, Table 3 lays out the distribution of reviewer recommendations that we received between January 1 – September 3, 2026.

Table 3. Reviewer Recommendation Summary, 2026

Reviewer Recommendation	Frequency of Recommendation
Decline	48%
Revise & Resubmit	35
Must Publish with Minor Revisions	8
Must Publish as Is	9

Conflicts of Interest

The *AJPS* continues to ask authors to identify conflicts of interest between themselves and the editors. In addition, if a member of the editorial team or staff spots a conflict of interest with an editor that the author did not disclose, they mark it and handle the manuscript accordingly. From January 1 – September 3, 2026, we noticed a total 229 conflicts of interest spread out over 194 manuscripts. Of the 229 conflicts of interest, 92 were reported by the corresponding author. A member of the editorial team spotted the remaining 137 conflicts of interest. In most cases, the conflict arose out of having a shared institutional affiliation with an editor, being a recent collaborator with an editor, or having had an editor on their dissertation committee. In those cases, a different editor was assigned to the manuscript.

In two cases, the author claimed that the conflict of interest arose from a "[c]urrent or past interaction that may unduly influence an editor's professional judgment, including actions perceived to be harassment, assault, or discrimination, or other relevant conflicts of interest of a serious nature not specified above." When these manuscripts were received, the Managing Editor contacted the PEC and Sarah Binder, in turn, contacted the authors. In both cases, the authors clarified that they had

erroneously claimed a conflict of interest with a member of the editorial team, so the editorial office was able to proceed as usual with the review of those submissions.

Revised Artificial Intelligence Policy

AJPS has led political science journals in confronting the many challenges of the artificial intelligence revolution. Following our April 2026 revision of our AI policy, we continued to observe the ongoing changes in the capabilities of, uses of, and norms regarding AI in political science. We engaged in ongoing conversations with scholars inside and outside of *AJPS* about AI, including an online survey of the dozens of members of the *AJPS* editorial board.

We concluded that *AJPS* needed a more permissive policy on authorial use of AI. Scholars across the field are using AI with greater frequency and creativity, and norms about use of AI are becoming more permissive. We also observed that it is difficult to write AI policy that precisely and clearly indicates what is and is not acceptable AI use, and we also recognize that monitoring is difficult, because of limits in AI detection software. Accordingly, in August 2026 we announced a new AI policy. That revised policy is described in a blog post and detailed on the AJPS website.

The new AI policy maintained the past AI policy requirements that authors be transparent about their AI use, and the ban on reviewer use of AI in directly evaluating the manuscripts. However, the text of the language on authorial use of AI shifted, to be more permissive of the use of AI. We note that the new policy is consistent with Wiley AI policies, and AI policies of many political science journals, including *American Political Science Review* and *Journal of Politics.*

We make a few observations about AI policy at *AJPS*. First, we will likely need to continue to revise our AI policy going forward, given rapidly changing AI capabilities, uses, and norms. For example, there is already growing interest in academia in the use of AI in the review process. Second, there are varying views about the use of AI within political science. Though many empirical political scientists support the use of AI, some political theorists are more hesitant, and support stronger restrictions on the use of AI. We considered adopting different AI policies for political theory submissions, but elected instead to maintain a single AI policy across all subfields. Third, the advent of AI presents considerable challenges to *AJPS* editorial processes, as discussed in this document and in the attached proposals document. Fourth, an author's use of AI may push us to decline the manuscript if that use violates other *AJPS* policies, including policies banning plagiarism and the use of "hallucinated" citations.

Adapting to New Challenges

As discussed above, the journal has seen a significant increase in its workload over the past nine months. Overall submissions have increased by 19%. In consequence, this has led to a 22% increase in the number of decisions made by the editorial team and a 12% increase in the number of reviewer invitations sent out to potential reviewers. In short, an increase in submissions represents an increase in work at every stage of the process.

Given the advent of artificial intelligence, we do not expect submissions to return to their previous levels. Rather, we expect that, in the absence of preventative measures, there will be further upward pressure as authors are able to produce manuscripts much swifter than was previously the case. Notably, the distribution of editorial decisions suggests that, overall, recent submissions do not appear to be of lower quality than they had previously been. Both our desk rejection rate and the rate at which we reject papers post peer review have remained constant while there has been a slight uptick in the rate at which we invite authors to revise and resubmit their manuscript, signifying that these additional submissions cannot be disposed of quickly with desk rejections.

As we had mentioned in our last report, AI has also created other challenges as we have had to start thoroughly checking the bibliographies in our accepted papers to ensure that they do not contain hallucinated citations. This is work that we did not have to previously do and which is quite laborious--routinely taking upward of three hours per accepted manuscript.

We have worked diligently over the past year to adapt to these changes; however, they are interfering with our ability to swiftly turn around manuscripts. Changes are needed to allow our office to function optimally. We are in the process of considering and proposing such changes. We suggest two changes in the attached, separate document.

Appendix: Editorial Team (Since June 1, 2026)

Co-Editors in Chief

Adam Berinsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Dan Reiter, Emory University

Associate Editors:

Elizabeth Cohen, Boston University
Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, University of Maryland
Christina Davis, Harvard University
Daniel W. Gingerich, University of Virginia
Frances Lee, Princeton University
Matt Levendusky, University of Pennsylvania
Andrew Little, University of California, Berkley
Ellen Lust, University of Gothenburg
Efrén Pérez, University of California, Los Angeles
Teppei Yamamoto, Waseda University

Editorial Board:

Arash Abizadeh, McGill University
Avi Acharya, Stanford University
Sarah Anzia, University of California, Berkeley
Leonardo Baccini, McGill University
Kate Baldwin, Yale University
Lauren Cohen Bell, Randolph-Macon College
Elissa Berwick, McGill University
Alex Braithwaite, The University of Arizona
Steven Brooke, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Sarah Bush, University of Pennsylvania
Brandice Canes-Wrone, Stanford University
James M. Curry, University of Notre Dame
Lauren Davenport, Stanford University
Janina Dill, University of Oxford
Amanda Driscoll, Florida State University
Jamie Druckman, University of Rochester
Naoki Egami, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Stefan Eich, Georgetown University
Erika Franklin Fowler, Wesleyan University
Bernard Fraga, Emory University
Taylor Fravel, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Jennifer Gandhi, Yale University
Anna Gryzmala-Busse, Stanford University
Caroline Hartzell, Gettysburg College
F. Daniel Hidalgo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
D. Sunshine Hillygus, Duke University
Lauren Honig, Boston College
Carlo M. Horz, Washington University in St. Louis
Lisa Hultman, Uppsala University
Susan Hyde, University of California, Berkeley
Jane Junn, University of Southern California
Josh Kalla, Yale University
Ayse Kaya, Swarthmore College
Orit Kedar, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Josh Kertzer, Harvard University
Korhan Koçak, New York University Abu Dhabi
Eric Kramon, The George Washington University
Yanna Krupnikov, University of Michigan
Chryl N. Laird, University of Maryland
Ranjit Lall, University of Oxford
Gabriel Lenz, University of California, Berkeley
Brad Leveck, University of California, Merced
Jacob Levy, McGill University
Kenneth Lowande, Rice University
Jason Lyall, Dartmouth College
Carla Martinez Machain, University of Buffalo
Edmund Malesky, Duke University
Neil Malhotra, Stanford University
Michele Margolis, University of Pennsylvania
Rahsaan Maxwell, New York University
Elena Mclean, University of Buffalo
Rachael McLellan, University of Glasgow
Heather Silber Mohamed, Clark University
Lisa Mueller, Macalester College
Paulina Ochoa Espejo, University of Virginia
Santiago Olivella, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Iain Osgood, University of Michigan
Alan Patten, Princeton University
Jennifer Pan, Stanford University
Tom Pepinsky, Cornell University
Jason Roberts, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Kenneth Roberts, Cornell University
Bryn Rosenfeld, Cornell University
Andrew Sabl, University of Toronto
Thomas Sattler, University of Geneva
Melissa Schwartzberg, Princeton University
Joshua Simon, Johns Hopkins University
Hannah Simpson, Washington University in St. Louis
Dan Slater, University of Michigan
Rune Slothuus, Aarhus University
Tara Slough, New York University
In Song Kim, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Wendy Tam Cho, Vanderbilt University
Jakana Thomas, University of California, San Diego
Danielle Thomsen, University of California, Irvine
Ian Turner, Yale University
Rocío Titiunik, Princeton University
Felicity Vabulas, Pepperdine University
Michael Wahman, Michigan State University
Yuhua Wang, Harvard University
David Waldner, University of Virginia
Rachel Wellhausen, University of Texas at Austin
Ismail White, Princeton University
Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University
Boliang Zhu, The Pennsylvania State University