

Partisan Grading*

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Abstract

Grades affect resource allocation inside and outside the boundaries of the university. It is therefore important that they will provide reliable information on student abilities. However, a well known fact is that at any university there could be large differences in grading outcomes – across disciplines, departments, and instructors – which do not necessarily reflect differences in student abilities. In this paper we argue that differences in grading outcomes are associated with the political orientation of instructors. We test this hypothesis using a detailed dataset which merges student grades awarded at an elite research university in the United States with voter registration records from the county where the university is located. Our main findings are consistent with the existence of partisan grading preferences: conservatism is associated with a less egalitarian assignment of grades and with lower grades awarded to Black students relative to Whites.

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1 Introduction

Grades serve important functions at institutions of higher education. Probably the most important function is to provide information on student abilities. This information is used by students in determining their relative strengths in different fields of study, which in turn may affect their course and major decisions. It is also used by others such as employers and graduate schools which use grades as signals of student abilities in their hiring and admissions decisions. Since grades affect resource allocation inside and outside the boundaries of the university it is important that they will provide reliable information on student abilities. In this context there are two main concerns. The first is grade inflation, or a tendency of grades to rise over time (without a parallel increase in student performance). The second is disparities in grading practices across disciplines, departments, and individual instructors. Both phenomena may lead to a loss in the information content of grades. In this paper we focus on the question of differences in grading practices.

Probably the most widely recognized difference in university grading practices in the United States is across disciplines, particularly, between the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The focus of attention is typically on differences in the mean grade or the share of top grades across disciplines. Thus according to a 2004 report in the *Harvard Crimson* (Krug, 2004) “Of the three major College divisions, humanities students trumped their counterparts in the social sciences and natural sciences, posting [in 2002-03] an average GPA [Grade Point Average] of 13.05 on the old 15-point grading scale, compared with averages of 12.52 and 12.33, respectively... This set of disparities is similar to that of 1990-1991... as well as to 1995-1996.” Similar differences have been reported for Princeton University (Quinones, 2008): in 2001-04 A’s accounted for 55.6 percent of student grades in the humanities, 43.3 percent in the social sciences, and 37.2 percent in the natural sciences. In its attempt to curb grade inflation and minimize grading disparities, in 2004 Princeton adopted a policy of capping the share of

A's. Even after the policy change, however, inter-disciplinary grading differences persisted: in 2005-08 (years in which the new grading policy was in effect) A's accounted for 45.5 percent of student grades in the humanities, 37.4 percent in the social sciences, and 35.3 percent in the natural sciences. Although the two examples given here pertain to Ivy League universities, differences in grading practices between disciplines are a widespread phenomenon in institutions of higher education across the United States (Rosovsky and Hartley, 2002).

What factors can account for the differences in grading practices across disciplines? A relatively detailed discussion of this issue is contained in the book *Excellence without a Soul* by Harry Lewis, former dean of Harvard College. Lewis (2006, pp. 121-2) argues that with respect to grading “humanities are... in a bit of a mess” and offers several explanations for the difference in grading practices between the humanities and the other disciplines. His main explanation is based on the claim that in the humanities there is no standard of objective truth. According to Lewis, “the combination of subjective judgment and human empathy of teacher for student may well result in a systematic upward bias in grades in the humanities.” Other explanations for differences in grading practices across disciplines and departments have been offered by Dickson (1984) and Freeman (1999). Dickson argues that departments inflate grades in order to maintain high student enrollment and thus, avoid reduction in their size and in the resources available for their faculty members. Dickson does not refer specifically to the humanities. However, to the extent that student demand for humanities courses declines over time this would explain the stronger tendency of humanities departments to inflate grades.¹ In a related article, Freeman argues that the high grades assigned in humanities departments are used to compensate students for lower post-graduation salaries that humanities majors would receive, all else being equal.

In line with the arguments made by Lewis and Dickson, Achen and Courant (2009) – who examine differences in average grades across fields of study in the University of Michigan from 1992 to 2008

¹Data compiled by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences show that the humanities' share of college degrees is today less than half of what it was during the heyday in the mid- to late 1960s. See Cohen (2009).

– argue that two conditions are necessary to sustain a regime of relatively low average grades: (1) students’ enrollment demand is high and inelastic and (2) the cost for professors of assigning low grades is relatively low, which is the case when there are objective assessment methods. Both these conditions are likely to hold more often in the natural sciences than in the humanities.

In this paper we offer a novel explanation for differences in grading practices, not only across disciplines and departments but also across instructors within disciplines and departments. We argue that grading practices may be associated with the political orientation of faculty members.² The link between political orientation and grading could operate at the level of the instructor – an association between individual views and grading preferences – and at the level of the department and discipline – aggregate political orientation being associated with a set of grading norms. As we explain in detail in the next section, partisanship may manifest itself in several aspects of grading. Unlike the previous literature, which attempted to explain differences in mean grades across fields of study, we focus our investigation on the issues of egalitarianism and the treatment of women and ethnic minorities. These issues are at the heart of American political discourse.

We test our hypotheses using a new unique dataset of student grades awarded at an elite research university in the United States during 2000-2004. Each observation in the dataset has information on an individual student taking a specific course and her final grade in the course. The dataset contains a large number of student, course, and instructor characteristics, including the instructor’s political affiliation which was obtained from voter registration records of the county where the university is located.

Our main empirical finding is that at the discipline, department, and individual instructor levels conservatism is associated with a less egalitarian assignment of grades, i.e. lower grades for low ability (SAT) students and higher grades for high ability students. An additional robust result is that at

²It is important to emphasize that the relationship between political views and grading outcomes we suggest is not causal. Rather, it is likely that some third factors lead individuals to both adopt certain political views and display a particular set of grading preferences.

all levels conservatism is associated with lower grades awarded to Black students relative to Whites. We find weaker and less consistent partisan differences in grading with respect to female and Hispanic students.

We believe that the partisan grading phenomenon this paper documents may pose serious questions of efficiency and ethics. In terms of efficiency the concern is that partisan grading may lower the information content of grades. Grades are used by outside readers of the transcript, such as employers and graduate school admission officers, as signals of student abilities. Grading disparities, especially when these are not transparent (e.g. when the employer does not know that the grading standards applied by one instructor are different from those applied by another instructor), may reduce the reliability of the signal and result in less efficient matches.

A related major reason to worry about partisan grading, and especially about the differences in grading practices across disciplines, is that grading disparities bias students' course and major choices (Sabot and Wakeman-Linn, 1991 and Johnson, 2003). The bias may be large: Johnson (2003) estimated that if differences in grading practices between disciplines were eliminated, the average undergraduate student at Duke University would probably take fifty percent more natural science and mathematics electives as they actually did. To put the same point in more colorful terms, "The rigors of Chem 101 create almost as many English majors per year as do the splendors of Shakespeare."³

Based on his findings, Johnson (2003, p. 194) goes as far as claiming that "the general level of scientific competence in America has been diminished simply because universities have not adopted more consistent grading policies." Johnson's conclusion is echoed by growth economist Paul Romer who in a 2002 op-ed piece in the Stanford Business Magazine argued that too few college students receive undergraduate degrees in science and engineering and that this shortage is one factor adversely affecting economic growth in the United States. A major reason for this shortage, according to Romer, is grades:

³Wilson (1999), quoting University of Virginia professor Mark Edmundson.

“The grades assigned in science courses are systematically lower than grades in other disciplines, and students rely heavily on grades as signals about the fields for which they are best suited.”⁴ Thus partisan grading, to the extent that it is related to differences in grading outcomes across disciplines, may have serious adverse effects that reach far beyond the confines of the university.

Shifting our focus to ethical concerns, one may argue that partisan grading is unfair. The political orientation of faculty members should presumably have no effect on their grading practices and through them on the chance that a student will receive academic awards and honors, obtain admission to better graduate schools and find more lucrative jobs. Moreover, if indeed minority students receive differential treatment, partisan grading may be viewed as not only unethical but also as unconstitutional.

The results of our analysis have important potential policy implications. The ability of instructors to determine grading outcomes rests on the degree of autonomy they enjoy and on other institutional details. Thus, for example, our finding of partisan differences in the relative grading outcomes of Black students may reflect the fact that in the university we study, as in many other institutions of higher education in the United States, the identity of the student is typically known to the instructor when she or he assigns grades. The results we present may therefore highlight the need for reform in academic policies, such as putting limits on the discretion instructors enjoy when it comes to grading, and making it more difficult for them to use gender and race as factors in the grading process.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In the next section we explain why and how conservatives and liberals may differ in their grading preferences. In section 3 we detail how we constructed the dataset and in section 4 we present the main results of the empirical analysis. Section 5 provides additional tests and section 6 offers concluding remarks.

⁴See also Epstein (2006), who reports that in an interview with him, Ronald Ehrenberg, the director of Cornell University’s Higher Education Research Institute, argued that unequal grading practices drive students away from the natural sciences and toward the humanities and the less quantitative social sciences and Lewis (2006, p. 144), who writes that “if large numbers of students are avoiding science and engineering fields simply because the grades in those fields are somewhat harsher, it is possible that a large social cost will be paid in the long run for the varying grading standards.”

2 Incentives, Political Ideology and Grading Practices

In most universities faculty members have a large degree of autonomy when it comes to grading. This implies that their grading practices could be affected by various incentives but also by ideology. The role of incentives in influencing grading practices has received a considerable amount of attention. For example, it is widely believed that student evaluations of instructors affect these practices.⁵ Another type of incentive that probably plays a role in affecting grading practices is the competition, between universities and across departments within the same university, for student enrollment and in the placement of graduating students.⁶

We claim that political ideology may also play a role in influencing grades. In other words, grading practices may depend not only on incentives but also on tastes. The academic freedom faculty members enjoy in grading allows them to indulge on these tastes. Why and how would conservatives differ from liberals when it comes to grading practices? We start with the observation that there is a large body of research that shows that conservatives differ from liberals along many dimensions.⁷ Thus we can turn the question on its head and ask why should we expect conservatives to behave like liberals when it comes to something that, within the university context, the two groups do routinely and in a relatively unconstrained fashion?

Conservatism is a political philosophy that emphasizes the value of traditional institutions and practices. Since available research demonstrates that university grades were significantly lower in the past, it is not surprising that the most vocal critics of grade inflation have been conservatives (e.g. Will, 1976 and Mansfield, 2001). Conversely, those who believe that grade inflation is an unimportant or even a non-existent problem typically view it as a sort of a conservative obsession. Thus, Kohn (2002)

⁵For a survey of research on this issue, see Johnson, 2003, ch. 4.

⁶For empirical research on the relationship between enrollment and expected grades see Sabot and Wakeman-Linn (1991), Johnson (2003), and Bar, Kadiyali and Zussman (2009).

⁷Such differences have been explored by political scientists (e.g. Conover and Feldman, 1981) and political psychologists (e.g. Carney et al., 2008). Sunstein et al. (2006) provide fascinating evidence on partisanship in judicial decision making in federal courts in the United States.

argues that “to understand grade inflation in its proper context, we must acknowledge a truth that is rarely named: The crusade against it is led by conservative individuals and organizations...”

Conservatives believe more strongly than liberals that institutions and incentives can and should be used to shape human behavior. Thus it is likely that conservative faculty members would be more willing than their liberal colleagues to use the grading system to shape student behavior by both assigning low grades for poor academic work and by assigning high grades for excellent academic work.

Liberal grading practices may be influenced by the link between (some variants of) liberalism and a willingness to use the power of government to correct inequities. In the grading context this implies that, for a given distribution of student abilities, liberal faculty members would aim to produce a more egalitarian distribution of grades, with relatively few low grades but also relatively few very high grades. In a 1976 *Newsweek* article conservative writer George Will made the following observation regarding the connection between grading practices and egalitarianism: “Let us clear our minds of cant. Surely a just society is one in which people deserve their positions, and in which inequalities are reasonably related to reasonable social goals. Justice requires a hierarchy of achievement – unless all achievements are of equal social value, in which case all inequalities are arbitrary and illegitimate ‘privileges.’ Something like that extreme egalitarianism enjoys a vogue in academic circles, and helps produce grade inflation.”

Liberal political philosophy is concerned with the abuse of power and with individual self-development. To the extent that low grades may be viewed as oppressive and as hurting the self-development (or self-esteem) of students, liberal faculty members may be more averse than conservatives to assigning such grades. Thus it is possible that partisanship in grading will be more pronounced at the bottom of the grading scale than at its top.

A related manifestation of the ideological divide between liberals and conservatives has to do with the question of ‘affirmative action’, i.e. whether or not women and traditionally disadvantaged ethnic minorities should receive preferential treatment. In the grading context this implies that the political

orientation of instructors may be associated with their grading practices towards these groups. In his 1976 *Newsweek* article Will already raised this possibility by arguing that “Some of the minority students pulled into universities by ‘affirmative action’ programs would be swept right out if teachers did not relax standards, and this relaxation tends to raise the ‘floor’ under all grades.”

Along the same lines conservative Harvard political scientist Harvey Mansfield argued in a provocative 2001 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article that “at colleges, self-esteem often goes hand in hand with multiculturalism or sensitivity to people of diverse races and ethnicities – meaning that professors must avoid offending the identities (still another name for self-esteem) of victimized groups... When I was interviewed by The Boston Globe... I said that when grade inflation got started, in the late 60’s and early 70’s, White professors, imbibing the spirit of affirmative action, stopped giving low or average grades to Black students and, to justify or conceal it, stopped giving those grades to White students as well... Because I have no access to the figures, I have to rely on what I saw and heard at the time. Although it is not so now, it was then utterly commonplace for White professors to overgrade Black students.”⁸ In response, Rosovsky and Hartley (2002), Lewis (2006) and others have argued that Mansfield’s conjecture regarding the emergence of grade inflation is likely incorrect since the share of Black students at Harvard and other institutions of higher education (excluding historically Black colleges and universities) was miniscule in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s.

To summarize, there is ample reason to believe that liberal and conservative faculty members may have different views about grading. Since instructors enjoy a large degree of freedom in deciding on grades these ideological differences can easily translate into differential grading practices. Our discussion above suggests the following main hypotheses, which we test below: (1) conservative grading practices are less egalitarian than liberal grading practices; (2) conservatives differ from liberals in their grading (or treatment) of women and disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

⁸Similar observations were made earlier by Allan Bloom (1988) based on his experience as a faculty member at Cornell University. Bloom additionally observed that these patterns were limited to the humanities and the social sciences.

3 Construction of the Dataset

In order to study the association between political orientation and grading practices we utilize a large dataset of undergraduate level course grades awarded at the College of Arts and Sciences of an elite research university in the United States between the Spring Semester of 2000 and the Spring semester of 2004. Each observation in the dataset has information on an individual student taking a specific course and her final grade in the course. The dataset contains characteristics of the student, the course and the instructor.

The dataset was built in several stages. In the first stage the university administration provided us with two datasets, one with student grades and the other with course characteristics. The second dataset contained, among other things, the name of the instructor/s of each course. We focus on cases where a single instructor taught the course, since only in these cases the instructor has complete control over grading outcomes.

In the next step we obtained voter registration data from the board of elections of the county where the university is located. In the United States citizens who wish to vote need to register with the authorities. In some states, including the state where the university we examine is located, when registering, a voter may declare an affiliation with a political party (this enables voting in primary elections of that party). We obtained the voter registration data (as of November 2008), which are publicly available for a small fee.

We next matched the names of the instructors from the course dataset with those that appear in the voter registration records. Naturally, we could not match all of the instructors since some of them were not United States citizens while others were United States citizens but were either registered in a different county or not registered at all.⁹ We were able to match 511 out of 1,169 instructors, i.e. about 44 percent

⁹The matching process was aided by the fact that the university we study is located in a relatively remote area and thus most faculty members reside in a single county.

of the total. In the final stage we used a unique course identifier to merge the course/instructor/political affiliation dataset with the student grades dataset. We classify as conservatives instructors affiliated with the Republican party and as liberals instructors affiliated with the Democratic party or with a few smaller liberal parties.¹⁰

4 Partisan Grading: The Evidence

4.1 The Big Picture

Only five percent of the faculty members in our merged dataset have a conservative affiliation, while about eighty percent have a liberal affiliation (mostly Democrats), see Table 1.¹¹ There is a clear difference in political orientation between the three disciplines: the share of conservatives is lowest in the humanities and highest in the natural sciences. Such differences are not unique to the university we examine. Figure 1 compares the share of Republicans in different disciplines at the university we examine (“Elite U”) with those at the University of California, Berkeley, and at Stanford University (Klein and Western, 2005). In all three institutions the humanities have a significantly lower share of Republicans than the natural sciences.¹²

[Table 1 and Figure 1]

How is this difference in political orientation across disciplines associated with grading? In Table 2 we provide some illustrative statistics. The figures in this table and in all the tables below (except

¹⁰While in principle there may be conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans, survey data presented by Gross and Simmons (2007) show that in practice such cases are rare: only 1.1 percent of the professors who classified themselves as Democrats held conservative or very conservative views while none of the professors who classified themselves as Republicans held liberal or very liberal views. At the same time there is naturally a large degree of variation in views within the supporters of each party. Thus, for example, the survey data show that 33.7 percent of the Democrats and 51.6 of the Republicans held what Gross and Simmons defined as moderate views. In Section 5.4 below we analyze differences within the Republican and Democratic camps.

¹¹As mentioned above, overall we identified the political affiliation of 511 instructors. The total number of instructors displayed in Table 1 (551) is larger because some instructors teach across disciplinary lines.

¹²Gross and Simmons (2007) report similar findings for a wider set of colleges and universities.

for Table 12) are based solely on grades assigned by instructors we identified as either conservative or liberal. The share of conservatives is displayed in column 1.¹³

[Table 2 and Figure 2]

The mean grade is clearly negatively associated with the share of conservatives in a discipline (column 2): as in Harvard and Princeton, grades are lowest in the natural sciences and highest in the humanities. The difference in the average grade between the humanities and the natural sciences is slightly smaller than the difference between two typical consecutive grade categories (e.g. B and B+), which is 0.3. Since grades are bounded from above by A+, it is not surprising to also find that the dispersion in grades is positively associated with the share of conservatives in a discipline (column 3). Figure 2, which displays the distribution of letter grades in the three disciplines, provides finer details on the question of dispersion. Compared to the Humanities, natural sciences courses have higher shares of student grades in each of the low grade categories F to B- as well as a higher share of A+ grades. In the humanities we observe the highest concentration of students grades in the categories B+ to A.

The ratio of the mean grade of female students to the mean grade of male students and the ratios of the mean grades of Black and Hispanic students to the mean grade of White students are all negatively associated with conservatism at the discipline level (columns 4-6). Of course, such differences in grading outcomes could result from various other factors. We next turn to a more rigorous empirical investigation that takes into account such factors.

4.2 Determinants of Student Grades

We use regression analysis to examine the determinants of individual student grades, restricting the investigation as before to courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or

¹³The share of conservatives is defined as (number of conservatives)/(number of conservatives and liberals). This definition is slightly different from the “share of Republicans” in Figure 1 where, for the sake of comparability with the data for the other two universities, we counted only Democrats instead of all liberals in the denominator.

liberal. The main purposes of the analysis in this sub-section are to demonstrate that the differences in grading outcomes across disciplines discussed above are not driven by compositional factors and to introduce the set of control variables we will use in our investigation of partisan grading. The dataset we use has about 74,000 observations. This reflects the grades of more than 22,000 students taking approximately 3,500 undergraduate level courses over 9 semesters. The Appendix provides summary statistics for the main variables included in the analysis.

Grades in the social sciences and the natural sciences are, respectively, 0.16 and 0.24 points lower on average than grades in the humanities (Table 3, column 1). We next add to the basic specification a long list of instructor, course, and student characteristics.

[Table 3]

Student grades are associated with instructor characteristics. Female instructors grade more leniently than their male colleagues (column 2). In contrast, older instructors grade more harshly than younger ones. Grades are strongly associated with course characteristics (column 3). One set of differences is between introductory courses (level 1 - the excluded group) and higher level courses: grades are lower in level 2 courses (which are also introductory in nature) but higher in advanced – levels 3 and 4 – courses. Course credits (number of academic hours per week) are negatively associated with course grades. Larger course enrollment is associated with lower grades. Finally, we find a positive time trend in grades, which likely reflects grade inflation.

Naturally, student grades are robustly associated with their own characteristics (column 4). SAT scores have a very strong positive association with grades. Female students receive significantly higher grades than males. We find that older students receive lower grades than their younger peers. Ethnicity is strongly associated with grades: relative to White students, Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native-American students receive significantly lower grades. Relative to freshman students, sophomores, ju-

niors, seniors and graduate students receive significantly higher grades.

Not surprisingly, the inclusion of student fixed effects greatly improves the explanatory power of the regression: the R-squared rises from 0.11 in column 4 to 0.61 in column 5. An interesting finding is that the addition of student fixed effects reverses the sign of most of the student class coefficients. In this context the most interesting finding is that senior grades are lower than grades in all earlier years, which may reflect the well-known “senioritis” effect – students in their last year of studies tend to slack off.

The coefficients on the indicator variables for social sciences and natural sciences are negative and highly significant throughout. Controlling for a large number of instructor, course, and student characteristics grades in the social sciences and natural sciences are, respectively, about 0.14 and 0.19 points lower on average than in the humanities.¹⁴

4.3 Egalitarianism

Based on the discussion in Section 2 we expect to see conservatism associated with less egalitarianism in grading. Grades are expected to increase with student ability for both conservative and liberal instructors. However, we argue that less egalitarian grading would manifest itself in a steeper grade profile with respect to student ability. This hypothesis is illustrated at the individual instructor level in Figure 3. The figure displays student ability (on a 0 to 1 scale) on the horizontal axis and student grade (on a 0 to 1 scale) on the vertical one. There are two grade profiles: one for a more egalitarian (liberal) instructor and one for a less egalitarian (conservative) instructor. In the figure, low ability students can expect a lower grade, and high ability students can expect a higher grade, from the conservative instructor. It is important to emphasize that the key issue here is the difference in the slopes of the grade-

¹⁴We note in passing that when we include in regressions of the type reported in column 5 of Table 3 a dummy variable for non-registered instructors (instructor age and gender are excluded from the regressions since these variables were obtained from the voter registration dataset) the coefficient for this variable is very small in size - either 0.01 or 0.02, depending on whether we include in the regression discipline or department fixed effects.

ability profiles, rather than potential differences in the intercepts: our argument is that conservatism will be associated with a steeper slope of the profile, i.e. with higher returns to student ability.

[Figure 3]

In the empirical analysis we proxy for ability with the best available measure which is independent of instructors' grading practices, the student's SAT score, and construct interaction variables between this score and variables that reflect political conservatism at the discipline, department, and individual instructor levels.

We find a positive relationship between conservatism and the returns to ability (slope coefficient) at the discipline level (Table 4, column 1). This result is consistent with our partisan grading hypothesis. However, there is an alternative simple explanation to it. We note that the values of the intercept and slope coefficients (-10.492 and 6.412) imply that, all else being equal, students of all relevant ability (SAT) levels can expect to receive a lower grade when attending classes in a more conservative discipline. Grades may be higher in the humanities for various reasons (e.g. humanities faculty may raise grades to counter declining student demand), but given that grades are bounded from above (at A+, or 4.3), the outcome is egalitarian.

The disparities in grading practices we observe across disciplines may have some potentially adverse consequences. For example, it may lead low ability students to take more courses in humanities departments or major in them. It may also lower the amount of effort exerted by students taking humanities classes. At the same time the highest ability students may avoid taking humanities courses since the relative return to their ability is lower.¹⁵

¹⁵Some basic patterns in our data are consistent with the last argument: in the humanities the shares of students with SAT scores of at least 1,450, 1,500, and 1,550 are, respectively, 24.9%, 11.8%, and 2.9%. In the natural sciences the corresponding shares are significantly higher: 32.3%, 16.3%, and 5.2%, respectively. This evidence should be viewed as only suggestive. A rigorous analysis of the question of students' selection into disciplines is outside the scope of the current paper.

The positive relationship between conservatism and the returns to ability is also found at the department level, even after controlling for discipline fixed effects (columns 2 and 3).¹⁶ In contrast to the results at the discipline level, where we found that students of all ability levels can expect to receive a lower grade when attending classes in a more conservative discipline, we now find that above certain SAT thresholds (which lie below the maximum SAT score) a student will receive a higher grade in the more conservative department.¹⁷

[Table 4]

Turning to the analysis at the individual instructor level, we again find that conservatism is positively associated with the returns to ability (columns 4-6). The fact that the coefficients barely change when we include department and discipline fixed effects increases our confidence that grading practices are indeed correlated with instructor political orientation.¹⁸ In Figure 4 we use the coefficients in column 6 to illustrate our main result of partisan differences in egalitarianism. The horizontal axis displays students' SAT scores. The vertical axis displays the difference in expected grade for a student when the instructor is conservative rather than liberal. The regression results imply that a student with a (hypothetical) SAT score of 0 can expect a 1.20 units lower grade from a conservative instructor than from a liberal one while for a student with a SAT score of 700 (the lowest score in the regression sample) the difference is 0.54 grade units. In contrast, a student with a perfect SAT score of 1,600 can expect a 0.30 units higher grade from a conservative instructor than from a liberal one. The threshold SAT

¹⁶Overall there are 71 departments/programs but many of them (especially in the humanities) are very specialized and small. The average number of instructors per department/program is 12. The results of the analyses in columns 1-3 are robust to a change in the definition of the share of conservatives in different departments and disciplines. When instead of treating the share variables as constant over time we allowed them to vary by semester the relevant coefficients decreased in size (in absolute value) but in all cases maintained their signs and statistical significance. In the analyses below we continue to use the original definition of the share variables because we view them as being associated with relatively constant grading norms.

¹⁷In column 2 the SAT threshold is 1,517 ($\sim \frac{5.279}{3.481} \times 1,000$) and in column 3 it is 1,448 ($\sim \frac{4.997}{3.450} \times 1,000$).

¹⁸In principle it would have been desirable to examine the role of partisanship using course fixed effects. However, given the nature of the data at our disposal this is practically impossible: of the more than 1,700 courses analyzed here only 21 had at least one conservative and one liberal teaching them (in different semesters) during the period 2000-2004.

level in which a student will be indifferent between taking a course with a conservative instructor and a liberal one is 1,278 ($\sim \frac{1.200}{0.939} \times 1,000$), which is roughly at the 22nd percentile of student SAT scores in the sample.

[Figure 4]

The analysis in Table 4 ignores the possibility that conservative and liberal instructors may face different distributions of student abilities in their classes. In order to address this concern we constructed a proxy for the student’s relative ability in the class by first calculating the difference between the student’s own SAT score and the mean score in the class, and then dividing the difference by the standard deviation of the SAT scores in the class. We find that our results are robust to the replacement of the absolute ability measure with the relative one (Table 5). It is important to note that in Table 4 the coefficient for the variable “conservative instructor” relates to the expected grade of the *lowest possible ability* student (SAT=0) while in Table 5 the same coefficient relates to the expected grade of the *average ability* student in the class (SAT=mean SAT in class). The results in the last three columns of Table 5 imply that the average ability student can expect a *slightly higher* grade (less than 0.1 grade units) from a conservative instructor than from a liberal one. Thus, when considered in the context of their own disciplines and departments, conservative instructors are not stricter graders than liberal ones, but they do assign lower grades for low ability students and higher grades for high ability students.¹⁹

[Table 5]

¹⁹The analysis in Table 4 also ignores the possibility that conservative and liberal instructors may face different class sizes. We have seen that grades are lower in larger classes. If there is a strong correlation between class size and political orientation we might worry that partisan grading captures differences in grading practices between small and large classes. However, controlling for instructor and course characteristics, as well as department fixed effects, we do not find a statistically significant difference in class size between courses taught by conservative and liberal instructors.

The evidence provided in this section is consistent overall with our hypothesis that conservatism would be associated with a less egalitarian distribution of grades. There are several ways to interpret this finding. A convenient way to think about the first one is to view grading as a two stage procedure: in the first stage the instructor administers an exam to the students and assigns them numerical grades, say in the range of 0 to 100. In the second stage the instructor maps these numerical grades into letter grades. For an identical distribution of numerical grades, partisan grading will manifest itself in a different mapping, where the conservative instructor will tend more than his liberal colleague to assign F and A+ grades. However, it is also possible that partisanship will take place at the first stage, where the conservative instructor will tend to view answers as either correct or incorrect while the liberal instructor will tend to see more nuance (i.e. all answers will receive at least some partial credit). In this case the second stage mapping of numerical into letter grades could be identical for the conservative and liberal instructors.

A second way to interpret the findings is that there is a partisan difference in the amount of effort an instructor is willing to invest in helping students of different abilities. For example, it is possible that liberal instructors would be willing to invest more time (e.g. in office hours) than their conservative colleagues in helping the relatively weak students, while the conservative instructors will tend to invest more effort than the liberal ones in helping the most talented students. A third mechanism that may be at play has to do with an endogenous reaction of students to signals given by instructors. Thus a liberal instructor may devote no more office hours to helping weak students than his conservative colleague, but may nevertheless give the student more implicit or explicit encouragement.

Given that we do not have any information on instructor or student behavior it is impossible for us to determine which of these interpretations is valid. The important point from our perspective is that partisan differences in *grading outcomes* do exist.

4.4 Gender and Ethnicity

We next examine whether conservatism is associated with the application of differential grading standards with respect to female students and to students from traditionally disadvantaged ethnic minorities — Blacks and Hispanics. The application of differential grading standards towards these groups obviously requires that the instructor knows the gender and ethnicity of the students. At the university we examine (as in many other institutions of higher education in the United States) this is indeed the case. The name of the student appears on written assignments (such as problem sets and term papers) and on exams. Even if teaching assistants grade students' work, instructors are those who decide how to allocate letter grades based on graded assignments and exams. Instructors also have the power to allow students to hand in extra credit assignments, and they decide on the weight given to different aspects of class performance. A final important point is that in each semester instructors are supplied with the photographs of the students enrolled in their classes. Thus it is plausible that grading will be influenced by student characteristics such as gender and ethnicity.

In order to carry out the investigation we constructed a set of interactions between the political orientation variables and indicator variables for women and ethnic minorities. We find that at the level of the discipline and the department conservatism is associated with lower grades for female students (Table 6, columns 1 to 3). However, within disciplines and departments conservative instructors do not differ from their liberal colleagues when it comes to grading female students (columns 4 to 6). A possible interpretation of the results is that women happen to possess special talents in the fields of study which attract liberal instructors.

[Table 6]

To investigate whether there is partisanship in the grading of Black students we restrict our sample to Black and White students only (Table 7). We find that conservatism is associated with lower grades

for Black students at all levels: discipline (column 1), department (columns 2 and 3), and individual instructor (columns 4-6). The differences are large in magnitude. For example, the coefficient on the interaction variable in column 6 measures the difference in the expected grade for a Black student, relative to a White student, when taking (within the same department) a course with a conservative instructor instead of a liberal one. The absolute size of the coefficient, 0.38, is roughly half the standard deviation of grades in our sample (see the Appendix) and more than the difference between two typical consecutive grade categories.

[Table 7]

Shifting our focus to Hispanic students (Table 8) we find that conservatism is also associated at all levels with lower grades for Hispanic students relative to White ones. However, the magnitude of the differential is in all cases smaller for Hispanics than for Blacks. For example, the coefficient on the interaction variable in column 6 is only 0.15 grade points, less than half the size of the coefficient estimated for Black students in Table 7.

[Table 8]

Differences across disciplines and departments in the grading of traditionally disadvantaged ethnic minorities may not necessarily reflect partisan biases. Instead, one can claim, for example, that Black and Hispanic students possess skills that are more highly appreciated in the fields of study which attract liberal instructors. However, it is more difficult to use the same line of argument to account for differences in grades within disciplines and departments. The results suggest the possibility that the ethnicities of students may be taken into consideration by instructors. Like in the case of egalitarianism, the results may be interpreted in several ways. The first interpretation would be that while student performance could be the same under the liberal and conservative instructors, grading is different. The instructor

might consciously or unconsciously take into account the ethnicity of the student when assigning grades. Under the second interpretation the allocation of effort by the instructor in helping students would depend on their ethnicity. According to the third interpretation the professor is sending signals that either encourage or discourage minority students.

An obvious question that arises from our finding is whether and to what extent liberals discriminate in favor of minorities or conservatives discriminate against them. Unfortunately, given the nature of the data at our disposal we cannot make such a judgement.²⁰

4.5 Ability, Gender and Ethnicity

The analyses presented in Tables 4-8 ignores the possibility that student ability, gender, and ethnicity may be correlated. Moreover, in each of these tables the sample is somewhat different. In Table 9, which contains our preferred set of regression results, we address these two potential concerns by simultaneously including interaction terms with all the variables of interest and restricting the sample throughout to Black, Hispanic and White students. At the discipline and department levels we find that all the egalitarianism, gender, and ethnicity coefficients maintain their signs but decline in size (in absolute value) and statistical significance (columns 1-3). At the individual instructor level we find a robust partisan difference in terms of egalitarianism and a large and highly significant partisan difference in the treatment of Black students (columns 4-6).

[Table 9]

²⁰One way to test the discrimination against the affirmative action hypotheses would be to use an experiment of the sort conducted by Hanna and Linden (2009).

5 Additional Tests

5.1 Partisanship and Extreme grades

Based on the discussion in section 2, we argue that it is likely that partisanship in grading will be most pronounced at the bottom of the grade scale. We next investigate this issue (using the same uniform sample used in Table 9), contrasting partisan differences at the top of the grade scale with those at the bottom of the scale. In the university we examine the highest grade possible is A+ (4.3 points). A+ grades account for 4.14 percent of the total in our sample. On the bottom of the distribution we focus on grades of less than C (2 points). Grades in this category include F, D-, D, D+, and C-. Together these grades account for 4.18 percent of the total in our sample. We find practically no partisan differences in the assignment of A+ grades at the level of the discipline and the department (Table 10A, columns 1-3). We do however find partisan differences in the assignment of the top grade at the level of the instructor (columns 4-6). Low ability students are relatively less likely, and high ability students are relatively more likely, to be awarded the A+ grade from a conservative instructor. We also find that Blacks are relatively less likely than Whites to be awarded the A+ grade when taking a course with a conservative instructor rather than with a liberal one.

[Table 10A]

Shifting our focus to the lowest grades, we find much stronger partisan effects (Table 10B). At all levels conservatism is associated with a higher probability that such grades will be assigned to low ability students and a lower probability that these grades will be assigned to high ability students. We also find that at all levels conservatism is associated with a higher probability that low grades will be assigned to Black students. Partisan differences are generally weaker and less consistent for female students and for Hispanic students.

[Table 10B]

Overall the results presented in Tables 10A and 10B suggest that partisanship in grading is more pronounced at the bottom of the grade scale than at its top. This is consistent with the argument, raised in Section 2, that to the extent that low grades may be viewed as oppressive, liberal faculty members may be more averse than conservatives to assigning them.

5.2 The Role of Instructor’s Gender, Age, and Race

One may be concerned that our partisan grading results are driven, at least in part, by gender, age, and race differences among instructors. Moreover, gender, age, and race differences in grading preferences are interesting in their own right. In this sub-section we explore these issues.

The voter registration data we use contain information about gender and age but not about race. In order to determine the race of the instructors in our dataset we conducted online searches for their photographs. We were able to locate the photographs of 453 instructors and identified twelve of them (three percent) as Black. Eleven of the twelve are Democrats and one is unaffiliated. Of the 511 instructors in our dataset, 178 (35 percent) are female. Five of the female instructors are Republicans while 142 are Democrats. The age distribution of liberal instructors is very similar to that of conservatives: the mean and standard deviation of age is 52 and 11, respectively, for liberals; the corresponding figures for conservatives are 54 and 11.

Controlling for the gender, age, and race of the instructors does not affect our main partisanship results with respect to egalitarianism and the treatment of Black students (top panel of Table 11). We find two interesting differences in grading outcomes between female and male instructors (second panel from the top). First, female instructors are more likely than male instructors to assign the grade A+ to female students. Second, we find that female instructors grade in a more egalitarian manner than males at the bottom of the grade scale. This result is consistent with existing literature which finds that women have more egalitarian preferences than men (see Croson and Gneezy, 2009). With respect

to age, we find that older instructors seem to be less egalitarian than younger ones, a relationship that is only significant when examining the assignment of A+ grades (third panel from the top). Finally, we find that Black instructors do not differ from their non-Black colleagues in their grading practices (bottom panel). However, given that the number of Black instructors is so small, this result may simply reflect lack of power

[Table 11]

5.3 Grading Practices of the Unaffiliated

So far we have ignored the roughly 16 percent of instructors in our dataset who are registered but unaffiliated with any party. It is interesting to know how these instructors grade. Are the unaffiliated “closet” conservatives or “plain vanilla” liberals? Grading patterns associated with these instructors may hold the answer to this question.

Our results (Table 12) indicate that the unaffiliated instructors grade like liberals: we find no evidence that the unaffiliated grade in a less egalitarian fashion than liberals and they also do not differ from liberals when it comes to the grading of females and students from ethnic minorities.

[Table 11]

5.4 Shades of Partisanship

Another interesting question worth exploring is whether one can find differences in grading practices within camps: do “hard-core” liberals differ from moderate ones and likewise for conservatives? We attempt to answer this question by differentiating among Democrats and Republicans in two ways. First, we use the voter registration records to categorize individuals into those who voted in primary elections and those who did not. Second, we use data on political campaign contributions to categorize individuals

into contributors and non-contributors, and, within the latter group, according to the number and size of the contributions.

The voter registration records report for each voter up to twelve voter history entries. These allow us to find out whether a given individual voted in primary elections. We argue that it is plausible that an individual who is affiliated with a given party and participates in the party’s primary elections may be more partisan than another individual who is affiliated with that party but did not vote in the primaries. We thus define as a primary voter an individual who was affiliated with a party (Democratic or Republican) and, according to the available voter history records, ever voted in primary elections. By this definition, 87 percent of the Democrats and 59 percent of the Republicans are primary voters. This difference in primary voting patterns is in line with Gross and Simmons (2007, p. 39) who argue that “conservative academics have traditionally been less active politically than their more liberal counterparts.”

Before analyzing the differences in grading practices within camps using the primary voting information, we first replicate our baseline regression for a sample that is restricted to Republicans and Democrats only (Table 13A, column 1). The results are practically identical to those obtained with the unrestricted sample (Table 9, column 6), which is expected given that almost all the liberal instructors are Democrats.

Interestingly, we find that non-primary voting (“moderate”) Republicans do not differ in their grading practices from non-primary voting (“moderate”) Democrats (top panel). We also find practically no difference in grading practices between primary-voting Democrats and non-primary voting ones (middle panel). In contrast and in line with expectations, we find that “hard-core” (primary-voting) Republicans are much less egalitarian than the “moderate” ones (bottom panel). However, these two groups of Republicans do not differ in the treatment of minorities. We note that given the small number of Republican instructors in our dataset, the results presented in the top and bottom panels of Table 13A

should be interpreted with caution.

[Table 13A]

To construct our second measure of “hard core” partisanship we searched for the names of the instructors we identified as Democrats or Republicans in the website www.opensecrets.org and found out whether these instructors made political campaign contributions. The information in that website is based on data from the United States Federal Elections Commission. We labeled an individual as a contributor if he or she ever contributed money to the respective party or party candidates from 2000 to 2008. We were able to find 60 registered Democrats but only 2 registered Republicans who contributed to their party or party candidates.²¹ We therefore had no choice but to limit the analysis of contributions to the registered Democrats. We further differentiate between the contributors according to the number and size of the contributions they made. In terms of the number of contributions, we label as “heavy” contributors those who contributed more than once from 2000 to 2008. In terms of the size of contributions we label as “heavy” contributors those whose contributions in 2000-2008 totaled more than \$500. According to both definitions there are 36 “heavy” contributors, but the two lists are not identical. We ask to what extent the contribution status and the further difference between “light” and “heavy” contributors matter for grading.

Our analysis of the difference in grading behavior between campaign contributors and non-contributors among the Democratic instructors yields a somewhat surprising result (which is close to being statistically significant): the contributors, supposedly more “hard-core” Democrats, seem to be less egalitarian than the non-contributors (Table 13B, column 1). One interpretation of the result is that the contributors, rather than being “hard-core”, are actually “moderate” or “centrist” Democrats. This interpretation fits well with the fact that most of the contributions are to presidential candidates (rather than

²¹This again is consistent with Gross and Simmons (2007, p. 39) who report that “50.9 percent of non-Bush voters reported giving money to a political party or candidate during the 2004 election cycle, as compared to 24.0 percent of Bush voters.”

to local candidates) who tend to be relatively moderate. Our finding may also reflect to some extent income differentials as the contributors could be wealthier than the non-contributors. When we further differentiate between “heavy” and “light” contributors we find, using both metrics, that the “heavy” contributors are less egalitarian (again the results are barely significant). A more robust result obtained from our analysis is that Black students receive a higher grades from “heavy” contributors than from “light” ones.

[Table 13B]

The results presented in Tables 13A and 13B provide an interesting perspective on intra-camp differences in grading practices. However, given the data limitations and the difficulty of constructing reliable proxies for the location of the instructors along a “left-right” spectrum of views, the results should be viewed as suggestive rather than definitive.

6 Conclusion

Differences in political ideology between individuals manifest themselves in many ways. We demonstrate, within the context of an elite research university in the United States, that political ideology is also associated with grading: conservative instructors differ in their grading practices from their liberal peers. While links between political orientation and grading practices have been suggested before, to the best of our knowledge this study provides the first large scale empirical examination of partisan grading.

Our main empirical finding is that conservatism is associated with a less egalitarian assignment of grades: at the discipline, department, and individual instructor level conservatism is associated with lower grades for low ability students and higher grades for high ability students. An additional robust result is that at all levels conservatism is associated with lower grades for Black students relative to Whites.

Partisan grading matters. Our study suggests that the political orientation of faculty members may have an indirect effect, through grades, on the chance that a student will receive academic awards and honors, obtain admission to better graduate schools and find more lucrative jobs. To the extent that grades influence students' course selection and career choice, partisan grading may affect resource allocation within and outside the boundaries of the university. We believe the results call for further investigation and discussion of the partisan grading phenomenon and more generally of grading practices in colleges and universities across the United States.

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APPENDIX: SUMMARY STATISTICS

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade	Grade	74,201	3.319	0.748
	Grade is less than C	74,201	0.044	0.204
	Grade is A+	74,201	0.043	0.202
Discipline/department statistics for individual grade observations	Humanities	74,201	0.501	0.500
	Social Sciences	74,201	0.355	0.478
	Natural Sciences	74,201	0.144	0.352
	Share of conservatives in discipline	74,201	0.057	0.032
	Share of conservatives in department	74,201	0.064	0.067
Instructor	Republican	427	0.063	0.244
	Primary-voting	427	0.037	0.190
	Democratic	427	0.913	0.282
	Primary-voting	427	0.796	0.403
	Campaign-contributing	427	0.141	0.348
	Heavy contributor (by number)	427	0.084	0.278
	Heavy contributor (by amount)	427	0.084	0.278
	Green	427	0.014	0.118
	Working Families	427	0.007	0.084
	Liberal	427	0.002	0.048
	Female	427	0.356	0.479
	Age (/100)	427	0.523	0.114
	Black	383	0.029	0.167
	Course	Level 1	3,489	0.103
Level 2		3,489	0.270	0.444
Level 3		3,489	0.336	0.473
Level 4		3,489	0.291	0.454
Credits		3,489	3.646	1.035
Enrollment (/100)		3,489	0.213	0.547
Student	SAT (/1,000)	17,096	1.359	0.116
	Female	22,059	0.497	0.500
	Age (/100)	22,059	0.208	0.028
	White	22,059	0.576	0.494
	Asian	22,059	0.149	0.356
	Black	22,059	0.047	0.211
	Hispanic	22,059	0.054	0.226
	Native American	22,059	0.005	0.072
	Foreigner	22,059	0.065	0.246
	Refused to answer	22,059	0.005	0.072
	Missing ethnicity	22,059	0.099	0.299
	Freshman	22,059	0.254	0.372
	Sophomore	22,059	0.229	0.319
	Junior	22,059	0.190	0.292
	Senior	22,059	0.270	0.376
	Fifth year	22,059	0.002	0.044
	Graduate	22,059	0.055	0.225

Notes: All statistics pertain to grades awarded in courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal.

TABLE 1: PARTY AFFILIATION SHARES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

	Conservative	Liberal				Other		
	Republican	Democratic	Green	Working Families	Liberal	Independence	Unaffiliated	
Humanities	0.034	0.801	0.015	0.006	0.000	0.006	0.138	N=327
Social sciences	0.041	0.746	0.025	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.180	N=122
Natural sciences	0.108	0.686	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.196	N=102
Overall	0.049	0.768	0.015	0.005	0.002	0.004	0.158	N=551

Notes: see text for data sources.

TABLE 2: SHARE OF CONSERVATIVES AND GRADE PATTERNS

	Share of conservatives	Grades		Relative mean grade		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Females	Blacks	Hispanics
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Humanities	0.040	3.41	0.67	1.03	0.91	0.95
Social sciences	0.052	3.25	0.78	1.03	0.85	0.89
Natural sciences	0.136	3.17	0.86	0.98	0.82	0.85

Notes: The share of conservatives is defined as the number of conservatives divided by the number of conservatives and liberals. All statistics pertain to grades awarded in courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. Column 4 reports the mean grade of female students divided by the mean grade of male students. Columns 5 and 6 report the mean grade of Black and Hispanic students, respectively, divided by the mean grade of White students.

TABLE 3: GRADING DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	No Additional Controls	Adding Instructor Controls	Adding Course Controls	Adding Student Controls	Student Fixed Effects
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Social Sciences	-0.159 ^{***} (0.006)	-0.141 ^{***} (0.006)	-0.135 ^{***} (0.007)	-0.138 ^{***} (0.007)	-0.141 ^{***} (0.007)
Natural Sciences	-0.240 ^{***} (0.009)	-0.214 ^{***} (0.009)	-0.187 ^{***} (0.009)	-0.164 ^{***} (0.010)	-0.186 ^{***} (0.011)
Instructor is female		0.079 ^{***} (0.006)	0.067 ^{***} (0.006)	0.087 ^{***} (0.007)	0.069 ^{***} (0.006)
Instructor's age (/100)		-0.103 ^{***} (0.026)	-0.078 ^{***} (0.026)	-0.019 (0.028)	-0.088 ^{**} (0.027)
Course level 2			-0.078 ^{***} (0.008)	-0.085 ^{***} (0.009)	-0.076 ^{***} (0.009)
Course level 3			0.027 ^{***} (0.009)	0.008 (0.010)	-0.031 ^{***} (0.010)
Course level 4			0.218 ^{***} (0.011)	0.166 ^{**} (0.013)	0.071 ^{***} (0.013)
Course credits			-0.078 ^{***} (0.004)	-0.109 ^{***} (0.006)	-0.099 ^{***} (0.005)
Course enrollment (/100)			-0.014 ^{***} (0.001)	-0.015 ^{***} (0.001)	-0.012 ^{***} (0.001)
Time trend			0.008 ^{***} (0.001)	0.007 ^{***} (0.001)	0.035 ^{***} (0.005)
Student's SAT score (/1,000)				1.297 ^{***} (0.031)	
Student is female				0.154 ^{***} (0.006)	
Student's age (/100)				-1.968 ^{***} (0.398)	
Student is Asian				-0.102 ^{***} (0.008)	
Student is Black				-0.248 ^{***} (0.015)	
Student is Hispanic				-0.157 ^{***} (0.013)	
Student is Native-American				-0.287 ^{***} (0.054)	
Student is a Foreigner				-0.038 (0.032)	
Student refused to state ethnicity				-0.100 [*] (0.055)	
Student's ethnicity missing				-0.063 ^{***} (0.012)	
Student is in sophomore year				0.067 ^{***} (0.009)	-0.018 (0.013)
Student is in junior year				0.084 ^{***} (0.012)	-0.048 ^{**} (0.021)
Student is in senior year				0.093 ^{***} (0.015)	-0.122 ^{***} (0.030)
Student is in fifth year				0.004 (0.138)	-0.292 (0.198)

TABLE 3 (CONT.): GRADING DIFFERENCES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	No Additional Controls	Adding Instructor Controls	Adding Course Controls	Adding Student Controls	Student Fixed Effects
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Student is in graduate school				0.111* (0.065)	0.081 (0.079)
Observations	74,201	74,201	74,201	60,685	74,201
R-squared	0.016	0.019	0.040	0.106	0.605

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Robust standard errors are reported in brackets. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 4: PARTISAN DIFFERENCES IN THE RETURNS TO STUDENT ABILITY

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-10.492** (4.221)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * SAT score (/1,000)	6.412** (2.820)					
Share of conservatives in department		-5.279** (2.403)	-4.997** (2.233)			
Share of conservatives in department * SAT score (/1,000)		3.481** (1.611)	3.450** (1.600)			
Conservative instructor				-1.209** (0.564)	-1.240** (0.544)	-1.200*** (0.454)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)				0.943** (0.427)	0.958** (0.415)	0.939*** (0.357)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	60,685	60,685	60,685	60,685	60,685	60,685
R-squared	0.587	0.586	0.590	0.586	0.591	0.606

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

**TABLE 5: PARTISAN DIFFERENCES IN THE RETURNS TO STUDENT ABILITY
USING STANDARDIZED SAT SCORES**

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-1.800 ^{***}					
	(0.300)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * standardized SAT score	1.858 ^{***}					
	(0.267)					
Share of conservatives in department		-0.541 ^{**}	-0.299			
		(0.270)	(0.194)			
Share of conservatives in department * standardized SAT score		0.635 ^{***}	0.634 ^{***}			
		(0.181)	(0.184)			
Conservative instructor				0.092 [*]	0.083	0.096 [*]
				(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.057)
Conservative instructor * standardized SAT score				0.119 ^{***}	0.119 ^{***}	0.107 ^{***}
				(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.038)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	60,326	60,326	60,326	60,326	60,326	60,326
R-squared	0.593	0.588	0.593	0.588	0.593	0.608

Notes: Standardized SAT score is equal to (student's SAT score - course mean SAT score)/course standard deviation of SAT scores. The sample includes grades awarded in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 6: PARTISANSHIP AND GENDER

<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-1.021*** (0.299)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * female student	-1.633*** (0.230)					
Share of conservatives in department		-0.294 (0.211)	-0.012 (0.216)			
Share of conservatives in department * female student		-0.439** (0.213)	-0.513** (0.209)			
Conservative instructor				0.109* (0.057)	0.098* (0.055)	0.107* (0.059)
Conservative instructor * female student				-0.019 (0.027)	-0.019 (0.025)	-0.008 (0.019)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	74,201	74,201	74,201	74,201	74,201	74,201
R-squared	0.604	0.602	0.606	0.601	0.606	0.621

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 7: PARTISANSHIP AND ETHNICITY – BLACK STUDENTS

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-1.510 ^{***}					
	(0.243)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Black student	-2.019 [*]					
	(1.101)					
Share of conservatives in department		-0.407 [*]	-0.237			
		(0.231)	(0.173)			
Share of conservatives in department * Black student		-1.742 ^{***}	-1.479 ^{***}			
		(0.483)	(0.479)			
Conservative instructor				0.125 ^{**}	0.115 ^{**}	0.129 ^{***}
				(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.064)
Conservative instructor * Black student				-0.410 ^{***}	-0.405 ^{***}	-0.381 ^{***}
				(0.111)	(0.114)	(0.101)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	48,783	48,783	48,783	48,783	48,783	48,783
R-squared	0.597	0.596	0.599	0.596	0.600	0.615

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 8: PARTISANSHIP AND ETHNICITY – HISPANIC STUDENTS

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-1.504 ^{***}					
	(0.255)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Hispanic student	-2.400 ^{***}					
	(0.837)					
Share of conservatives in department		-0.412 [*]	-0.219			
		(0.231)	(0.174)			
Share of conservatives in department * Hispanic student		-1.315 ^{***}	-1.150 ^{**}			
		(0.510)	(0.506)			
Conservative instructor				0.124 ^{**}	0.114 ^{**}	0.124 ^{**}
				(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.063)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student				-0.187 ^{***}	-0.184 ^{***}	-0.147 ^{**}
				(0.066)	(0.067)	(0.061)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	49,449	49,449	49,449	49,449	49,449	49,449
R-squared	0.595	0.593	0.597	0.593	0.597	0.612

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 9: PARTISANSHIP – ABILITY, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-5.146 (3.804)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * SAT score (/1,000)	3.116 (2.561)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * female student	-1.377*** (0.253)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Black student	-0.989* (0.581)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Hispanic student	-2.016*** (0.542)					
Share of conservatives in department		-1.891 (1.715)	-1.929 (1.483)			
Share of conservatives in department * SAT score (/1,000)		1.214 (1.164)	1.428 (1.106)			
Share of conservatives in department * female student		-0.263 (0.163)	-0.364** (0.181)			
Share of conservatives in department * Black student		-1.390*** (0.394)	-1.060*** (0.363)			
Share of conservatives in department * Hispanic student		-1.181*** (0.400)	-0.974** (0.401)			
Conservative instructor				-0.978** (0.496)	-1.014** (0.476)	-1.035*** (0.398)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)				0.794** (0.384)	0.813** (0.371)	0.832*** (0.318)
Conservative instructor * female student				0.033 (0.022)	0.033 (0.022)	0.039* (0.022)
Conservative instructor * Black student				-0.269*** (0.057)	-0.260*** (0.060)	-0.233*** (0.058)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student				-0.099*** (0.037)	-0.093*** (0.035)	-0.054 (0.033)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286
R-squared	0.586	0.584	0.588	0.584	0.590	0.605

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 10A: PARTISANSHIP AT THE TOP OF THE GRADE SCALE

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade is A+</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	-0.637 (1.063)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * SAT score (/1,000)	0.743 (0.815)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * female student	-0.194** (0.089)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Black student	-0.038 (0.135)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Hispanic student	-0.081 (0.078)					
Share of conservatives in department		-0.199 (0.420)	-0.266 (0.461)			
Share of conservatives in department * SAT score (/1,000)		0.196 (0.327)	0.180 (0.348)			
Share of conservatives in department * female student		-0.101** (0.049)	-0.072 (0.052)			
Share of conservatives in department * Black student		-0.033 (0.062)	-0.091 (0.069)			
Share of conservatives in department * Hispanic student		-0.045 (0.055)	-0.077 (0.057)			
Conservative instructor				-0.266** (0.123)	-0.262** (0.123)	-0.265** (0.129)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)				0.209** (0.102)	0.207** (0.102)	0.208** (0.104)
Conservative instructor * female student				0.016* (0.009)	0.016* (0.009)	0.014 (0.009)
Conservative instructor * Black student				-0.018** (0.008)	-0.020*** (0.007)	-0.021*** (0.007)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student				-0.010 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.007 (0.008)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286
R-squared	0.359	0.358	0.359	0.360	0.361	0.371

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 10B: PARTISANSHIP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GRADE SCALE

	<i>Dependent variable: student grade is less than C</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share of conservatives in discipline	2.458 ^{***} (0.741)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * SAT score (/1,000)	-1.534 ^{***} (0.531)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * female student	0.035 (0.047)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Black student	0.530 ^{***} (0.193)					
Share of conservatives in discipline * Hispanic student	0.777 ^{***} (0.062)					
Share of conservatives in department		0.792 ^{**} (0.400)	0.755 ^{**} (0.357)			
Share of conservatives in department * SAT score (/1,000)		-0.493 [*] (0.266)	-0.526 ^{**} (0.259)			
Share of conservatives in department * female student		-0.015 (0.031)	0.013 (0.030)			
Share of conservatives in department * Black student		0.533 ^{***} (0.106)	0.462 ^{***} (0.104)			
Share of conservatives in department * Hispanic student		0.307 ^{**} (0.152)	0.265 [*] (0.158)			
Conservative instructor				0.280 ^{**} (0.133)	0.288 ^{**} (0.131)	0.287 ^{**} (0.114)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)				-0.215 ^{**} (0.097)	-0.218 ^{**} (0.096)	-0.221 ^{***} (0.085)
Conservative instructor * female student				-0.011 ^{**} (0.005)	-0.011 ^{**} (0.006)	-0.013 ^{**} (0.006)
Conservative instructor * Black student				0.083 ^{***} (0.027)	0.081 ^{***} (0.028)	0.076 ^{***} (0.028)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student				0.014 (0.019)	0.013 (0.020)	0.009 (0.020)
Discipline fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Department fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286	46,286
R-squared	0.435	0.434	0.436	0.433	0.436	0.445

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either conservative or liberal. Grades of less than C include the following categories: F, D-, D, D+, and C-. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Clustered standard errors are reported in brackets: clustering is by discipline in column 1, by department in columns 2-3, and by instructor in columns 4-6. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 11: THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTOR'S GENDER, AGE, AND RACE

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade is A+</i>	<i>Grade is less than C</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Conservative instructor	-1.047 ^{***} (0.335)	-0.256 ^{**} (0.107)	0.270 ^{***} (0.089)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	0.845 ^{***} (0.268)	0.201 ^{**} (0.088)	-0.209 ^{***} (0.068)
Conservative instructor * female student	0.048 [*] (0.023)	0.015 [*] (0.008)	-0.009 (0.006)
Conservative instructor * Black student	-0.230 ^{***} (0.063)	-0.019 ^{**} (0.008)	0.071 ^{**} (0.029)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student	-0.035 (0.043)	-0.008 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.020)
Female instructor	0.295 (0.194)	-0.078 (0.054)	-0.094 [*] (0.050)
Female instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	-0.203 (0.131)	0.058 (0.040)	0.067 [*] (0.035)
Female instructor * female student	0.028 (0.023)	0.019 ^{**} (0.009)	0.004 (0.006)
Female instructor * Black student	0.025 (0.054)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.015 (0.017)
Female instructor * Hispanic student	0.072 (0.040)	0.012 (0.009)	-0.023 [*] (0.012)
Instructor age	-0.682 (0.947)	-0.352 [*] (0.191)	0.400 (0.292)
Instructor age * SAT score (/1,000)	0.573 (0.669)	0.278 [*] (0.148)	-0.319 (0.206)
Instructor age * female student	-0.038 (0.087)	0.021 (0.025)	0.000 (0.025)
Instructor age * Black student	0.054 (0.220)	-0.006 (0.030)	0.023 (0.073)
Instructor age * Hispanic student	0.117 (0.154)	-0.004 (0.040)	0.093 [*] (0.055)
Black instructor	0.212 (0.524)	0.088 (0.069)	-0.022 (0.214)
Black instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	-0.231 (0.358)	-0.075 (0.048)	0.038 (0.154)
Black instructor * female student	-0.021 (0.051)	0.007 (0.010)	0.012 (0.023)
Black instructor * Black student	0.075 (0.090)	0.011 (0.016)	-0.022 (0.033)
Black instructor * Hispanic student	-0.181 (0.126)	-0.011 (0.023)	0.039 (0.050)
Department fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	42,055	42,055	42,055
R-squared	0.619	0.393	0.445

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified (1) as either conservative or liberal and (2) as either Black or non-Black. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Standard errors, clustered by instructor, are reported in brackets. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

TABLE 12: GRADING PRACTICES OF THE UNAFFILIATED

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade is A+</i>	<i>Grade is less than C</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Conservative instructor	-1.027 ^{***} (0.406)	-0.252 [*] (0.130)	0.273 ^{**} (0.114)
Conservative instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	0.826 ^{***} (0.323)	0.198 [*] (0.105)	-0.213 ^{**} (0.086)
Conservative instructor * female student	0.041 [*] (0.021)	0.016 ^{**} (0.008)	-0.013 [*] (0.006)
Conservative instructor * Black student	-0.232 ^{***} (0.056)	-0.023 ^{**} (0.007)	0.079 ^{***} (0.028)
Conservative instructor * Hispanic student	-0.055 [*] (0.031)	-0.010 (0.008)	0.012 (0.019)
Unaffiliated instructor	-0.051 (0.281)	-0.048 (0.059)	0.044 (0.086)
Unaffiliated instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	0.046 (0.201)	0.039 (0.045)	-0.031 (0.061)
Unaffiliated instructor * female student	-0.015 (0.027)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.008 (0.007)
Unaffiliated instructor * Black student	-0.008 (0.056)	-0.003 (0.008)	0.002 (0.020)
Unaffiliated instructor * Hispanic student	-0.052 (0.037)	-0.011 (0.007)	0.011 (0.014)
Department fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	52,422	52,422	52,422
R-squared	0.587	0.348	0.421

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as conservative, liberal, or unaffiliated. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Standard errors, clustered by instructor, are reported in brackets. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

**TABLE 13A: DIFFERENT SHADES OF PARTISANSHIP
PRIMARY VOTING**

<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>		
	(1)	(2)
Republican instructor	-1.025*** (0.399)	0.244 (0.550)
Republican instructor * SAT score (/1,000)	0.824*** (0.318)	-0.248 (0.380)
Republican instructor * female student	0.036 (0.022)	0.091 (0.077)
Republican instructor * Black student	-0.222*** (0.057)	-0.010 (0.125)
Republican instructor * Hispanic student	-0.054 (0.033)	-0.097 (0.088)
Primary-voting Democratic instructor		0.018 (0.258)
Primary-voting Democratic instructor * SAT score (/1,000)		-0.064 (0.175)
Primary-voting Democratic instructor * female student		0.064** (0.027)
Primary-voting Democratic instructor * Black student		0.102 (0.077)
Primary-voting Democratic instructor * Hispanic student		-0.089 (0.056)
Primary-voting Republican instructor		-1.476** (0.579)
Primary-voting Republican instructor * SAT score (/1,000)		1.223*** (0.428)
Primary-voting Republican instructor * female student		0.007 (0.075)
Primary-voting Republican instructor * Black student		-0.125 (0.101)
Primary-voting Republican instructor * Hispanic student		-0.044 (0.078)
Department fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	45,637	45,637
R-squared	0.608	0.609

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as either a Democrat or a Republican. An individual is considered primary voting if according to the voter registration records he or she voted in at least one primary election. The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Standard errors, clustered by instructor, are reported in brackets. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

**TABLE 13B: DIFFERENT SHADES OF PARTISANSHIP
CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AMONG DEMOCRATIC INSTRUCTORS**

<i>Dependent variable: student grade</i>			
	Classification of contributors to "heavy" and "light" by-		
		Number of contributions	Amount of contributions
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contributor	-0.561* (0.340)	-0.072 (0.265)	-0.354 (0.377)
Contributor * SAT score (/1,000)	0.353 (0.231)	0.012 (0.178)	0.201 (0.244)
Contributor * female student	0.002 (0.035)	0.003 (0.039)	-0.012 (0.039)
Contributor * Black student	-0.006 (0.057)	-0.125 (0.079)	-0.109 (0.078)
Contributor * Hispanic student	-0.076* (0.043)	-0.095 (0.061)	-0.091 (0.077)
Heavy contributor		-0.882 (0.553)	-0.378 (0.618)
Heavy contributor * SAT score (/1,000)		0.613* (0.370)	0.276 (0.413)
Heavy contributor * female student		-0.006 (0.063)	0.031 (0.062)
Heavy contributor * Black student		0.209** (0.087)	0.173* (0.090)
Heavy contributor * Hispanic student		0.039 (0.078)	0.027 (0.081)
Department fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Instructor controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Course controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	39,940	39,940	39,940
R-squared	0.616	0.617	0.617

Notes: The sample includes grades awarded to Black, Hispanic and White students in undergraduate level courses with a single instructor who was identified as a Democrat. An individual is considered a campaign contributor if according to campaign contribution records (<http://www.opensecrets.org/indivs/index.php>) he or she contributed money to the Democratic party/party candidates from 2000 to 2008. Heavy contributors are those who contributed more than once (column 2) or contributed more than \$500 over the period under consideration (column 3). The regressions were estimated by Ordinary Least Squares. Standard errors, clustered by instructor, are reported in brackets. The symbols *, **, *** represent statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level in a two-tailed t-test.

FIGURE 1: SHARE OF REPUBLICANS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

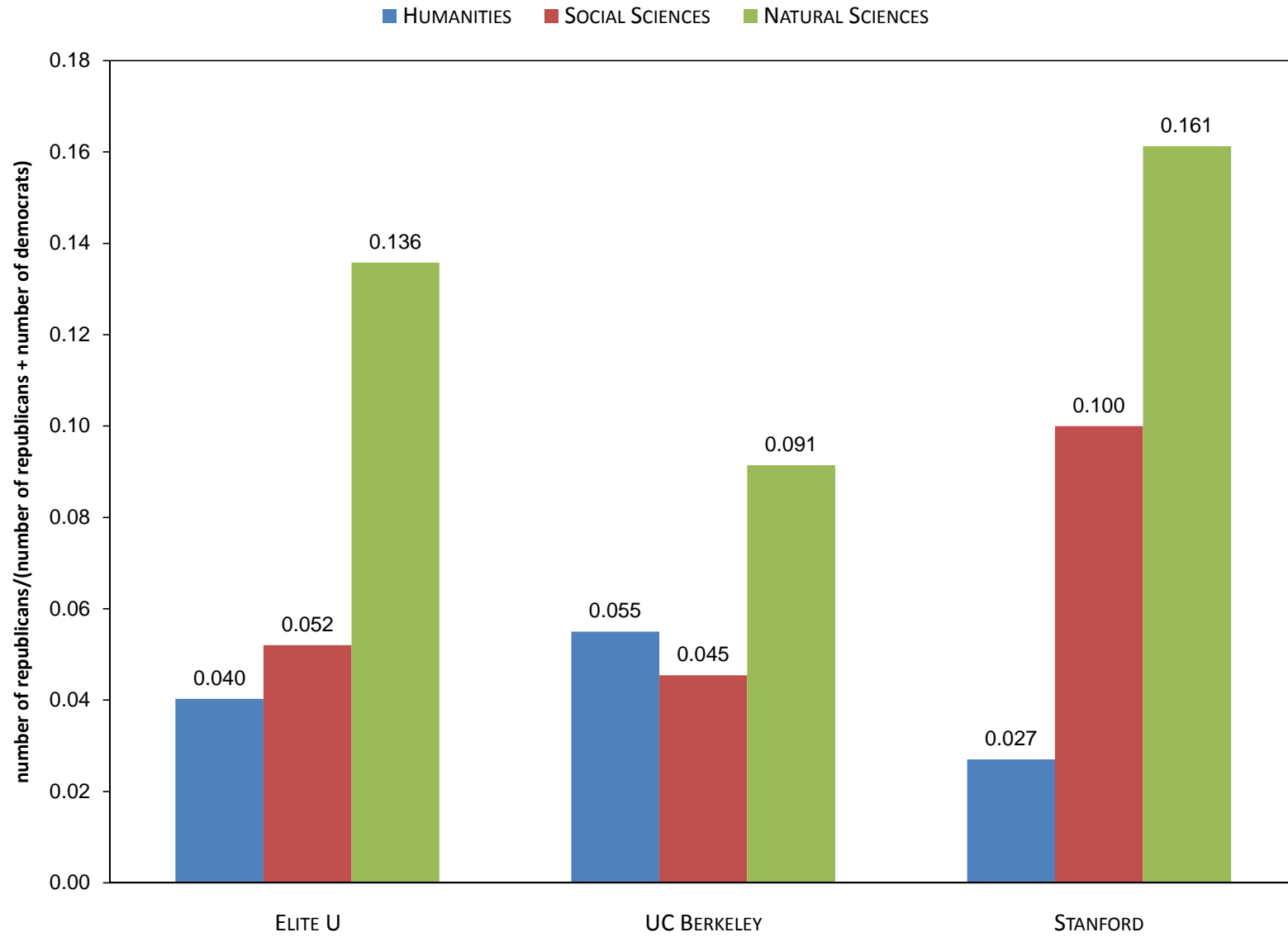


FIGURE 2: DIFFERENCES IN GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

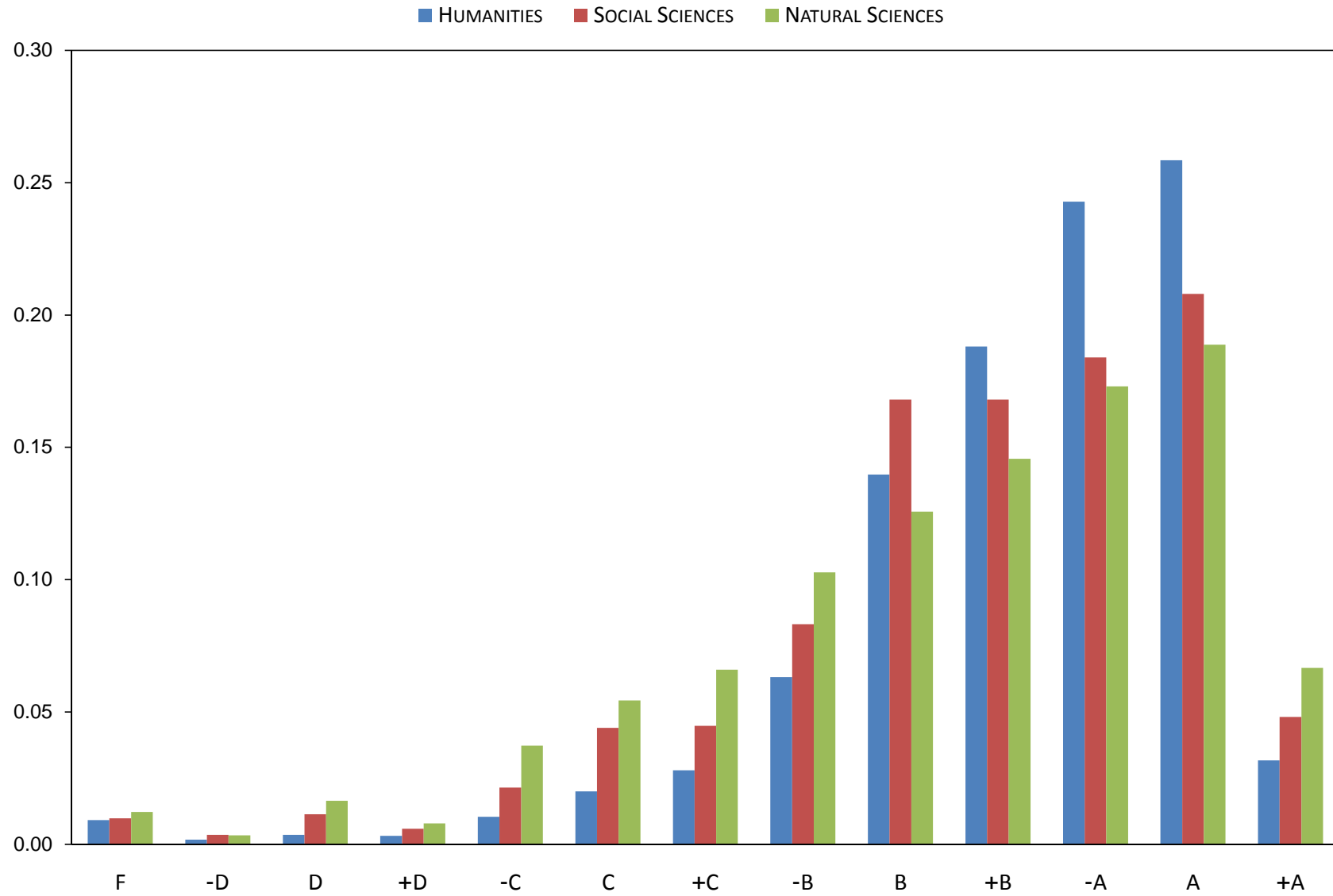


FIGURE 3: ILLUSTRATION OF PARTISANSHIP AND EGALITARIANISM IN GRADING

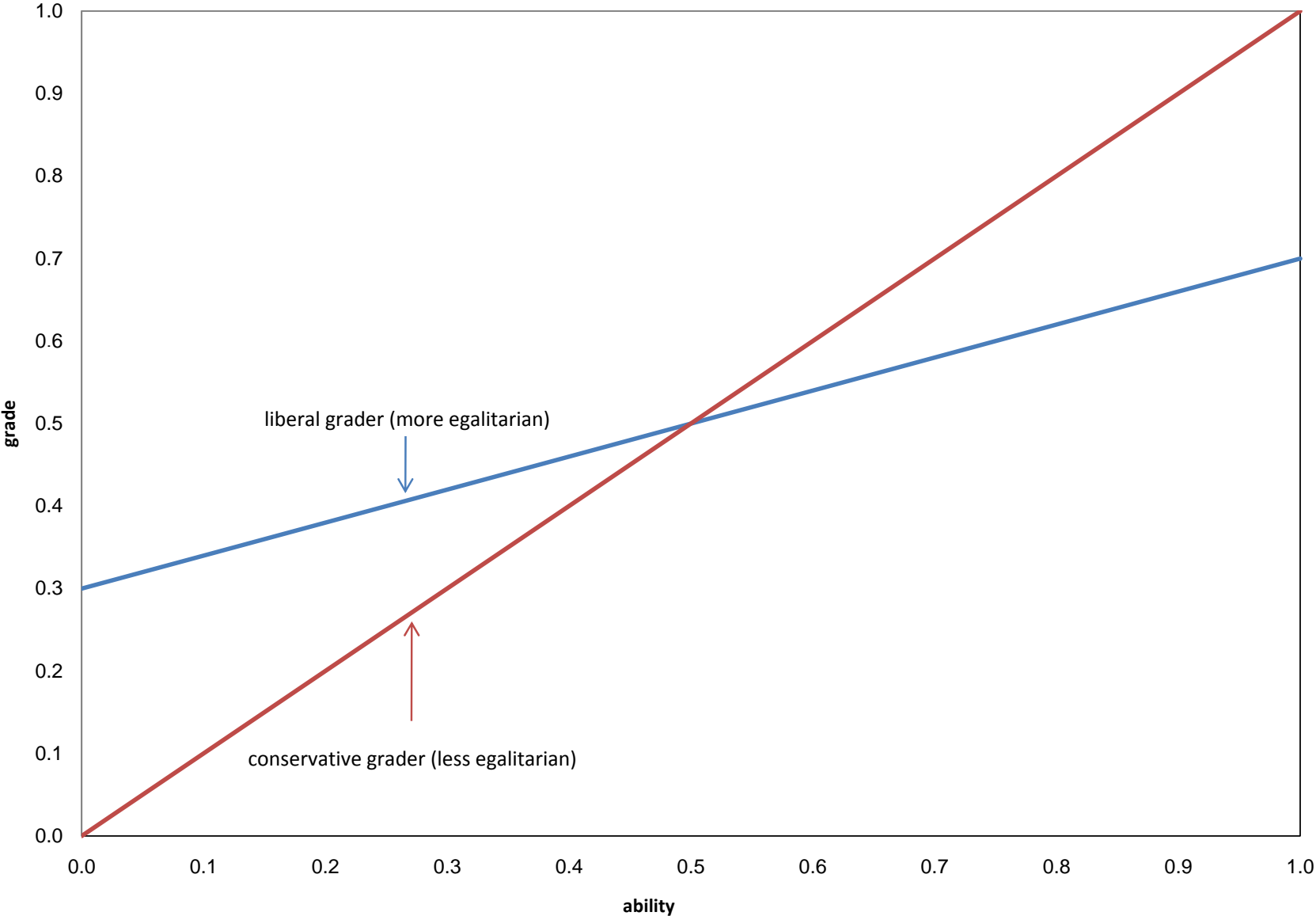


FIGURE 4: PARTISANSHIP AND EGALITARIANISM IN GRADING

