

Introduction to American Politics
POLI 1

Professor Trounstone

Fall 2009

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9-11am

Office Hours Sign Up: www.mysignup.com/trounstone

Course Website: UCMCrops

Textbook Website: <http://logic.cqpress.com>

Course Description

Welcome to Political Science 1. This course focuses on developing a systematic way to think about American politics that goes beyond knowing current events. It provides students with a broad background in concepts and questions central to the study of political institutions, behaviors, and traditions in the United States. Each week students will be asked to apply political science theories to important debates in American politics. Examples of topics we'll discuss include analyzing election outcomes, gay marriage, congressional budgeting, presidential war powers, homeland security, partisan polarization, public opinion, media bias, judicial activism, and affirmative action.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

At the end of this course students should be able to

1. Communicate a thorough factual understanding of the structure and operation of the American political system (PLO 1 and PLO 4)
2. Fluently consume and critique basic political science literature on Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, the federal bureaucracy, political attitudes and values, political participation, voting, parties, interest groups, and domestic policy making (PLO 2)
3. Explain common and unusual political events in American politics using political science theories (PLO 4 and PLO 5)

General Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for Political Science:

1. An understanding of the processes, theories, and empirical regularities of political institutions and political behavior in the student's chosen emphasis area: American politics, comparative politics, or international relations.
2. An ability to employ critical thinking and demonstrate social scientific literacy, including basic quantitative literacy.
3. A capacity to utilize contemporary social science research methods to conduct rigorous research on political phenomena.
4. Effective written communication skills, especially the ability to convey complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner.
5. An ability to apply abstract theory and research methods to understand contemporary political events and public policies.

Requirements and Expectations

Students will be assessed according to their knowledge of the course materials and their ability to analyze, explain, and apply their knowledge to new and different contexts. Students who are regularly prepared for section and active in discussion also tend to earn higher grades on their quizzes, papers, and exams.

You are expected to attend lecture and section and do all of the reading. The assigned materials should be read before class on the date that they are listed. Lectures and discussions will be based on the assumption that you have completed the reading for that day and are able to analyze the content.

Papers and quizzes will be posted to UCMCrops under “Assignments.” All assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date. **Do not put your name on any assignment – use only your student id number.** Late assignments will be penalized one third of grade for every 24 hours that they are late. Assignments more than 72 hours late will not be accepted. Unstapled assignments will not be accepted. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.

Your grade will be based on four components.

2 Papers (20% each):	40%
2 Quizzes (7.5% each):	15%
Final Exam:	30%
Section:	15%

Paper Assignments

There will be two 5-7 page papers that comprise 40% of the grade. These papers are intended to give students the opportunity to take concepts and ideas learned in class and apply them to current events in American politics. Grades for your papers will be based on both substance and style. Use proper grammar, appropriate language, and proofread and spell-check the final copy of every assignment. These papers will assess your attainment of SLO 3

The first paper is due **October 15th**. The second paper is due **December 8th**.

Quizzes

There will be two short quizzes that comprise 15% of the total grade. Quizzes will assess your knowledge of key readings, facts, and concepts covered in the preceding weeks (SLO 1). The quizzes will be posted to UCMCrops 24 hours prior to the due dates listed below. Quizzes are to be completed independently but they are open book (open note, open internet, etc.).

Quiz #1 **September 17th**

Quiz #2 **November 12th**

Final Exam

The final exam will be a cumulative take-home exam. It is worth 30% of the grade. You will have 36 hours to complete it. It will be available on UCMCrops starting at 9:00am on December 15th and will be due by 9:00pm on December 16th. You will turn in your exam by uploading it to UCMCrops. The exam will assess your attainment of SLOs 1, 2, and 3.

Sections

All students are required to attend one section each week. More than four unexcused absences will result in a failing section grade. Typically each week in section you will apply the theoretical concepts presented in the lectures and readings to a substantive case (noted in bold throughout the syllabus). The readings and cases were selected to provide a forum for debate. Once during the semester you will prepare discussion questions for your colleagues. More information on this assignment will be provided at your first section meeting. Your participation in section will reveal your attainment of SLOs 1 and 2.

Readings

There is one textbook for this class (available at the bookstore) and supplemental readings that will be posted to UCMCrops.

Required Texts:

The Logic of American Politics, 4th ed. with Obama supplement, Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser (LOGIC)

Academic Honesty

Cheating will not be tolerated. You must write your own papers, quizzes, and exams. Any student caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and be referred to the administration for disciplinary actions. Keep in mind that the technology that allows students to retrieve papers from the internet also allows instructors to find those papers. If you are unclear what constitutes plagiarism please come talk to me.

Course Outline

Week 1

August 25th: Foundations of American Politics

August 27th: Collective Action Concepts
LOGIC: chapter 1

Week 2

September 1st: The Founding and Constitution
LOGIC: chapter 2
The Federalist Papers #s 10, 51

September 3rd: NO CLASS (APSA conference)

Week 3

September 8th: Federalism and Separated Powers
LOGIC: chapter 3
The Federalist Papers #46
Peterson, Paul, "Who Should Do What," pp 1-6

September 10th: Sub-national Politics

Case: Jost, Kenneth "Gay Marriage," September 26, 2008 pp1-24

Week 4

September 15th: Congressional Institutions

LOGIC: chapter 6

Mayhew, David, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, pp 3-18, 49-73

September 17th: Congressional Policy

*****Quiz #1 Due at the Beginning of Class*****

Arnold, Douglas, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, pp 3-36

Case: Clemmitt, Marcia, "Pork Barrel Politics" pp1-24

Week 5

September 22nd: Presidential Roles and Expectations

LOGIC: chapter 7

September 24th: Presidential Tactics

Neustadt, Richard, *Presidential Power*, pp 29-49

Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (4):850-72.

Case: Giroux, Gregory, "The First 100 Days: Obama in the Oval Office" pp1-42

Week 6

September 29th: Congressional Simulation

October 1st: Bureaucratic Structure and Development

LOGIC: chapter 8

Moe, Terry, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure", pp 267-329

Week 7

October 6th: Bureaucratic Control

Fiorina, Morris. 1977. *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp37-47; 52-66

McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrol Versus Fire Alarm. *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1):165-77.

October 8th: Interest Groups

LOGIC: chapter 13

Case: Katel, Peter, "Consumer Safety," pp1-24

Week 8

October 13th: Courts

LOGIC: chapter 9

October 15th: Courts

*****Paper #1 Due at the Beginning of Class*****

Rosenberg, Gerald. *The Hollow Hope*, pp1-71

Case: Scalia, Antonin, "Common-Law Courts in a Civil-Law System: The Role of United States Federal Courts in Interpreting the Constitution and Laws"
Breyer, Stephen, "Our Democratic Constitution"

Week 9

October 20th: Defining Public Opinion

LOGIC: chapter 10

Zukin, Cliff, "Sources of Variation in Published Election Polling: A Primer"

October 22nd: Role of Public Opinion

Schudson, Michael, "America's Ignorant Voters" pp1-9

Bartels, Larry, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut" pp 15-31

Case: Polling Examples posted on UCMCrops

Week 10

October 27th: News Media

LOGIC: chapter 14

October 29th: News Media Guest Lecture: Phil Trounstine

Gilens, Martin, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*, chapters 5-6, pp102-153

Case: Election Coverage posted on UCMCrops

Week 11

November 3rd: Parties as Institutions

LOGIC: chapter 12

November 5th: Party Cleavages

Downs, Anthony, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, chapters 7-8, pp96-141

Case: David Brooks, "One Nation, Slightly Divisible"

Sasha Issenberg, "Boo-boos in Paradise"

Week 12

November 10th: Voter Participation

LOGIC: chapter 11

Rosenstone, Stephen J. and Mark Hansen. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*, chapters 1-2 pp1-37

Menand, Louis, "The Unpolitical Animal" pp1-5

November 12th: Political Campaigns

*** **Quiz #2 Due at Beginning of Class*****

Case: Zelizer, Julian, "Worst Campaign Ever"

Nagourney, Adam et al, "Near-Flawless Run is Credited in Victory

Judis, John, "Obama's Victory Marks a Radical Realignment in American Politics", *The New Republic*

Gelman, Andrew and John Sides, "Stories and Stats"

Week 13

November 17th: Voting Rights

Keyssar, Alex. *The Right to Vote*, 2, 4 pp 26-52, 77-116

November 19th: Representation and Institutions

Burke, Edmund. *Speech to the electors of Bristol on being elected* in *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*. Vol. II. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'". *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3) pp. 628-657

Guinier, Lani, *Tyranny of the Majority*, pp1-20, 119-156

Case: Jost, Kenneth, "Redistricting Disputes" pp1-28

Week 14

November 24th: Electoral Institutions: Recount

November 26th: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 15

December 1st: Civil Rights

LOGIC: Chapter 4

December 3rd: Civil Rights: A Class Apart

Sniderman, Paul & Ed Carmines, *Reaching Beyond Race*, chapter 4, pp99-125, 138-139

Gutman, Amy, *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*, pp107-138

Jensen, Robert, "White Privilege Shapes the U.S. Affirmative action for whites is a fact of life," pp1-3

Case: Katel, Peter, "Affirmative Action," pp 1-24

Week 16

December 8th: Civil Liberties

***** Paper #2 Due At Beginning of Class*****

LOGIC: Chapter 5

Case: Pearlstein, Deborah, "Rights in an Insecure World," pp1-5

McCarthy, Andrew, "The Patriot Act without Tears," pp1-5

*****Final Exam posted December 15th due December 16th*****