

POLS 1100: U.S. National Government

Fall 2016, Sec. 2, Tues/Thurs, 10:45am-12:05 pm, SFEBB 1110

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Office Hours:

Tues: 12:30-1:30 pm (office)

Thurs: 9:15-10:15 am (CRCC café)

or by appointment

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Office Hours:

Tuesday 3-5 pm (office)

Thursday 3-5 (Google Hangout)

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Course Objectives

In this course we will explore the institutions, practices, and processes that shape how Americans govern themselves. Much of our discussion will focus on the theory of democracy and whether American political institutions and practices are congruent with democratic values. Recurring themes will include the tension between majority rule and minority interests, the degree to which the public can be expected to participate in the political process, and whether public participation is even desirable. This will be combined with an examination of the federal government as an organization. We will study both how political processes function to create policy change, and how those same processes can thwart policy change. Students will be expected to understand the basic structure, processes and actors in the federal political system. Several short papers will help students develop their research, critical thinking and expository writing skills.

Course Requirements and Methods of Evaluation

Knowledge of basic subject matter will be tested through one midterm and one final exam, which will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions, administered via Canvas, and last approximately 80 minutes. The final exam will only include questions from the materials covered after the midterm. Questions for both exams will be drawn from the textbook, the reader, lectures, and materials posted on Canvas.

Each section on the syllabus, will include a quiz administered via Canvas that will test you on the material in the textbook and other readings. That quiz will open for 46 hours following the last scheduled day for that section; you will have two attempts with the scores averaged. The quiz dates are included in a sheet attached to this syllabus. The system will drop your lowest quiz score.

You must also submit two short research papers. These will involve research that can be performed online. You will be asked to use a particular resource to research a question and then write a three-page paper describing what you found, and its significance. There will be an assignment for each section from Federalism to Bureaucracy; you are required to do two. Each assignment will be made for a period of one week; at the end of that period, the assignment will "time out" and you may only submit the new assignment made for the next section. You should submit one of those weekly assignments by Oct. 8 and a second by Nov. 19. A list of subjects and dates is attached to this syllabus; each assignment will involve specific instructions that you should read and follow closely. The assignments' purpose is to improve your research, writing and analytical skills; your paper will be graded on the basis of writing and analysis as much as description. Do not expect to submit an unrevised first draft and receive a satisfactory grade; proofreading a printed copy is highly recommended. A guide to writing the research papers is posted in the Syllabus module on Canvas; please consult it carefully.

You are expected to attend class and to participate in discussion. This course is deliberately designed to take advantage of the important debates and controversies that have typified American politics and American political science for the past 200 years, and to minimize the amount of "textbook" learning. You are expected to have read the assigned readings **before** the dates specified. I strongly urge you to take notes on the readings - this will better prepare you for both our in-class discussions and the examinations. Plan to bring Kollman, *Readings in American Politics* and the relevant Canvas readings to class every session

Clickers and Participation Grade: Participation is essential. **I expect you to complete all of the assigned reading before the class for which it was assigned and I reserve the right to call on anyone at any time.** We will be using an [electronic response system \(clickers\)](#). Your participation grade will be improved if you engage in discussion. During class, I will regularly ask you questions and ask you to choose, via clicker, among several answers or options. Your participation via clicker will also serve as a gauge of attendance and as the primary measure of participation. The clickers require that you have an account with TurningPoint Cloud. Register your clickers as soon as possible through the tool in [Canvas](#).

The use of both laptop computers and cellphones during class is strictly prohibited, except for the use of cellphones as "clickers." Click [here](#) for an explanation of this policy.

Exams, participation, and assignments are worth the following:

	Points	Date
Participation (clicker points)	120 (5 per class)	
Canvas Quizzes	(12 x 15 pts each) = 180	See schedule
Research Papers	(2 x 60 pts each) = 120	Due by Oct. 15, Nov. 26
Midterm Exam	120	Oct. 20, class time
Final Exam	120	Dec. 16: 10:30 am-11:50am
Total Points	660	

How Course Grades will be Assigned: This course will be graded on a "dual curve." First, I will apply a standard curve in which those who earn total points in the ranges below will receive, at minimum, the grade stated in the table below, with students who fail to earn 60% of potential points failing the course. However, if class scores are significantly lower so that the median grade would dip below a B-, I will adjust the curve so that the top 15% of students will receive an A or A-, the next 35% will receive a grade in the B range, the next 30% will receive a grade in the C range, and the remaining 20% will receive a D or F. However, regardless of how low the adjusted curve drops, no student earning less than 50% of the possible points will earn a passing grade.

-	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	67-69% = D+
≥ 93% = A	83-86% = B	73-76% = C	63-66% = D
90-92% = A-	80-82% = B-	70-72% = C-	60-62% = D-

Required Materials: Our primary texts will be Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power and Purpose*, 13th Core Edition (without policy chapters), W.W. Norton, 2013 (ISBN 978-0-393-92245-5), **hereafter AG**, and Ken Kollman, *Readings in American Politics*, 3rd Edition, W.W. Norton, 2014 (ISBN 978-0-393-93674-2), **hereafter RAP**. These two books may be found as a bundle at the Campus Bookstore which will significantly reduce the total price. Additional readings are found within the modules on Canvas,

hereafter CAN. In addition, you are required to purchase a TurningPoint license with a clicker or with Responseware (the TurningPoint smartphone app), also available at the Campus Bookstore.

I have posted abridged PowerPoint class presentations, narrated PowerPoints, study guides, and other supplementary materials on [Canvas](#). I have also enabled discussions for each section in which you should ask any questions you may have regarding the content of the readings, PowerPoints, or lectures. The TA or I will answer such questions through the discussion or in class.

Policy on Late Papers, Unsubmitted Work and Incompletes: Papers will be accepted until 5 pm on the date due. Late papers will lose one stepped grade (i.e. B+ → B) if submitted within a week of date due; **papers will not be accepted after a week.** A grade of Incomplete is only available in cases of documented emergency or medical condition. **Papers must be submitted through Canvas as MS Word compatible files.**

Academic Misconduct: All quotes must be cited as such and include a clear reference to the work from which they were drawn; they will otherwise be treated as plagiarism. All use of materials other than course materials must be accompanied by full citations. All work in this course is assigned as individual work; working as groups or teams is strongly discouraged (and may be treated as cheating), as is all but the most casual assistance from others; this includes parents, spouses and other family members. **Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the course and other disciplinary action, up to expulsion from the University.**

Americans with Disabilities Act Notice: Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations should provide reasonable prior notice to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements. Written material in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification.

Wellness Statement: Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, can interfere with students' ability to thrive at the University of Utah. Contact the Center for Student Wellness: www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

August 23, 25, 30 –Why American Politics Matters

AG: Chap. 1. Five Principles of Politics

RAP: 1.4 D. Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew McCubbins, from *The Logic of Delegation*
16.1 Suzanne Mettler, from *The Submerged State*

CAN: Lynn Vavreck, [“The Long Decline of Trust in Government”](#)
Larry Bartels, [“Rich people rule!”](#)

September 1, 6, 8 - The Constitution

AG: Chap. 2. Constructing a Government: The Founding and the Constitution
Appendix: The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution and Amendments

RAP: 2.1 James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 10
2.2 James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 51
2.3 Brutus, *The Antifederalist*, No. 1
2.4 Robert A. Dahl, from *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?*

September 13, 15- Federalism

AG: Chap. 3. Federalism and the Separation of Powers

RAP: 3.1 James Madison, *The Federalist, No. 39*

3.2 William H. Riker, from *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*

3.3 *Arizona v. United States* (2012)

September 20, 22 - Public Opinion

AG: Chap. 10. Public Opinion

RAP: 9.1 Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins, from *The Democratic Dilemma*

9.2 John R. Zaller, from *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*

CAN: John Sides, "[Stealth Democracy](#)"

September 27, 29- Campaigns and Elections

AG: Chap. 11. Elections

RAP: 10.1 Rosenstone & Hansen, from *Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy*

13.1 Koza, Fadem, et. al., from *Every Vote Equal*

CAN: Frank Bruni, [The Millions of Marginalized Americans](#)

Adam Seth Levine, "[Don't Talk About Those Unpaid Bills](#)"

October 4, 6 - Political Parties

AG: Chap. 12. Political Parties

RAP: 12.1 John Aldrich, from *Why Parties? A Second Look*

12.2 Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, from *The American Voter*

12.3 Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller, from *The Party Decides*

Fall Break: October 9-16

Saturday, October 15 - You must have submitted your FIRST research paper by this date.

October 18 – Review Day**October 20 – Midterm Exam****October 25, 27 - Interest Groups**

AG: Chap. 13. Groups and Interests

RAP: 11.1 Martin Gilens, from *Affluence and Influence*

11.2 Ken Kollman, from *Outside Lobbying:*

CAN: Ezra Klein, "[Our Corrupt Politics: It's Not All Money](#)"

November 1, 3 - Congress**AG:** Chap. 6. Congress: The First Branch**RAP:** 5.1 David Mayhew, from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*5.2 Richard F. Fenno, Jr., from *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*

5.3 Harbridge and Malhotra, “Electoral Incentives and Partisan Conflict in Congress”

November 8, 10 - The Presidency**AG:** Chap. 7. The Presidency as an Institution**RAP:** 6.1 Richard E. Neustadt, from *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*6.4 William G. Howell, from *Power without Persuasion***CAN:** Ezra Klein, “[The Unpersuaded](#)”**November 15, 17 - The Bureaucracy****AG:** Chap. 8. The Executive Branch: Bureaucracy in a Democracy**RAP:** 7.1 James Q. Wilson, from *Bureaucracy*

7.2 Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked”

CAN: John Diulio, “[Want better, smaller government? Hire another million federal bureaucrats](#)”

Cato Handbook for Policy Makers, “Privatization”

Saturday, November 26 - You must have submitted your second research paper by this date.**November 22, 29 - The Judicial Branch****AG:** Chap. 9. The Federal Courts**RAP:** 4.2 *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)8.1 Gerald Rosenberg, from *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring about Social Change?*8.2 *Marbury v. Madison* (1801)**December 1, 6 - Civil Liberties and Civil Rights****AG:** Chap. 4. Civil Liberties and Chap. 5. Civil Rights, Amendments to Constitution (pp.**RAP:** 4.1 Michael Dawson, from *Not in Our Lifetimes: The Future of Black Politics*4.3 *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008)4.4 Andrew Koppelman, from *Same Sex, Different State***CAN:** *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)**Dec. 8 - Why Politics Matters to Inequality – Bringing Together Some Themes****RAP:** 13.3 Nolan McCarthy, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, from *Polarized America***Final Exam - Friday, Dec. 16: 10:30 am - 11:50 am.**

Quiz and Research Paper Policy and Schedule

There will be a Canvas quiz for each subject. Each quiz will be worth 15 points and will include material drawn from the textbook, other readings, and lectures. You may take each quiz twice, but you will encounter different questions and your results will be averaged, so study well before each attempt. Avoid taking quizzes late at night as this lowers performance. All quizzes open short after the end of class on the date noted (12:15 pm) and close 46 hours later at 10:15 am on the day listed.

The requirements for this course include two writing assignments that involve online research. You will be asked to use a particular resource to research a question and then write a three-page paper describing your research, what you found, and its significance. There will be an assignment for each section from Federalism to Bureaucracy. There are eight possible paper assignments; you are required to write on two.

Each assignment will be made for a period of one week; at the end of that period, the assignment will "time out" and you may only submit the new assignment made for the next section. You should submit one of those weekly assignments by the first date given, a second by the second date noted. The assignments' purpose is to improve your research, writing and analytical skills; your paper will be graded on the basis of writing and analysis as much as description. Be sure to revise your paper and proofread a printed copy before submission.

Here are three reasons that you should submit your papers early. First, you can control your own schedule and choose to do your papers when you do not have assignments in other classes. Second, you will want to get feedback on your first paper before writing the second; submitting early leads to early feedback. Third, if you submit your research papers before the "drop dead" date for each one, you will get your paper back faster as you will avoid being part of the large surge of papers that will take us more time to grade and return.

You must submit your **first** paper by 5pm on Oct. 18, the **second** paper by 5 pm on Nov. 28.

Please make sure to closely review the paper guidelines in Canvas before writing your paper.

Section	Quiz Opens (12:15 pm)	Quiz Closes (10:15 am)	Paper Assigned	Paper Due (5 pm)	Satisfies _____ Research Paper
Introduction	Aug. 30	Sept. 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Constitution	Sept. 8	Sept. 10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Federalism	Sept. 15	Sept. 17	Sept. 15	Sept. 22	1 st
Public Opinion	Sept. 22	Sept. 24	Sept. 22	Sept. 29	1 ^{st*}
Campaigns & Elections	Sept. 29	Oct. 1	Sept. 29	Oct. 6	1 st , 2 nd
Political Parties	Oct. 6	Oct. 8	Oct. 6	Oct. 15	1 st , 2 nd
Interest Groups	Oct. 27	Oct. 29	Oct. 27	Nov. 3	2 nd
Congress	Nov. 3	Nov. 5	Nov. 3	Nov. 10	2 nd
Presidency	Nov. 10	Nov. 12	Nov. 10	Nov. 17	2 nd
Bureaucracy	Nov. 17	Nov. 19	Nov. 17	Nov. 26	2 rd
Judicial Branch	Nov. 29	Dec. 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Civil Rights/Liberties	Dec. 6	Dec. 8	N/A	N/A	N/A