Course Description
This course is designed to both reinforce and increase students’ understanding of American politics broadly construed. We will cover not only the historical genesis and modern function of American political institutions, but also covers the theoretical grounding of such institutions. This course also includes an introduction to the American public policy process, a unit on popular culture and American politics, and a very brief introduction to the professional study of American politics. Drawing on both contemporary examples from the 2008 electoral campaign and examples from American political history, we will take up questions like, “What are the pros and cons of representation?” “Should we be concerned by the growth of bureaucracy?” “How ‘grassroots’ are most interest groups?” and “Is the average eighteen year old American truly prepared to be a citizen ‘under the law?’”

Course Objectives
By the end of the term, each student will:
- understand the classic American governmental institutions and principles like federalism and separation of powers
- understand the role of law in American governmental institutions and how the “rule of law” both enhances and hinders politics in the United States
- understand how the shortcomings of classic American governmental institutions led to the necessary creation and/or expansion of “new” institutions like interest groups and the modern bureaucracy
- gain an introductory understanding of the public policy process
- understand that while cultural objects such as films and television are not political in the same way institutions are, they often represent or influence political attitudes
- gain an introductory exposure to some professional approaches to studying American politics

In addition, this course will allow each student to improve the following skills:
- speaking ability (through class discussion and an oral examination)
- research paper writing skills, including the ability to gather and cite appropriate primary and secondary sources
the ability to create arguments and the ability to judge between arguments when there is no objectively right or wrong answer

Books and Course Materials

There are no books for this course. All the materials are available online, either on Moodle or via links provided in the syllabus. Additionally, every student should keep abreast of current events via a newspaper (Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc.). Each student is expected to pay any cost associated with printing the material for this course in lieu of paying for books. I may send out materials via email as well; every student must provide me with an email address that s/he agrees to check at least once a day. Every student will be held responsible for all information on the course Moodle site and all information contained in emails from the instructor!

Assignments and Grading

These assignments will determine your grade for the course:

- “Basics” Examination (**24 September 2008**) 10%
- In-Class Essay Examination (**24 October 2008**) 25%
- Oral Examination (**18-20 November 2008**) 20%
- Final Paper (incl. graded draft work) 35%
- In-Class Participation Exercises 5%
- Attendance 5%

Class Policies and Information

Attendance:

- I will take attendance in every class.
- Every student starts out with 100 attendance points. Students will lose **2.5 points** for every unexcused absence and **1 point** for every tardy (defined as being more than five minutes late).
- Absences are excused only with documentation from a doctor (or other medical professional), Dean (or other University official), or judge (or other government/court official). Religious observances are also excused.
- Any student who will be missing classes throughout the semester for College-sanctioned activities must meet with me no later than 15 September 2008 so that we may discuss any potential schedule conflicts.
- If any student misses more than 50% of the classes (20 meetings), he or she will automatically fail the ENTIRE course, even if the absences are considered “excused,” unless I receive a note from a Dean.
Classroom Decorum:
In order for our class to be successful, each member needs to adhere to certain standards of conduct. If a student repeatedly or egregiously violates these standards, I will deduct points from the student's attendance grade.

- Attendance is more than mere presence. I understand that not every student will be a frequent and vocal contributor to class discussion, but I believe that every student is capable of active listening and silent engagement (making eye contact with me to indicate comprehension, nodding to indicate understanding, asking questions, etc.) and coming to class with the readings and note-taking instruments. I expect this from every student in every class.
- I will not tolerate classroom behavior that distracts me or the other students. Students who engage in behaviors including, but not limited to: reading newspapers, reading books or doing work for other classes, text messaging, using a laptop to IM or surf the internet, leaving the classroom frequently, and talking (especially while another student has the floor!) will be asked to stop once and then asked to leave the classroom.
- If I have to ask a student to stop one of these behaviors or if a student is not prepared and engaged, I will deduct one point from that student's attendance grade. If I have to ask a student to leave the classroom, I will deduct a full day's worth of points (2.5 points) from that student's attendance grade.

Assignments/Late Work/Make-Ups:
- All assignments must be handed in in hard copy. NO EMAIL!
- Assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day late (weekends included). After two weeks, the assignment will receive a grade of “0.”
- Assignments will be collected at the start of class; any assignment turned in more than TEN minutes after the start of class (8:10AM) will receive a three point deduction. If you are unable to turn your work in during class, you must either bring it to me in my office or leave it in my department mailbox. I do my “final check” of my office and mailbox at 4:00PM each day; work turned in after that time will not be counted until the next day.
- I must receive any request for an extension at least two business days before the assignment is due. I do not guarantee that I will grant all requests for extensions.
- I will only give make-up exams to students who have excused absences.
- Students will not be allowed to reschedule exams to accommodate their travel schedules unless the travel is related to a genuine emergency and they present me with documentation from a Dean.

Grading:
- All work will be graded on a 0-100 numerical scale. However, Rhodes assigns letter grades. My equivalents are as follows: A (100-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-88); B-

1 Students who have documented extended illness, etc. are not subject to this policy.
A grades are reserved for work of exceptional caliber; B+ and B grades represent above-average mastery of the material; B- and C+ grades represent average mastery of the material; C and C- grades represent below-average mastery of the material; and D/ F grades represent unsatisfactory mastery of the material.

If you want me to regrade your work, you must schedule an appointment with me and prepare a written request that explains why you believe you deserve a different grade. We will discuss your assignment, and I will respond to your written request within two business days.²

Per Rhodes's policy, all grade queries must be submitted no later than one month after the assignment is returned.

I do not give extra credit in my courses.

Academic Integrity:

Please familiarize yourself with the Rhodes College Honor Constitution, available at: http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/CampusLife/Honor_Constitution.pdf

Your name on your assignment constitutes a pledge. Understand that when you pledge work in my classroom, that means you are telling me that you fully comprehend the entire Honor Constitution. I will not accept “I didn't understand” as an excuse and will report violations to the Honor Council.

I will be happy to explain or discuss any aspect of the Honor Constitution via email or in my office hours.

Access Issues

If you have circumstances that require special accommodations in terms of assignment structure or attendance, please have the appropriate office prepare a letter for me and give me this letter as soon as possible.

Accommodations and excused absences cannot be provided retroactively; it is imperative that I receive your letter in advance of the first exam.

If you need the phone number or email of any College official or office (Dean, Disability Services, etc.), please feel free to ask me.

General Academic Decorum:

Please feel free to call me either Lexie (not Lexi!!) or Prof. Hoerl and please feel free to let me know how you prefer to be addressed.

Emails should never be written in leet or txt-speak and should have relatively good grammar and spelling. Emails should include a salutation (“Hi Lexie,”

² If I make a calculation error (i.e., if I add up points incorrectly), you may feel free to point this out to me before or after class, or via email. There is no need for an appointment or formal written request.
“Dear Prof. Hoerl,” or something similar) and should be signed. Sending emails that adhere to these very basic standards demonstrates respect for the recipient of your email. I reserve the right to ignore emails from students who repeatedly fail to adhere to these basic standards. I will respond to those students before or after class, or in my office hours.

- Students should use e-mail to ask me clarifying questions about the course material/administrative matters or to make appointments for matters that require extended discussion.
- Be sure to check the syllabus and any other course handouts before sending me an email—common questions about due dates and policies are covered in those documents.
- I make myself available during office hours to deal with questions about individual class situations, questions about the material, general questions about the discipline of political science, and other related topics.
- I am more than happy to go over written assignments with students, but I cannot read and comment on drafts over email. I will not read full drafts on the day before an assignment is due and I absolutely will not “pre-grade” full drafts.
- Any student who is having problems in the course should see me right away. Either I can assist the student, or I can direct the student to Rhodes's tutorial resources. The sooner students see me, the more flexibility I have in terms of how to help them.

Course Schedule

**NOTE:** You should complete readings by the date listed on the syllabus (i.e., on 9/3 we will discuss the Constitution). All readings listed in the course schedule are required.

**8/27/08**  Introduction; The Syllabus as Constitution

**8/29/08**  CLASS CANC.—Prof. Hoerl is at the American Political Science Assoc. Meeting

1 September 2008—NO CLASS, Labor Day Holiday

**9/3/08**  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** United States Constitution (available at constitution.org)  
Add/Drop Period ends TODAY

**9/5/08**  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Federalist 10, Federalist 51 (available at constitution.org)

**9/8/08**  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Federalist 52, 53, 62, 63 (available at constitution.org)

**9/10/08**  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Federalist 69, 70, 78, 79 (available at constitution.org)
9/12/08  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government
**Reading:** Brutus, Letters 4, 5, 15, 16
http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus00.htm

9/15/08  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government:
**Reading:** Baker, House and Senate, Ch. 4 (Moodle)

9/17/08  The “Classic” Institutions of American Government
**Reading:** Wildavsky (Moodle), Neustadt (Moodle)
Caplan, “Who Cares about Executive Supremacy?”
http://www.theamericanscholar.org/wi08/supremacy-caplan.html
Pass/ Fail Declaration Period and Extended Drop Period end TODAY

9/19/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution
**Reading:** Marbury v. Madison
http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marbury.html

9/22/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution
**Reading:** Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, KS
http://www.landmarkcases.org/brown/opinion1.html
http://www.landmarkcases.org/brown/reaction.html

9/24/08  “Basics” Examination (10% of grade)

9/26/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution
**Reading:** Gideon v. Wainwright
http://www.lectlaw.com/files/case17.htm

9/29/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution—protecting people
**Reading:** Miranda v. Arizona
http://www.landmarkcases.org/miranda/majority.html
http://www.landmarkcases.org/miranda/dissenting.html

10/1/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution—liberating people
**Reading:** New Jersey v. TLO
http://www.landmarkcases.org/newjersey/majority.html
http://www.landmarkcases.org/newjersey/concurring.html
http://www.landmarkcases.org/newjersey/dissenting.html

10/3/08  Law: The Most Precious Institution—liberating people/ precedent
**Reading:** Lawrence v. Texas
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZO.html
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZD.html

10/6/08  In-Class Writing Day #1
10/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** de Tocqueville, selections from *Democracy in America*

10/10/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Lowi, selections from *The End of Liberalism* (Moodle)  
Michels, selections from *Political Parties* (Moodle)

10/13/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Skocpol, selections from *Diminished Democracy* (Moodle)

10/15/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Weber, selections from “Politics as a Vocation” (Moodle)

10/17/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Waldo, selections from *The Administrative State* (Moodle)

20 October 2008—NO CLASS, Fall Recess
Midterm Grades Available by 9:00AM

10/22/08  The New Institutions of American Government  
**Reading:** Wilson, “Juridical Democracy vs. American Democracy” &  
“Reinventing Public Administration” (Moodle)

10/24/08  Oral Examinations conducted 10/23 and 10/24 (20% of grade)

10/27/08  In-Class Writing Day #2

10/29/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** Weimer/ Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts & Practice*, Chs. 2-3 (Moodle)

10/31/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** John Kingdon, “Processes: Origins, Rationality, Incrementalism and Garbage Cans” (Moodle)  
Withdrawal Period ends TODAY!

11/03/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** Kingdon, “The Policy Window and Joining the Streams” (Moodle)

11/05/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** Case Studies--“Bread for the World” and “Zero Homeless” (Moodle)

11/07/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** Case Studies--“Flu Vaccine” and “Rural Democracy” (Moodle)

11/10/08  Introduction to the Public Policy Process  
**Reading:** Rosin, “American Murder Mystery” (Moodle)
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<td>11/12/08</td>
<td>Culture and the Boundaries of the Political</td>
<td>Reading: Fallows, “Rhetorical Questions”</td>
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<td>Culture and the Boundaries of the Political</td>
<td>Reading: Bowman, “Hollywood’s Hero Deficit”</td>
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<td>11/17/08</td>
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<td>Reading: Fulford, “Pauline Kael and Trash Cinema”</td>
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<td>Adorno, selections from “The Culture Industry,” (Moodle)</td>
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<td>11/19/08</td>
<td>In-class Essay Examination (25% of grade)</td>
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<td>11/21/08</td>
<td>Culture and the Boundaries of the Political</td>
<td>Reading: Hersey, selections from The Evolution of Allure (Moodle)</td>
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<td>11/24/08</td>
<td>Culture and the Boundaries of the Political</td>
<td>Reading: Fussell, selections from The Great War and Modern Memory (Moodle)</td>
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<td>26 and 28 November 2008—NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Recess</td>
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<td>12/1/08</td>
<td>In-Class Writing Day #3</td>
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<td>12/3/08</td>
<td>Introduction to the Professional Study of American Politics: Elections</td>
<td>Reading: TBA</td>
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<td>12/5/08</td>
<td>Introduction to the Professional Study of American Politics: Public Opinion</td>
<td>Reading: Jacobs/ Shapiro, Politicians Don’t Pander, Chs. 1-2 (Moodle)</td>
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<td>12/8/08</td>
<td>Introduction to the Professional Study of American Politics: Political Psychology</td>
<td>Reading: McGraw/ Dolan, “Personifying the State” (Moodle)</td>
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<td>12/10/08</td>
<td>Final Wrap-up</td>
<td>no required reading</td>
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**Your final papers are due December 13, 2008 by 4:00PM!**