

POLS 151-02, United States Politics, Fall 2004

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Political Science 151: United States Politics

Fall 2004
9:00-9:50 MWF
309 Buckman Hall
843-3879

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Office Hours: M 3-4, T 1-3, W- 3-4
or by appointment

This course serves as an introduction to our political system. We will explore several distinct yet interrelated domains of American political life, including the philosophic underpinnings of our political system, our primary political institutions, the ways in which citizens organize and communicate about political life, and a few salient topics in contemporary politics. While centering on these four areas, readings and lectures will often diverge in unpredictable ways, providing a variety of political and philosophic issues for us to address and discuss. This course has a broad scope, seeking to introduce you to a variety of problems and ways of thinking about politics rather than immersing you in a few areas only.

Naturally, an introductory course must appeal both to those who are considering future politics classes as well as those who would sooner swim in the Mississippi. The reading load in this class will vary from light to heavy, depending on the week in question. However, even lighter selections should be read carefully and actively—you will gain little from a single reading of a particular article if you do not revisit it later or take some sort of notes. While such practices will undoubtedly help your course grade, they also aid in the more important goal of learning to think critically about the moral and political world around you.

I will frequently ask questions and initiate discussion in order to provide a more active learning environment. While speaking in front of your peers can be intimidating, voicing and offering your thoughts for potential criticism is a powerful learning tool.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability at x3994 as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:

Students will complete the following requirements for this course:

One 3-5 page paper	10%
One midterm	25%
One 6-8 page paper	25%
One final	30%

Astute students will notice that 10% of your grade remains unassigned. You are strongly encouraged to become an active citizen of our Republic by reading a good daily paper or browsing one online. I will supplement this encouragement with a weekly quiz (one relatively easy question) on current events, beginning Friday September 3rd. The quiz question will be drawn from major stories of the preceding week (Monday through Thursday) found in **all** of the following papers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or *the Washington Post*. The question will not be difficult, unless, of course, you haven't been paying attention to the world around you. You will receive a 10, 7 or 0, depending on your answer (or lack thereof). By my count, there are eleven Fridays that do not contain an exam or holiday; your best seven of these eleven will count towards your grade.

Note: Though online newspapers are normally free, some may require you to register and provide some nominal personal information. Should you be opposed to such a course of action, you will have to secure paper copies of one of these papers.

At the end of all written work, you must affirm the principles of the schools' honor code. A handout on plagiarism will be distributed along with this syllabus. I will not accept late papers without a

fantastic reason (and you'll know it if it happens to you). Failure to complete the assigned work above will result in a failing grade.

Required Texts:

American Government: Power and Purpose (8th), Theodore Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, and Kenneth Shepsle (LGS).

Faultlines: Debating the Issues in American Politics, David Canon, John Coleman, and Ken Mayer Eds. (*Faultlines*)

I strongly encourage “active” reading; that is, taking notes and summarizing information in a way that suits you. Simply running your eyes over the material ensures that you will forget most of it, lowering your exam grade and making the class less of a worthwhile experience. You will also note that there are several web-based readings (WB) on the syllabus. You can launch these articles from Web CT or the emailed copy of the syllabus you will receive. You may read and print these articles as you see fit, but you are responsible for reading them. If for any reason you encounter a broken link, please notify me immediately. Do not fall into the trap of just scanning web-based readings; you should still take notes in whatever fashion best suits you.

Note: the interactive prisoner’s dilemma should not be printed out. Most links go directly to print-ready copies of the articles, but some may require you to click on a “printer-ready” link.

Assignments and Lecture Schedule

August 25

Introduction

I. Fundamentals

August 27, 30

Virtue, Religion, and Liberalism in American Democracy

Ben Franklin, [The Way to Wealth](#), 1753 (WB)

Faultlines, pp. 1-10

September 1, 3

Freedom and Power in Early America

Quiz 1 9.3

Chapter Three (LGS)

James Madison, [Federalist #51](#) (WB)

Faultlines, pp. 21-29

September 6

No class: Labor Day Weekend

September 8, 10

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Quiz 2 9.10

Chapter Four (LGS)

The Bill of Rights, pp. A25-A26 (LGS)

Faultlines, pp. 39-57

September 12

Capitalism and Democracy

Short paper assignment distributed

Milton Friedman, [Excerpts from Capitalism and Freedom](#) (WB)

FDR, [“Commonwealth Club Address”](#) (WB)

September 15

Rational Choice and Government

[The Prisoner’s Dilemma](#) (WB)

[Interactive Prisoner’s Dilemma](#) (WB)

Garret Hardin, [“The Tragedy of the Commons,”](#) 1968

II. Institutions

September 17, 20, 22
Quiz 3 9.17

Congress

Chapter Five (LGS)
 James Madison, [Federalist # 57](#)
 James Madison, [Federalist # 62](#)
Faultlines, pp. 58-73

September 24, 27
Quiz 4 9.24
Short Papers Due 9.27

Presidency

Chapter Six (LGS)
 Article II, pp. A18-A20 (LGS)
 Alexander Hamilton, [Federalist #70](#)
Faultlines, pp. 74-85

September 29, October 1, 4
Quiz 5 10.1

Courts

Chapter Eight (LGS)
 Alexander Hamilton, [Federalist #78](#)
Faultlines, pp. 100-113

October 6

Bureaucracy

Chapter Seven (LGS)
Faultlines, 86-99

October 8

Midterm Exam

III. Organization, Communication, and Participation

October 11, 13

Political Parties

Chapter Eleven (LGS)
Faultlines, pp. 144-160

October 15

No class

October 18

No class: Fall Break Holiday

October 20, 22
Quiz 6 10.22

Interest Groups

Chapter Twelve (LGS)
 James Madison, [Federalist #10](#)
Faultlines, pp. 161-173

October 25, 27

Political Socialization and Public Opinion

Chapter Nine (LGS)
 David Brooks, "[One Nation, Slightly Divisible](#)," *Atlantic Monthly*, 2001 (WB)
 Studyworks, "[Understanding Polls](#)," (all links in table of contents, WB)
[ABC News Poll Methodology](#) (WB)

October 29, November 1, November 3

Elections

Quiz 7 10.29
 Long paper topics distributed 11.3

Chapter Ten (LGS)
Faultlines, pp. 114-143
 Follow the election returns!

November 5, 8
 Quiz 8 11.5

Media
 Chapter Thirteen (LGS)
Faultlines, pp. 174-184

IV. Topics in Politics

November 10, 12, 15
 Quiz 9 11.12

Democracy and Terror in the Information Age
Faultlines, pp. 30-38
 Marci Hamilton, "[The Supreme Court's Terrorism Cases: What They Held, and Why They are Important](#)," FindLaw Commentary, July 1, 2004 (WB)
 Paul Starobin, "[Dawn of the Daddy State](#)," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 2004 (WB)
 Sheldon Pacotti, "[Are We Doomed Yet?](#)" *Salon*, March 31, 2003 (WB)

November 17, 19
 Quiz 10 11.19

American Foreign Policy, Past and Future
Faultlines, pp. 203-216
["The Debate Over Washington's Neutrality Proclamation"](#) (WB)
 Saeed Razavi-Faqih and Ian Urbina, "The Fight for Iran's Democratic Ideals," *The New York Times*, December 10, 2002
 James Dobbins, "[Nation-Building, The Inescapable Responsibility of the World's Only Superpower](#)," RAND Corporation, 2003 (WB)

November 22
 Long Paper due

No class

November 24, 26

No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29, December 1

Economic and Social Policy: The Future of Entitlements
Faultlines, pp. 185-202

December 3
 Quiz 11 12.3

The Battle Over Gay Marriage
 James Q. Wilson, "[Against Homosexual Marriage](#)," (WB)
 Andrew Sullivan, "[Why Civil Union Isn't Marriage](#)," *The New Republic*, May 8, 2000 (WB)

December 5

The Future of the Death Penalty
 John Stuart Mill, "Speech in Favor of Capital Punishment"
["5 Reasons to Oppose the Death Penalty"](#) (WB)
 Roger Clegg, "[The Color of Death](#)," National Review Online (WB)
 Austin Sarat, "[Governor Ryan's Decision to Empty Illinois' Death Row: A Clear Sign of America's New Abolitionism with Respect to the Death Penalty](#)," FindLaw Commentary, January 15, 2003 (WB)

December 8
Final Question Distributed

Conclusion: Warnings From the Past
No readings.

December 15, 8:30 am

Final Exam (Location TBA)