Theories of (or Approaches to) American Politics

Jeremy C. Pope
jpope@byu.edu & @JeremyCPope

SPRING 2013, POLITICAL SCIENCE 310, SEC. 001
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS 1:15 - 3:45 PM, 793 KIMBALL TOWER

“Models are to be used but not to be believed.”—Henri Theil
“Everybody has a story.”—Robert Fogel

Course Objectives

This course is designed to serve as an intermediate introduction to the topics, approaches and theories in the field of American Politics. Students who apply themselves will learn how to do the following.

Describe the basic features of American government and politics.
Identify the major research traditions that structure the study of politics.
Apply theories of politics to explain current practices in American politics.
Analyze, think, and write critically about political theories and situations.

The course fulfills the General Education Arts, Letters, and Sciences (Social Sciences) requirement.¹ Bear in mind these objectives are the designs of others. Good students are not “taught” principles, they learn them. The best students therefore, have their own objectives. This course is no different.

The course will be conducted primarily as a seminar. This means students need to have carefully read the material before each class period and come prepared to contribute some opinions on the reading each week. These opinions should, at least some of the time, be critical of the readings. This course will expose students to a wide variety of approaches to American politics that are not always compatible or consistent with one another. It is the nature of political science to have a diversity of models, theories and approaches. The job of the student is to learn what is useful about all of them and to discard what is not useful.

Office Hours and Consultations

Office hours are on Tuesday, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, 10:15 - 11:50 a.m., and by appointment.²

¹It fulfills the following objectives from that list: demonstrate an understanding of the basic scientific principles which undergird the scientific process, including the strengths and weaknesses of this process; appreciate the excitement of discovery that has accompanied important scientific developments; demonstrate how scientific methodology can be used to analyze real-world science-related problems; evaluate scientific data and claims in order to make rational decisions on public-policy science issues that affect their community; express their thoughts (in oral, graphical, and written formats) on scientific topics clearly, including appropriate use of basic scientific vocabulary and effective interpretation of quantitative data; and reflect rationally upon the interface between science and religion.
²I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these hours.
Prerequisites

Political Science 200 is the only prerequisite for majors. The logic for this requirement is that you need to have acquired some of the rudimentary knowledge about theory provided in PL SC 200. Without that you may find this course very difficult.

Course Texts

This course follows two textbooks. The first, *America's New Democracy* is a standard introductory treatment of American Politics (Fiorina et al., 2010). It serves as our foundation. Though class sessions will always touch on the material in this textbook (and quizzes will cover the material), much of the discussion will go beyond that material and focus on the additional readings. It is expected that students will learn that material outside of class discussion. The second required text is *Analyzing Politics*, by Kenneth Shepsle (2010). It focuses on a rational choice tour of political science topics. It is a useful introduction to that vital approach to political science. Additional readings will come online. Required course readings will be linked within Learning Suite. Recommended readings are available in the library or via www.jstor.org, a website accessible in most campus locations.

Course Outline

*The Foundations of American Politics and Its Study*

**Approaching American Politics (May 1)**

Why use theories? What possible good can they serve and how do they help us understand the world around us? The tack this course takes is to suggest that good theories are like maps. Theories accomplish specific goals and help us make sense of the political world around us by simplifying the key features of a political or social situation. We will begin by studying the nature of democracy, elections and modern campaigns (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter one). Those chapters are an introduction to some key concepts. Riker (1977) and Shepsle (2010, chapters one and two) offer us rational choice approach to theory-building. Their own views are far from universal however. Lowi (1992) critiques that outlook arguing that that political science is really the product of the regime under which we live and that the current regime, wedded to economic language, employs rational choice for political purposes. Despite this trenchant critique it is a fact that much of today’s political science aspires (at least in principle) to ideas and principles laid out by William Riker and others. Students will need to build their own list of criteria for what constitutes a “good” theory.

*Recommended readings:* Kramer (1986) does a nice job of supporting Riker’s view of political science models. Simon (1993) offers a direct response to Lowi’s critique of political science. The rationalist conception of politics may be dominant in some corners, but it is far from universal. That’s not just because of the anti-rational choice critique leveled by Lowi. Clarke and Primo (2012) suggest that this traditional view of political science is out of step with the best philosophy on models of political science. Though he takes a more traditional approach than Clarke and Primo, Shapiro (2002) believes that the empirical support for a rational choice model of political science just is not there and that it should be abandoned in favor of a more problem-based version of political science.

---

3. I am prepared to waive the requirement for non-majors that can demonstrate some of the same skills covered in PL SC 200.
4. This assumes I can make LearningSweet bend to my will. Dicey.
5. The analogy holds true across quality. Good theories are good maps. Poor theories leave you stranded at a subway station headed the wrong direction … metaphorically speaking, of course.
Agendas and Constitutions (May 6)

Before proceeding to any further analysis we need to understand the importance of agendas to political science. Shepsle (2010, chapter three) provides us with the “warm-up exercise.” How important is the agenda to any political problem and why? Class members will see that it is not simply important, it actually determines the outcome.

Our main focus of the day however, will be an understanding of the American founding, with an emphasis on the Federal Convention of 1787, more popularly known as the Constitutional Convention. The American constitution is the foundation for the republic and is semi-properly considered the beginning of American politics (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter two). Studying that beginning is therefore the work of more than a single course, but we can make a beginning and even go further to an actual Convention debate where the class is divided into state delegations to debate a couple of key questions.

Roche (1961) provides the barest of introductions to the Convention debates and provides a simple theory of how the Constitution came into being. Robertson (2005) provides an alternative account of that event, focusing on the specific contribution of Roger Sherman. Robertson also provides an introduction to how federalism came into being and some of the issues it raises. Finally, no course on American politics is complete without a discussion of Madison’s theories about how groups would interact in the American republic (Madison, 1788).

Recommended readings: The real literature on the American Founding is voluminous and stretches across a host of disciplines. Jillson (2002) offers a nice political science treatment of the Constitutional Convention. Though more rooted in history than in political science, Rakove (1996) offers an impressive account of the politics of the Convention and how its decisions unfolded. Rakove’s account suggests both that studying the “original meaning” of the text is a worthy pursuit, and that it is probably an almost impossible task to finally accomplish. Looking beyond the Convention, Jills and Wilson (1987) provide a tight theoretical account of the failure of the Articles of Confederation. Aldrich and Grant (1993) analyze the shift from the Constitutional politics of the Convention to the formation of political parties in the first Congress. Clinton and Meirowitz (2004) test the (apocryphal?) historical account of the first log roll: Madison tolerating Hamilton’s bill on assumption of state debts and Hamilton permitting the capitol to be moved south to a new formed district along the Potomac River. Finally, Dahl (2003) provides a modern critique of the Constitution? Is it outmoded and insufficient to modern views and practices?

Federalism & The Tools of Group Choice Analysis (May 8)

Robertson (2005) provides some discussion of the origins of federalism and its attendant problems. (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter three) provides a discussion of how federalism works out in practice today. One of the central problems of American government is how centralized will power be? It has never been fully centralized in a national government or fully decentralized to the state governments (at least since the Constitution). That tension is one of the most important elements of American politics.

The foundation of American politics is probably pluralism and the competing demands of various groups and interests in society. To analyze those choices we need to arm ourselves with all of the necessary tools to analyze group choice. Shepsle (2010, chapters four and five) lay out the tools of group choice analysis and spatial analysis, concepts central to discussion of American politics. The modern way of understanding group choice is to think in terms of spatial models. Indeed this is becoming one of the workhorse tools of political science. Though a full treatment of this kind of work is beyond our scope here, Shepsle (2010, chapter five) provides a substantial introduction to the topic. The chapter is difficult, but students should try to get as much out of it as they can. Simple spatial model questions will be reviewed in class and

---

6 Though not required, Dougherty and Heckelman (2006) offer a critique of Robertson’s views about Sherman.

7 You should have read this for last time, but I hope you did not forget about it.
Theories of (or Approaches to) American Politics

covered on the examination.\(^8\)

**Recommended reading:** The pluralist school of thought is much older than the modern practice of political science. The study of how the public makes decisions was most prominently written about over two hundred years ago by James Madison in the *Federalist Papers*. Some of Madison’s basic ideas were elaborated into that pluralist school which flourished among from the turn of the twentieth century up through mid-twentieth century. Murray S. Stedman (1953) and Golembiewski (1960) review David Truman’s (1951) book, *The Governmental Process*, probably the classic tome on pluralist school of political science. Since it is a forerunner to modern rational choice theory these works are worth some attention. Their contribution was more about process and internal, bureaucratic procedure. Schattschneider (1960, see, particularly, chapters 1-4 & 8) is the classic work on how groups form, mobilize and fight with one another to gain the upper hand in American politics. Walker (1991, particularly chapters 1-3, 5 & 10) is a more recent study but also repays reading.

The pluralist school is so large that it would probably sustain an entire course. Dahl (1961, particularly chapters 1, 7, 8-16, 24 & 27-28) is a careful account of who controls the agenda. What goes onto it and which classes of society are most powerful. The book is a classic case study of New Haven, CT (the home of Yale University) and it spawned a whole series of other interest group texts focused on how various factions get their way in key areas of public policy (Dexter, Bauer and de Sola Pool, 2007). However, whether or not an issue even appears on the agenda is just as important as which groups our powerful. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) in a short paper, close to a book review of Dahl’s work on New Haven, argue that the pluralist model ignores the agenda. The lack of a decision is often just as important as who appears to win political decisions (Crenson, 1972, is also useful). Lowi (1979, particularly the prefaces and chapters 2-3), synthesizing many of these strands, argues that as all major organized interests captured their piece of the bureaucracy in the United States clientilism became the rule and various interest groups seized control of the American government.

**Mass Political Behavior in the American Context**

**America’s Political Culture (May 13)**

There is an old saying that politics trumps the law and culture trumps politics. There is little doubt that the cultural underpinnings of a society constrain political possibilities, something just as true in the American context as it is in other places. Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter four) provide a nuanced account of how America’s social diversity is balanced by a surprising amount of philosophical unity. Hartz (1955, chapter one) provides the classic argument on how culture shapes American politics and also offers an argument about what forces caused and shaped that philosophical unity. For a more updated discussion of how culture could matter we leave the confines of the United States and study it in Italy Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993, chapter six).\(^9\)

**Recommended reading:** Many people have written about American political culture, but no one with more care and success than Tocqueville (1996 (originally published 1835)). His account of American culture repays reading. Though the entire book is worth your time, Vol. I, chapter three and vol. II, part 2, chapters one through nine are the key points for developing a cultural theory of American politics. In the wake of fascism’s rise in Europe and horrors of war, many American political scientists tried to better understand culture and the role it could play in politics. Almond and Verba (1963, particularly chapters 1, 4, 7 & 14-15) created the sub-field of political culture. Steinmo (1994) provides a compelling critique of political culture as an independent force, arguing that it plays far less role than the power of institutional design.

---

\(^8\)This reading is dense and some of the most difficult in the course. Starting early will pay off.

\(^9\)Don’t worry. It connects back to the American scene.
Public Opinion and the Media (May 15)

Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter five) answers three questions. How do we define public opinion? How do we measure it? And how should it influence the government. Actually that final question never really gets an “answer” as it is complicated enough to merit its own book, but their work is a very good start. However, before we can get too deep into the question of influencing the government we need to define and measure public opinion. Zaller and Feldman (1992) provide an account of survey research that draws on both rational choice and psychological approaches to argue that there may not be much of any “there” there—at least when it comes to public opinion. Perhaps people just answer questions without really giving much thought to anything. Today we will try to devise a test of this hypothesis.

The other subject of the day is the media (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter six). What media sources do Americans use and how is that changing? Is there any evidence for media bias or media effects on public opinion? Frankly this subject is far from settled in American politics. Just how much effect the media has on public attitudes is open to serious question.

Recommended reading: Jacobs and Shapiro (2000), in a book-length treatment, argue that when people complain about pandering politicians they are confused. It is not really the case that politicians obey voters. Rather politicians do whatever they want and then explain away any problems if necessary. Polls are used not to discern public opinion to be to figure how to frame the position that the politician personally prefers. On the media side, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) provide an experimental study showing the importance of priming effects in American politics. In a related vein (Druckman, 2004) offers an analysis of how actual campaign content delivered in the media affects voter attitudes and decision-making. Much of this work builds off of the foundation of social psychology popularized in political science by Robert Lane (1962, see particularly chapters 5-6, 9-12, 20-21 & the postscript).

Individual Participation (May 20)

James Madison said that “a dependence upon the people” is the primary check on government and so no discussion of American politics would be complete without an analysis of individual participation and voting (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter seven). However, it is an open question: why do people participate? To some it may seem obvious that everyone who is a good citizen would want to participate. However, if that is the key criterion there are very few good citizens. Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter seven) begins with a history of the franchise then proceeds through an international comparison of turnout and participation to a normative discussion about whether we should worry about low turnout. Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954, chapter six) offer one of the best early of who participates. Their mode is essentially sociological theory and group orientation, but their influence stretches far beyond that field. Today, you probably take modern analysis of voters for granted, but they pioneered the field. Now television programs break down voting patterns or opinion by all sorts of demographics from age to occupation and beyond. This type of analysis is relatively recent (when considering the long history of the republic) and can be traced in many ways to their academic work.

It may seem obvious that people merely vote “based on our preferences” or “our beliefs,” but anyone who has ever been in a legislature of any kind (or even just a small group voting on alternatives) realizes quickly that voting is hardly the straightforward proposition that we might believe. Shepsle (2010, chapter six) explains the difficulties of straightforward voting and helps us think about the nature of “sophisticated” behavior in voting.

Recommended reading: The study of who participates and how has an almost endless number of papers studying the phenomena. One good paper that brings in both mass opinion and elite behavior is by Campbell and Monson (2008) on gay marriage and the 2004 elections. They claim that Republicans strategically used ballot initiatives to drive up pro-Bush turnout in the election. The question of being able to manipulate who will vote is of obvious importance in American politics. Lupia (1994) offers a different
account of how voters make decisions. By his lights, citizens depend on mental shortcuts—heuristics—to decide what they will do in an election. One other matter to consider in elections is who actually runs in the election. Fox and Lawless (2004) show that there is a clear gender bias in who decides to participate in the campaign. Women choose not to run. If they do run, they win at rates equal to men. But, for some reason not entirely clear, women choose not to run campaigns, seemingly because they do not consider themselves qualified.¹⁰

Midterm examination: The midterm examination will be held in class or in another room on May 22. It will consist entirely of short answer questions (a paragraph or two) and perhaps a slightly longer essay.

National Elections (May 29)

Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter eight) provide an introduction to the basic literature on campaigns and elections. However, the American system of elections is hardly the only one out there. Shepsle (2010, chapter seven) reviews the many different types of systems and some of their consequences. Understanding how the American system has functioned is the work of not one but several courses. Despite the scope of the task V.O. Key does provide a very influential introduction to what elections accomplish in the American system. Key (1966, see particularly the preface and chapter 1) offers V. O. Key’s view of how an electorate can behave “responsibly.” One of the points seen in Fiorina et al. is that partisanship—a concept taken for granted today—organizes and helps determine how people vote in national elections. Partisanship is such a ubiquitous concept that any analysis of political public opinion data (and often data that is not obviously political) comes with a partisan breakdown. Because it has become such an important category we sometimes forget that the roots of partisanship, as a theory, are in psychology. Campbell et al. (1960, chapter six) originated the concept (shortly after the work of Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee) studying the 1952 and 1956 elections. Despite that antiquity the book holds up very well and is arguably the most influential book ever written in modern American political science.

Recommended: Key’s book was published at the end of his life, but he had been thinking about elections for years. One critical strand of American politics has been the realignment synthesis. Key (1955, 1959) popularized the idea that there were certain critical elections that deeply influenced policymaking. Burnham (1970) took Key’s theory much further and argued for a periodization of critical elections (approximately every thirty-six years). Brady (1991) notes that around these critical elections policy-making was creative and fruitful. The party that won the election was able to shape policy for years to come. Despite its popularity the perspective has fallen into question (Shafer, 1991). Mayhew (2004) argues that the concept is essentially useless.

Parties have been controversial now for some years. In the late 1940s the American Political Science Association commissioned a report on the state of government. This report was largely authored by E.E. Schattschneider, one of the great political scientists of the mid-twentieth century (though it is credited to the committee at large and not to him alone). The people of that time viewed their problems with government very differently than we do today. The document (only a portion of which is assigned) argues for the need to have much clearer political parties that work against one another in opposition and competition for the public good (Committee on Political Parties, 1951, “Summary of Conclusions and Proposals” and “The Need for Greater Party Responsibility”). Not everyone agreed. For instance, Ranney (1951) responded to report by arguing that it was an inappropriate plan for the American system. Turner (1951) makes a similar argument that the defects of excessive partisanship are serious. The debate may seem old, but it echoes in our modern arguments about political polarization (Poole and Rosenthal, 2007; Mann and Ornstein, 2012).

¹⁰Men seem perfectly willing to think of themselves as qualified.
Political Cooperation and Influence (June 3)

To get anything done in a democracy requires cooperation, a far greater social science problem than can be simply seen in the American politics literature. Drawing on the work of Mancur Olson (worth reading in his own right) Shepsle (2010, chapter eight, pp. 231-252 are the most valuable, and chapter nine). Students should bear in mind that cooperation—to gain control of the government—is the beginning of national political parties, something that E.E. Schattschneider said was essential for democracy. Consequently, students should read a bit about political parties and think about how they create (or inhibit) cooperation (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter nine).

Finally, Economists tend to be the ones that discuss public goods. However, it is always the job of politicians to provide them so it is worth carefully considering what political science teaches us about collective goods and their provision (Shepsle, 2010, chapter ten).

Recommended: Though more famous for popularizing the median voter theorem, Downs (1957) offers an account of why parties would be necessary in the American Political system. His work is heavily influenced by economics. So is the work of John Aldrich but, his (1995) work is a bit more accessible.

National Political Institutions

The Congress (June 5)

There is nothing more essential than the legislature. It is properly (across most systems of government, but definitely in the American system) considered the first branch of government (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter ten). Shepsle (2010, chapter twelve) provides a fairly detailed introduction to the basics of a rational choice presentation of a legislature. Before turning to the presidency, we pause to think briefly about political leadership. Shepsle (2010, chapter 14) reveals that leadership is only half of the problem in politics. Good leadership must be based on a theory and the practice of “followership.”

Recommended: In many respects the rational choice approach epitomized by Shepsle’s discussion of institutions has become the dominant way of thinking about legislatures. Mayhew (1974) popularized the argument. However, it is far from the only way. Matthews (1959) presents a sociological theory of a legislature rooted in norms and customs. Fenno (1962) is similarly sociological in his approach, but offers a different vision for a legislature. Fenno (1978) pushes the idea of a sociological study of elected officials much further. His influential book Home Style continues to reverberate in political science. Sociology is not the only other way of studying the Congress. Cooper and Brady (1981) and Cooper and Young (1989) provide very careful accounts of both congressional leadership and congressional procedures rooted in history and historical change. Schickler (N.d., chapter one) provides a very similar approach.

The Presidency (June 10)

Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter eleven) provides background on the basics of the office, but the presidency is inherently less amenable to theories than are the other parts of government. Another approach to presidents employs history. Skowronek (1997) believes that presidents come into power in a particular moment and time and that their circumstances determine much of their policy, their successes and their failures. More than other subjects in the course students will see the difficulty in developing clear theories about presidents, but since their importance is unquestioned the effort proceeds.

Recommended reading: Because America has very few presidents it is much more difficult to develop a clear theory of them. Few cases means that statistical analysis is only a very limited tool. One approach, offered by Barber (1992, chapters one and two give the main points of the argument), is to think about the psychological makeup of the individual president. George and George (1998, see particularly chapters 5-6) offer a similar account focused on management style’s fit with cognitive style. The reform tradition in
political science (see above) is well developed, and the presidency has hardly escaped notice. Sundquist (1986), coming after Watergate and in a period of declining trust in government prepared a book on how American government could be reformed. He focuses mainly on the presidency though the ideas apply across multiple branches of government. Both his normative theories and the positive theories that undergird his analysis are worth consideration.

The Bureaucracy (June 12)

Some of the most visible government action are not cabinet meetings or great debates on the floor of the Senate. Bureaucracy is the way policy gets executed (Fiorina et al., 2010, chapter twelve, pp. 295-313). It is a part of government that responds to both the legislature and the executive in complicated ways. Shepsle (2010, chapter 13) provides us with some nice theory about how bureaucracies work.

Shepsle’s approach is far more reliant on a rational choice approach to bureaucracy than is James Q. Wilson’s approach. Wilson (1991, chapters seventeen and eighteen) provides a deep sociological account of how bureaucrats develop rules, handle change and shift their mission. His account gives us another window into how bureaucrats think about the world and what they attempt to accomplish.

Recommended reading: Work on the bureaucracy tends to be long. Kaufman (1960) explains the role of the forest range in the national bureaucracy. Skocpol (1995, the first 100 pages are the heart of the argument) explains how the first social insurance came into being in the United States.

The Judiciary and some Final Comments (June 17)

Courts are the final branch of government Fiorina et al. (2010, chapter thirteen, pp. 328-352). Some legal theories would suggest that the law must be approached very differently from other political bodies, but Shepsle (2010, chapter 15) presents a self-consciously “political theory” where judges see themselves and their power as part of a political system. Baum (1994) gives us a review of possible accounts of the motivations of judges. This is one of the least well-established areas of American politics. It is a fruitful area for future research.

Recommended reading: Nemacheck (2007) provides an account of how presidents select judges (especially for lower courts). The politics of judicial selection have grown more and more contentious through time.

Final examination: The final examination will be held on June 19 from 3:00 until 4:50 p.m. in the regular class or in another announced room. It will consist entirely of short answer questions (a paragraph or two) and perhaps a slightly longer essay.

Grade Policy

The course evaluation has six basic elements.

- Class participation / quizzes ........................................... 50 points
- Analysis papers ........................................................... 75 points
- Midterm examination .................................................. 75 points
- Reading presentation ................................................... 100 points
- Research proposal ....................................................... 100 points
- Final examination ...................................................... 100 points

Participation and Quizzes: There will be five quizzes randomly distributed throughout the class sessions. These quizzes will be simple and short (five questions each). They cannot be made up nor can they be taken early. A related component of the grade is participation. This class is small (less than thirty students) by design; the small size permits increased class participation. Each class session will be a mixture of a
Theories of (or Approaches to) American Politics

bit of lecture, discussion, and sometimes class activities. Students who do a good job of participating in the discussions on a regular basis will receive a large number of participation points. Students whose participation is not of the same quality will receive proportionally fewer points. Quantity of comments is not the only (or even the strongest) consideration. Thoughtful comments will receive the greatest reward. Some students are not as comfortable participating in class. That is why the two components are linked. A perfect score on the quizzes with relatively little participation will still earn a very high score on this component. Missing a few quizzes, but with excellent participation will also score well. Skipped quizzes and little participation will mean a relatively low grade on this score.11

One element of participation will be discussion of current news and politics. To facilitate some of this discussion there will be links and make very brief comments on news articles that pertain to the class on Twitter: @JeremyCPope. Students need not open a Twitter account to see these links, just bookmark: https://twitter.com/JeremyCPope. Come prepared to talk about current events in each class period (this will definitely help your participation score).

Analysis Papers: Students should submit at least three one or two page reactions to a recommended reading in the class. The purpose of this paper is decidedly not to summarize the readings, a short paragraph summarizing the main point of the paper (or of the chapters that you read12) is more than sufficient.13 The short note should simply explain one testable hypothesis provoked by reading the paper. Do not simply report on a hypothesis tested or explained in the paper. Take the hypotheses discussed there and suggest a related or implied hypothesis suggested by reading the work. The paper work should explain the question being tested, why this theory implies or suggests that hypothesis, and how it could, at least in principle, be tested. Students may submit up to five of these papers (but never more than one per session) until they have received the score they like (or they have run out of attempts). Each assignment is worth twenty-five points. They will be graded strictly, but a perfect score in this area is obviously possible.

Reading presentation: For the first couple of weeks Prof. Pope will present all of the readings. However, on beginning on May 13, with the discussion of political culture, student groups will begin presenting the readings that go beyond the text. Eight groups of approximately two to four students will present each reading. This presentation should summarize the key points of the work (focusing more on the theory than on the empirics) and then ask some questions of the other students in the class. A group activity may be appropriate. Each group should consult with Prof. Pope about the content of the presentation. These presentations will last between twenty to forty-five minutes depending upon the day and the presentation content. The assignment is worth a total of one hundred points. Twenty points will be assigned by the students who watch the presentation. Thirty points will be assigned by your fellow-group members. And fifty points will be assigned by Prof. Pope. Additional details will become available as the semester progresses.

Research proposal: Each student is expected to submit a research proposal that accomplishes the following four goals.

- Explain a key problem studied by political scientists.
- Review solutions to that problem in the political science literature using as many sources as the student deems relevant.14
- Evaluate the success of political science reasoning applied to that problem

11To be as clear as possible, I will assign the total points based on your quiz scores and my assessment of your participation at the end of the course. Students interested in their grade may certainly inquire before the end of the semester.
12Sometimes entire books are on the recommended reading list. In these cases students should read a few chapters of the book and explain the portion that they read.
13You may assume I am familiar enough with the reading that it needs no introduction.
14Assume that the question “how many sources do I need to cite” will be met with a blank and unfriendly stare. You should summarize as much literature as you think important and can find. More is not necessarily better. Finding literature that is on point matters more than finding a large number of citations.
Propose a research project that would answer interesting political science questions.

The specific topic of the paper is left up to the student. The final version of the paper is due in my hands or under my door no later than Monday, June 17 at 6:00 p.m., or earlier.\textsuperscript{15} Drafts may be submitted earlier and will receive review and comment as quickly as Prof. Pope can accomplish it. Students should not turn in a first draft, but a polished refined draft (of no more than ten pages) that has been reviewed by peers, possibly the writing center and anyone willing to help. The stapled paper should be in a reasonable font and double-spaced. Deviations from that pattern will be penalized. Excessive length will also be penalized.\textsuperscript{16}

Examinations: The examinations will be held in class or in another room announced later. They will be a series of short-answer, multiple choice and short essay questions. With respect to the final examination, please bear in mind that it cannot be given early and can only be given late under circumstances for an incomplete grade. Events in your control will not count as a valid reason for rescheduling.\textsuperscript{17}

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is at the heart of academic life and the honor code at this university. Some students who would never think of a violation of the Word of Wisdom will not hesitate to cheat on an exam or plagiarize a paper. See the section of the BYU homepage devoted to the honor code for details on the academic honesty policy. Assume that clear cases of dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course.

Disabilities

Brigham Young University and its faculty are committed to providing a learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, you are responsible for making your needs known to us and seeking available assistance from the university in a timely manner. In addition to notifying us, you must contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC) at 422-7065, 1520 WSC. The UAC reviews requests for reasonable academic accommodations for all students who have qualified documented disabilities, and any accommodations for this class must be coordinated with the UAC office. See http://uac.byu.edu/ for more information.

Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against discrimination and sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well.\textsuperscript{18} If you encounter sexual harassment or discrimination, please talk to a faculty member; contact the Equal Employment Office in D-282 ASB or by telephone at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

\textsuperscript{15}The usual caveats apply here (but not to the quizzes): illness, alien abduction, cooling your heels in President Samuelson’s office, or a personal audience with the First Presidency may be reason to negotiate a late submission. However, this must be done well before the absence or as soon afterward as humanly possible. Failure to do so may result in the loss of the assignment.

\textsuperscript{16}For instance, if I read a page that could have been a paragraph I will assign fewer points than if I simply read the paragraph.

\textsuperscript{17}A policy similar to the paper late policy is in force here.

\textsuperscript{18}Please see: http://www.byu.edu/hr/directory/equal-employment-opportunity for many more details.
Incompletes:

This course adheres to University policy on “incompletes,” which is that an incomplete (I) is given only when circumstances beyond the student’s control make it impossible to complete the required work within the prescribed time. Arrangements must be made between the professor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The “I” is never given when a student is failing or has failed the course.

Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add deadline</td>
<td>May 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>May 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal Deadline</td>
<td>June 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuance deadline</td>
<td>June 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day of instruction &amp; final research proposal due</td>
<td>June 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>June 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Last updated: April 24, 2013

learnsuite.byu.edu