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. Bear in mind these objectives are the designs of others. Good students are not “taught” principles, they learn them. The best students 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. The reading load for this class is substantial. Before the student presentations (see the course outline) there are about 1200 pages of reading spread over about ten weeks. The daily load varies. Some days it is as high as a hundred pages for a single session. The readings are designed to help students form opinions about the topics and theories in American politics.

These student 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.

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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.

2Students who are not prepared to read a substantial amount should seek another section of this course.
Office Hours and Consultations

Office hours are on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3:00 - 3:50 p.m., and by appointment.\(^3\)

Prerequisites

Political Science 200 is the only prerequisite for majors.\(^4\) 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, *The American Political System*, by Ken Kollman (2014), is a standard introductory treatment of American Politics. 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 or the library’s course reserve.\(^5\) Recommended readings are available in the library or via www.jstor.org, a website accessible in most campus locations.

Course Outline

*Intellectual Foundations*

**Problems and Maps in American Politics (January 7)**

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.\(^6\) 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. Kollman (2014, chapter one) introduces us to some of the key issues in analyzing American politics. More broadly, Kollman (2014) serves as a foundation for our discussion of different approaches to American politics.

**How Much “Science” in our Maps of Political Science? (January 9)**

One very longstanding debate in American politics (and social science more broadly) is about how “scientific” should our approach be? And what is a relatively more “scientific” approach. Riker (1977) and Shepsle (2010, chapters one and two) offer us a rational choice approach to theory-building. It is a fairly scientific approach to the subject, but their views are far from universal. Lowi (1992) critiques rational choice as an approach, arguing 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

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\(^3\) Though it is not formally scheduled, I can often meet with students on Thursdays after class, but make an appointment to be sure. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these hours.

\(^4\) I am prepared to waive the requirement for non-majors that can demonstrate some of the same skills covered in PL SC 200.

\(^5\) This assumes I can make LearningSweet bend to my will. Dicey.

\(^6\) 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.
principle) to ideas and principles laid out by William Riker and others. We will begin having the conversation about what is a “good” theory in this class period by focusing on the importance of hypotheses and how they are defined and generated.

**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 is just not there and that it should be abandoned in favor of a more problem-based version of political science.

**Creating a Constitution (January 14)**

The American Constitution is the foundation for the republic and is semi-properly considered the beginning of American politics (Kollman, 2014, chapter two). Roche (1961) provides the barest of introductions to the Convention debates and provides a simple theory of how the Constitution came into being. Studying that beginning is therefore the work of more than a single course, but we can make a beginning and even practice a bit of our own convention where the class is divided into state delegations to debate a few key questions.

**Recommended readings:** The real literature on the American Founding is voluminous and stretches across a host of disciplines. Robertson (2005) provides an account focusing on the specific contribution of Roger Sherman as well as an introduction to how federalism came into being and some of the issues it raises. Dougherty and Heckelman (2006) offer a critique of Robertson’s views about Sherman. 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.

**The Constitution’s Outcome: Federalism & Institutional Design (January 16)**

After continuing our debates on the Constitution we will spend at least a bit of time discussing federalism (Kollman, 2014, chapter three). The practical workings of federalism are messy and not well theorized. However, federalism is, perhaps, the central problem of American government. How centralized should 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.

**Recommended readings:** Looking beyond the Convention, Jillson 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?

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7Most class sessions come with a set of additional recommended readings on the subject. These recommended readings serve several purposes: depth in the subject, practice for considering new hypotheses, and possibilities for group presentations. I will say more about them in class.
Mass Political Behavior: The Ingredients of Politics

American Political Culture (January 21)

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. The best description of American political culture is found in Tocqueville (which can be found online in many places). Though the entire text is of enormous value, we will focus our discussion most on Volume I, part I, chapter three and Volume II, part II, chapters 1 - 9. Tocqueville’s account is hardly the only description of American politics from a cultural perspective. 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.

Recommended reading: 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.

How Important is Culture? (January 23)

Though much of this approach has fallen out of favor there are fairly modern approaches to culture as a force in politics. 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).

Recommended reading: Though the theoretical portion of Putnam’s work on culture is easier to see in the Italian context, his work has been updated for America (Putnam, 2000). Finally, 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.

Public Opinion in America (January 28)

Culture is about what unifies a particular geographic—or sometimes political—area. The broader question of what do many individual citizens believe is the study of public opinion. (Kollman, 2014, chapter nine) describes the basics of public opinion. The study of public opinion is approached from many distinct viewpoints: pluralism, rational choice, sociology and psychology. A rational choice approach uses the tools of Riker to analyze human behavior. Shepsle (2010, pp. 41 - 123) lay out the tools of group choice analysis and spatial analysis, concepts central to discussion of American politics. Such spatial models have become one of the workhorse tools of political science. Though a full treatment of this kind of work is beyond our scope here, Shepsle 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 covered on the examination.9

Recommended reading: 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. Jacobs and Shapiro (2000), in a book-length treatment, argue that when people complain about politicians pandering to the public, or to special interests, 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 hour how to frame the position that the politician personally prefers. One branch of the study of public opinion is how the media shapes attitudes (in fact the media itself is an entire sub-field in American politics). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) provide an experimental study showing the importance of priming effects in American

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8 Don’t worry. It connects back to the American scene.
9 This reading is dense and some of the most difficult in the course. Starting early will pay off.
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).

Public Opinion, Pluralism, and Sociology (January 30)

The pluralist school of thought on public opinion 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. Though we cannot read all of what he wrote, #10 is the heart of Madison’s thinking. 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. Modern survey research makes it possible to analyze how different groups align and influence one another. Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954, chapter six) offer a sociological account of how opinions form and what maintains coalitions. Today, you probably take modern analysis of voters for granted, but these sociologists 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.

The pluralism school of thinking was very influential (even helping spawn the sociological approach). However, it does seem to leave out institutions. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) in a short paper argue that the pluralist model ignores the agenda. They claim that it is useless to analyze the groups or the political situation without analyzing which issues even appear on the agenda and that the lack of a decision is often just as influential as the fact of a decision.

Recommended: The pluralist school is so large that it would probably sustain an entire course. Among the older sources, 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.

Dahl (1961a, particularly chapters 1, 7, 8-16, 24 & 27-28) is a careful account of which groups matter in local government 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). (Crenson, 1972, is also useful). Lowi (1979, particularly the prefaces and chapters 2-3), synthesizes many of these strands, arguing 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.

Political Participation & Cooperation in America (February 4)

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 (Kollman, 2014, chapter ten). Shepsle (2010, chapter eight) offers an account of both how difficult it is to get people to cooperate and some speculation on why they would choose to cooperate anyway.

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

Can We Explain Participation? (February 6)

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. As to how they vote, 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, chapters nine and ten, through p. 293) explains the difficulties of straightforward voting and helps us think about the nature of “sophisticated” behavior in voting, drawing heavily on the work of Mancur Olsen (worth reading in his own right).

Recommended: Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) present a classic argument that declining political participation is intimately linked to declining mobilization in American politics. Essentially the parties decided to stop bringing people to the polls. Green and Gerber (2008) offer an account of how people could be brought back to the polls. Using randomized controlled trials, Gerber and Green establish the value of different mechanisms for mobilizing voters.

American National Elections (February 11)

Kollman (2014, chapter thirteen) 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 really requires a comparative focus and is the work of not one but several courses.

Recommended: 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.” 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. 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.

10Men seem perfectly willing to think of themselves as qualified.
What Drives Election Outcomes? (February 13)

Because it has become such an important demographic, constantly being used in political analysis, 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: Bartels (2000) argues that the “Michigan Model” of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, has essentially held through time and that partisanship is the key driver of election outcomes. Sundquist (1983) provides a nice historical discussion of the shifting partisan eras in American history.

Midterm examination (February 20)

The midterm examination will be held in class or in another room. It will consist of short answer questions (a paragraph or two) and perhaps a slightly longer essay. There may be a few multiple choice questions.

The American Political System

Parties and Interest Groups (February 25)

Kollman (2014, chapters eleven and twelve) offer the standard political science view of interest groups and political parties. They are institutions created to link the government and the governed, as such they are not as formal as the branches of government, but hardly as chaotic as simple public opinion and participation.

Recommended: Cohen et al. (2008) describes the way in which party elites dominate the presidential nomination process. Parties are probably more than simply a collection of interest groups, but they are not much more than that. Dahl (1961b) is the classic text on how interests organize themselves and influence (control?) local government. Moe (1980) provided an update about how interest group leaders hold their group together to accomplish their goals. In recent years, as the country has become more interested in equality, Gilens (2012) provides an account of the political inequality that subverts the American political system.

Should the Parties Be Reformed? (February 27)

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.

Recommended: 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). 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.
The U.S. Congress (March 4)

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 (Kollman, 2014, chapter five). Shepsle (2010, chapter twelve and pp. 123 - 155) provides a fairly detailed introduction to the basics of a rational choice presentation of a legislature.

*Recommended:* Though we often associate “leadership” with the presidency, it is actually a much broader topic, and one that relates closely to legislators. 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.” Though not as central to our tour of theories in American politics, this chapter is one of the better ones in Shepsle’s book.

What Motivates Members of Congress? (March 6)

In many respects the rational choice approach epitomized by Shepsle’s discussion of institutions has become the dominant way of thinking about legislatures. 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. It is worth considering if we think these approaches, now fallen out of use, have more to offer than we would have imagined.

*Recommended:* Mayhew (1974) popularized the rational choice argument. In contrast, 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 & The Bureaucracy (March 11)

Kollman (2014, chapter six) provides background on the basics of the office, but the presidency is somewhat less amenable to generalized theories than are the other parts of government because of the lack of cases and the fact that each president may be more of a specialized case.

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 (Kollman, 2014, chapter seven). 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.

*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. Wilson (1991, especially 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.

A Historical Approach to the Presidency (March 13)

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.
Theories of (or Approaches to) American Politics

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 Judiciary (March 18)

Courts are the final branch of government we will study. Kollman (2014, chapter eight) provides a nuts and bolts account of how courts work. On this day we will also spend some time getting ready for student presentations.

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.

What Motivates Judges? (March 20)

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.

Recommended: 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. We will make the final preparations necessary for student presentations in this session.

Student Presentations (March 25 - April 9)

Each student group will present a paper selected from the syllabus or another document that will be circulated. Grading will be explained in class.

Concluding Comments (April 15)

Final examination: The final examination will be held on Monday, April 21 from 2:30 until 5:30 p.m. in the regular class or in another announced room. It will consist of short answer questions (a paragraph or two) and perhaps a slightly longer essay. There may be a few multiple choice questions.

Grade Policy

The course evaluation has six basic elements.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Class participation / quizzes</td>
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<td>Analysis papers</td>
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<td>Midterm examination</td>
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<td>Group presentation</td>
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<td>Research proposal</td>
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<td>Final examination</td>
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Participation and Quizzes: There will be five quizzes randomly distributed throughout the class sessions. These quizzes will be simple and short (approximately 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 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. In whatever fashion students like, they should come prepared to talk about current events in each class period (this will definitely help participation scores).]

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 do the following

Explain one testable hypothesis provoked by reading the paper, i.e., take the hypotheses discussed there and offer a related or implied hypothesis suggested by reading the work.

Do not simply report on a hypothesis tested or explained in the paper. Add an original twist for the highest grade.

Explain how this hypothesis 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 ten points. They will be graded strictly, but a perfect score in this area is obviously possible.

Reading presentation: In the final weeks of the class we will shift from the regular class conduct to a form driven by students. Beginning on March 25, six groups of approximately four to six 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 thirty to forty-five minutes depending upon the day and the presentation content. The assignment is worth a total of one hundred points. Twenty-five points will be assigned by the students who watch the presentation. Twenty-five 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.

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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.
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.\(^\text{14}\)

Evaluate the success of political science reasoning applied to that problem

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 Tuesday, April 15 at 5:00 p.m., or earlier.\(^\text{15}\) 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 seven 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.\(^\text{16}\)

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.\(^\text{17}\) Please understand that it is a fundamental university policy that a final exam not be given early. Do not bother asking for this. An incomplete, under the right circumstances is possible, but an early final examination is not.\(^\text{18}\)

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.

\(^{14}\)Assume 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.

\(^{15}\)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.

\(^{16}\)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.

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

\(^{18}\)My neighbor, many years ago needed to take a final exam early to leave town and be on time for a job. He decided this request was only fair and went to the university president’s home to ask President Dallin Oaks for this simple favor. There was no way to skip this final and graduate and my neighbor could not postpone the date of employment. According to my neighbor, President Oaks wished him the best of luck in finding a new job.
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. 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.

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add deadline</td>
<td>January 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Holiday</td>
<td>January 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidents Day Holiday</td>
<td>February 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday Instruction (no class)</td>
<td>February 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>February 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal Deadline</td>
<td>March 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discontinuance deadline</td>
<td>April 2</td>
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<td>Last day of instruction &amp; final research proposal due</td>
<td>April 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>April 21</td>
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References


19Please see: http://www.byu.edu/hr/directory/equal-employment-opportunity for many more details.


Last updated: January 7, 2014

[learningsuite.byu.edu](http://learningsuite.byu.edu)