

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS

Fall 2009
Marquette University

Professor: Stephen Engel (stephen.engel@marquette.edu)
Office: William Wehr Building Room 415

9:00—9:50 AM (MWF)
David Straz Hall 502

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays (4:00-5:30 PM), Tuesdays (10:00-Noon), and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this class, students will investigate various aspects of American political institutional development and political behavior. How have institutions changed over time, how have Americans' political behavior, engagement, and efficacy changed over time, and what do these changes tell us about the sustainability of the Founders' democratic experiment? The course provides a detailed introduction to concepts underlying the subfield of American politics. It surveys common themes, topics, and methods used in this field. It covers a broad range of materials with diverse writing styles and methodologies, and it requires students to think and write critically about the topics discussed.

We begin the course by examining the principles and documents that form the foundation of the government of the United States. Next, we extend our focus by evaluating the major institutions that constitute the federal system. This examination will concentrate on the separation of powers, the three federal branches (the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary), the bureaucracy, and political parties. We then examine political behavior including voting behavior, political efficacy, social movement and interest group development, and public opinion. Finally, we will bring institutional and behavior concepts together by looking at governance in action, particularly in the areas of legal rights construction and public policy development.

By focusing on political structure, changing dynamics of political leadership, and evolution of political participation in the United States, we will ultimately be able to analyze a range of questions: What is the general nature of the American political system—is it open and responsive to all or is it restricted to those who have certain material, educational, or other resources? Is democracy a quest for inclusion or exclusion? How has our definition of citizenship changed over time, and has this change influenced our notions of political participation? How well does government—both state and federal—respond to policy needs and crises? What reforms could be undertaken to make our governing system more responsive?

The primary text for this course is Samuel Kernell, Gary Jacobson, and Thad Kousser. (2009). THE LOGIC OF AMERICAN POLITICS, 4TH EDITION. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

The course book can be purchased at BookMarq. All other readings will be available for download on the D2L class web site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grades will be based on exams, participation, and structured in-class debates. There are two exams: an in-class midterm and an in-class final.

Depending on the final size of the class, students will team up to lead 1 of 6 possible debates. On "debate days", two groups of at least 2 students each will present one side of a contentious argument. Each group will prepare a 5 to 7 minute presentation representing not only the best cases for their side of argument but also engaging the possible flaws of the other side. This presentation should be turned in to the professor as a no more than a 4-5 page paper. The paper itself should not be read during the debate. Each group will be offered 3 minutes to respond to the other side before discussion is opened to the rest of the class.

All class members are expected to ask questions of the debaters. Each student not debating will prepare 2 questions to ask the debaters and submit these questions to me at the end of the debate. These questions will be considered part of students' participation/attendance grade.

GRADING:

Participation/Attendance:	15%
Group Debate/Presentation:	20%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Comprehensive Final Exam:	35%

"REQUIRED" VERSUS "RECOMMENDED" READINGS:

The syllabus is divided into required and recommended readings. You are responsible for knowing the information covered in the required readings. Any information in the required readings or presented at lecture is fair game for exams. Recommended readings are included on the syllabus to encourage you to deepen your understanding of a particular topic. If you are interested in reading them, please see me.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Academic honesty is expected. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. If you have questions, see (<http://www.marquette.edu/wac/plagiarism/AvoidingPlagiarism2.shtml>) or see me.

LATE POLICY:

Each day an assignment is turned in late, it will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade if permission of instructor for an extension has not been attained before the due date.

PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

TOPIC 1. RULES OF THE GAME: THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT

M, 8/31: Welcome and Course Overview

W, 9/2: Evaluating Politics
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 1

Recommended:

Robert Dahl. 2002. *How Democratic is the Constitution*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Thomas Hobbes. 1651. *Leviathan*: "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery," "Of the First and Second Natural Laws, and of Contracts," and "Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Commonwealth"

John Locke. 1690. *Second Treatise of Government* (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5)

F, 9/4: NO CLASS—Professor at 2009 APSA Conference

M, 9/7: NO CLASS—Labor Day Holiday

TOPIC 2. THE REVOLUTIONARY FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION

W, 9/9: The Founding
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 2 (45-61)
Gordon Wood. 1998. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 46-75 **(D2L)**
The Declaration of Independence **(D2L)**
The Articles of Confederation **(D2L)**

F, 9/11: The Constitution (In-Class Debate assignments distributed)
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 2 (61-93)
The Constitution **(D2L)**
Jeffrey Ellis. 2002. *Founding Brothers*. Vintage: New York ("Silences") **(D2L)**

Recommended:

First Essay of Brutus

M, 9/14: Federalism
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 3
Federalist 10, 46, 51 **(D2L)**

Recommended:

Federalist 16, 17, 39

TOPIC 3. POLITICAL CULTURE AND RELIGION

- W, 9/16: Political Culture
Alexis de Tocqueville. 1835. *Democracy in America: Volume 1* (Chapters 2-4) **(D2L)**
Rogers Smith. 1993. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America." *American Political Science Review* 87 (September): 549-566. **(D2L)**

Recommended:

Louis Hartz. 1962. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace (Chapter 1)

- F, 9/18: Religion and American Politics
John Wise. 1717. "Democracy is Founded in Scripture." **(D2L)**
Alexis de Tocqueville. 1840. *Democracy in America: Volume 2*. (Chapters 5-7) **(D2L)**
John F. Wilson. 2007. "Religion, Government, and Power in the New American Nation," in *Religion and American Politics*, Noll and Harlow, eds. Oxford University Press. **(D2L)**
Kellstedt, et. al. 2007. "Faith Transformed: Religion and American Politics from FDR to George W. Bush," in *Religion and American Politics*, Noll and Harlow, eds. Oxford University Press.
National Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1986. "Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy." **(D2L)**

Recommended:

Darren Dochuck. 2007. "Evangelicalism Becomes Southern, Politics Becomes Evangelical: From FDR to Ronald Reagan," in *Religion and American Politics*, Noll and Harlow, eds. Oxford University Press. **(D2L)**

- M, 9/21: Debate/Discussion 1:
"The Phrase 'Under God' In the Pledge of Allegiance: Violation of the First Amendment or Acceptable Expression" (Rourke, *You Decide!* 32-47)

PART II: AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

TOPIC 4. CONGRESS

- W, 9/23: Congress: The Electoral Connection
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 6

David Mayhew. 2008. "The Electoral Incentive" in *Parties and Policies: How The American Government Works*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapter 1) **(D2L)**

F, 9/25: Congress: The Members

Morris Fiorina. 1977. *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) **(D2L)**
Richard Fenno. 1978. *Homestyle: House Members in the Districts*. Little Brown (Chapters 1 and 5) **(D2L)**

M, 9/28: Discussion/Debate 2:

"Congressional Term Limits: Promoting Choice or Restricting Choice?"
(Rourke, You Decide! 148-159)

TOPIC 5. EXECUTIVE BRANCH: THE PRESIDENCY

W, 9/30: Presidency: Overview
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 7

Recommended:

Richard Neustadt. 1991. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*. New York: The Free Press (Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5)

F, 10/2: Presidency: From Where Does the Power to Lead Come?

Robert Dahl. 1990. "The Myth of the Presidential Mandates," *Political Science Quarterly* 105: 3. **(D2L)**

Kenneth Mayer, *With the Stroke of a Pen: Executive Orders and Presidential Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001 (Chapters 2-3) **(D2L)**

M, 10/5: Presidency: Patterns over Time

Stephen Skowronek. 2008. *The Presidency in Political Time: Reprise and Reappraisal*. The University Press of Kansas (Chapter 3) **(D2L)**

TOPIC 6. EXECUTIVE BRANCH: THE BUREAUCRACY

W, 10/7: The Development of the Executive Branch Bureaucracy

Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 8

Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *APSR* 28: 165-179. **(D2L)**

TOPIC 7. THE JUDICIARY

- F, 10/9: The Judiciary
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 9
Federalist 78 **(D2L)**
Alexander Bickel. 1962. *The Least Dangerous Branch*. New Haven: Yale University Press (Chapter 1). **(D2L)**
- M, 10/12: Debate/Discussion 3:
"Deciding the Constitution's Meaning: Rely on the Original Authors or Interpret in Light of Modern Circumstances? (Rourke, You Decide! 2-15)
- Recommended:
Gregory A. Huber and Sanford C. Gordon. 2004. "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind when It Runs for Office?" *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (April): 247-263.
- W, 10/14: Midterm review
- F, 10/16: Midterm Exam

PART III: AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

TOPIC 8. PUBLIC OPINION

- M, 10/19: What is Public Opinion?
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 10
- Recommended:
B. Page and R. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Chapter 1)

TOPIC 9. VOTING BEHAVIOR AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- W, 10/21: Voting and Elections
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 11
- F, 10/23: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
- M, 10/26: Political Participation and Identity
Geoffrey C. Layman and Edward G. Carmines. 1997. "Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism, Postmaterialism, and U.S. Political Behavior." *Journal of Politics* 59 (August): 751-77. **(D2L)**
Claudine Gay. 2002. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on

Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 95: 589-602. **(D2L)**

TOPIC 10. POLITICAL PARTIES AND IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

W, 10/28: Political Parties
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 12
John Aldrich. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
(Chapter 1) **(D2L)**

Recommended:

"Toward a More Responsible Two Party System." 1950. *APSR* 44: 1-36

F, 10/30: Electoral Realignments and Partisan Change
Edward Carmines and James Stimson. 1986. "On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution." *APSR* 80 (September): 901-20. **(D2L)**
Bruce Miroff. 2007. "Movement Activists and Partisan Insurgents." *Studies in American Political Development* 21 (Spring): 92-109. **(D2L)**
Anna Greenberg, "The Obama Generation," The Daily Beast. 26 April 2009 **(D2L)**

TOPIC 10. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND INTEREST GROUPS

M, 11/2: Social Movements and Interest Groups (Part I)
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 13
Stephen M. Engel. 2001. *The Unfinished Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1) **(D2L)**
Theda Skocpol. 1996. "Unravelling From Above," *The American Prospect* no. 25 (March-April): 20-25. **(D2L)**

Recommended:

Doug McAdam. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press (Chapters 1-3)

W, 11/4: Social Movements and Interest Groups (Part II)
Rhys Williams. 1995. "Constructing the Public Good: Social Movements and Cultural Resources." *Social Problems* 42 (February), 124-44. **(D2L)**
Joshua Gamson. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma." *Social Problems* 42 (August), 390-407. **(D2L)**
McGee Young. 2008. "From Conservation to Environment: The Sierra Club and the Organizational Politics of Change." *Studies in American Political Development* 22 (Fall): 183-203. **(D2L)**

TOPIC 12. MEDIA, CAMPAIGNS, AND ELECTIONS

- F, 11/6: Framing News and Influencing Citizens
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 14
Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *APSR* 91 (September): 567-83. **(D2L)**
- M, 11/9: Media and Election Campaigns
Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar. 1995. *Going Negative: How Campaign Advertising Shrinks and Polarizes the Electorate*. New York: Free Press (Chapters 1 and 7) **(D2L)**
James Fallows. 1996. "Why Americans Hate the Media," *Atlantic Monthly*
- W, 11/11: *The War Room* (viewing during class)
- F, 11/13: Debate/Discussion 4:
New Media/Cable News/Talk Radio—Improving Political Discourse?
Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Joseph N. Capella. 2008. *Echo Chamber*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6) and
Lincoln Dahlberg, "The Internet and Democratic Discourse," *Information, Communication, & Society* 4: 3 (2001): 615-633

PART IV: GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

TOPIC 13. CONSTRUCTING RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES AS AMERICAN POLITICS

- M, 11/16: Civil Rights
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 4
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- W, 11/18: Civil Liberties
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 5
The Legal Concepts of Privacy and Autonomy: *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), *Roe v. Wade* (1973), *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003)
- F, 11/20: Does the Court Promote Social Change?
Gerald Rosenberg, "Positivism, Interpretivism, and the Study of Law," *Law and Social Inquiry* 21 (Spring 1996) **(D2L)**
Michael McCann, "Casual versus Constitutive Explanations (or, On the Difficulty of Being So Positive...)," *Law and Social Inquiry* 21 (Spring 1996) **(D2L)**

- M, 11/23: Debate/Discussion 5:
“Granting Habeas Corpus Rights to Terrorist Suspects: Undermining National Security or Providing Justice?” (Rourke, *You Decide!* 270-89)
- W, 11/25: THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
- F, 11/27: THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS

TOPIC 14. CONSTRUCTING PUBLIC POLICY

- M, 11/30: Policy (Part I): Opportunities and Barriers to Reform
Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 15
Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Chapter 1)
(D2L)
- Recommended:
John Kingdon. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*. Boston: Little Brown (Chapters 1 and 8)
- W, 12/2: Policy (Part II): Opportunities and Barriers to Reform
Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Chapters 2 and 4) **(D2L)**
Jacob Hacker. 1996. “National Health Care Reform: An Idea Whose Time Came and Went.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law* 21 (4) 647-96. **(D2L)**
Jacob Weisberg, “Health, American Style,” *Slate*, 18 July 2009. (D2L)
Alec MacGillis, “Employers Are Far from Unified Against Overhaul,” *Washington Post*, 23 July 2009. **(D2L)**
- F, 12/4: Debate/Discussion 6:
Health Care Reform in the Age of Obama
“The Better Approach to Health Care Reform: Barack Obama’s or John McCain’s?” (Rourke, *You Decide!* [Internet Resource])
Paul Krugman, “Harry, Louise and Barack,” *New York Times*, 11 May 2009.
- M, 12/7: Spill-Over/Catch-Up Day
- W, 12/9: Wrap-up and Final Exam Review
- F, 12/11: NO CLASS—Professor at the Advanced Constitutional Law Conference at Princeton University