

POSC 2201

Introduction to American Politics

Department of Political Science
Tues/Thu 11:00-12:15
Physics 153
Spring 2010

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This course is meant to introduce you to the primary institutions, processes, and ideas that comprise the American political system. The study of American politics is the study of the development of the laws and institutions of government, the organization and mobilization of citizens, and the debates that have breathed life into our shared understanding of what a democracy entails. This course approaches the American political system from a developmental perspective, recognizing that politics is fluid, that both continuities and discontinuities across time are important, and that ultimately the search for power lies at the heart of political action.

The pedagogical aims of this course are twofold. First, it is designed to teach you about American politics. By the end of the semester you should be conversant in politics, able to derive your own opinions, and make sense of policy alternatives and their implications. Second, it is designed to develop your critical learning skills. You will improve your reasoning, your critical thinking, your writing, and your study habits. Recognizing that students express their achievements in different ways, I will assess your progress using a variety of techniques. First, we will have three exams – two midterms and a final exam – that will test your ability to synthesize course readings and lectures. Second, we will have ten quizzes or short essays that will help you develop your reading comprehension, writing skills, and analytical skills. Finally, there will be an expectation of class participation that will allow you to demonstrate your ability to express your ideas verbally. As part of the Core of Common Studies at Marquette, this course will contribute to students' attainment of the three learning objectives associated with the Social and Behavioral Sciences portion of the Core. These read: "At the completion of

core studies, the student will be able to (1) Understand central concepts, theories, and methods used to explain individual and social behavior in one of the social and cultural disciplines. (2) Use knowledge of social scientific methods to analyze examples of individual and social behavior. (3) Evaluate the applicability of social scientific knowledge for understanding individual and social behavior in particular contexts.

American Politics and Citizenship: I will not grade you on your citizenship, but I do expect all students to recognize the fundamental mission of Marquette University and to find ways outside of class to become better, more engaged citizens. I especially encourage volunteer efforts in the local Milwaukee community. In the past students have worked as tutors, mentors, organizers, foreign language instructors, etc., and I encourage you to figure out what you may bring to the effort to improve our community.

Very Special Note about Academic Dishonesty: I am vigilant and unsparing when it comes to cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the academic contract. Infractions will be dealt with swiftly and without mercy. If you are going to miss class or an assignment, the only way that I will be lenient is if you inform me ahead of time. There are no after the fact reprieves.

Attendance policy: You are required to attend all classes; there will be no after-the-fact excused absences. After you miss two classes, your participation grade will drop 10% for each additional class that you miss. You will not receive a passing grade if you miss more than six classes.

Grades

Midterm Exams – 15% each

Final Exam – 30%

Quizzes/Essays – 30%

Class Participation – 10%

Readings

Daily: New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, The Hill, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, McClatchy News Service

Weekly: National Journal, Congressional Quarterly, Economist, New Yorker

Blogs: Political Wire (www.politicalwire.com), Talking Points Memo (L) (www.talkingpointsmemo.com), Andrew Sullivan (C) (andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com), Daily Kos (L) (www.dailykos.com), Drudge Report (C) (www.drudgereport.com), Huffington Post (L) (www.huffingtonpost.com).

Required Books:

- Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis, American Government: Balancing Democracy and Rights, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Calvin Jillson and David Brian Robertson, Perspectives on American Government: Readings in Political Development and Institutional Change

(Routledge, 2009)

Books available at Bookmarq and Sweeney's.

Class Schedule

Week 1

January 19 –

- Intro to class and overview of syllabus

January 21 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 1 - Introduction
- Locke, "Of the Beginnings of Political Societies"

Week 2

January 26 –

- Jillson and Robertson – Introduction;
- Federalist Papers #1, #2
- Wood, "Republicanism"

January 28 –

- Landy and Milkis – Chapter 2 – Political Culture
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 3

February 2 –

- Huntington, "The Disharmonic Polity"
- Morone, "The Democratic Wish"
- Smith, "The Multiple Traditions in America"

February 4 –

- Paine, "Common Sense"
- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 3, Contesting the Constitution, p. 77-109
- Robertson, "Madison's Opponents and Constitutional Design"
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 4

February 9 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 3 – Contesting the Constitution, 109-122
- Federalist Papers #10, #51 (in Landy and Milkis)
- Storing, "What the Anti-Federalists were for"
- Amar, "America's Constitution"

February 11 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 4 – Political Development – 127-151
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 5

February 16 –

- Landy and Milkis – Chapter 4 – Political Development – 151-178

February 18 –

- Landy and Milkis – Chapter 11 – Political Parties
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 6

February 23 –

- Reichley, “Intention of the Founders”
- Milkis, “The Presidency and the Parties”
- Sundquist, “Party Realignment: What, When, and How?”

February 25 –

- **Exam 1**

Week 7

March 2 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 5 - Federalism

March 4 –

- Federalist Papers #39, #45;
- Weir, “States, Race and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism”;
- Mettler, “Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy”;
- Derthick, “Keeping the Compound Republic”
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 8

March 9 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 6 – Political Economy

March 11 –

- Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures”;
- Schumpeter, “The Process of Creative Destruction”;
- Kingdon, American Public Policy in Comparative Perspective”;
- Skocpol, “America’s First Modern Social Policies and their Legacies”
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

spring break

Week 9

March 23 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 7 – Congress

March 25 –

- Federalist Paper #62;
- Mayhew, “The Electoral Incentive”;
- Schickler, “Institutional Development of Congress”;
- Sinclair, “Parties and Leadership in the House”
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 10

March 30 –

- Harris and Tichenor, “Organized interests and American Political Development”;
- Clemens, “Politics without Party”;
- Schattschneider, “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System”;
- Schlozman, “What Accent the Heavenly Chorus?”

Week 11

April 6 –

- Exam review

April 8 –

- **Exam 2**

Week 12

April 13 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 8 - Presidency

April 15 –

- Federalist Paper #70, #72;
- Lincoln, “On the Suspension of Habeus Corpus”;
- Whittington and Carpenter, “Executive Power in American Institutional Development”;
- Rudalevige, “Charting a New Imperial Presidency”
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 13

April 20 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 9 - Judiciary

April 22 –

- Keck, “Modern Conservatism and Judicial Power”
- King and Smith, “Racial Orders in American Political Development”
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 14

April 27 –

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 10 - Bureaucracy

April 29

- Wilson, "Bureaucracy"
- Carpenter, "The Evolution of the National Bureaucracy"
- **Quiz/Essay Due to D2L**

Week 15

May 4 -

- Landy and Milkis - Chapter 12 - Public Opinion and Political Participation

May 6 -

- Sunstein, "Polarization and Cybercascades"
- King, "Running Scared"

Final Exam - May 12, 1-3 PM