

Political Science 1110
American Government & Politics
Hamline University
T, Tr, 8:00 A.M.-9:30 A.M.
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David Schultz
Fall 2018

American Government & Politics

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Course Description: This class shall examine some basic questions about American politics that you and many people in this country have. These questions include: What does it mean to be an American? Who were the constitutional framers and how democratic is our Constitution? Why can't Congress get anything done? Does it matter if I vote?

In approaching this introductory study of American politics from the point of view of asking "great questions" the intent is both to answer questions you might care about when it comes to politics but also to explain through them how the American political process works and to whose advantage.

Goals:

- * Answer some basic questions about American politics;
- * Understand the history and evolution of American political institutions and values;
- * Examine the interrelationships between public and private power in America and assess the democratic character of our political and economic institutions;
- * Assess the future of American politics;
- * Become acquainted with the discipline of Political Science; and
- * Acquire some knowledge of statistics and to learn how to analyze basic statistical data on American politics.

Required Books:

These books are at the Hamline University bookstore.

Critchlow, Donald T., *American Political History: A Very Short Introduction*.

Greenhouse, Linda, *The U.S. Supreme Court: A Very Short Introduction*.

Hacker, Jacob, and Paul Pierson, *Winner Take All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer--and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*,

Levinson, Sanford, *Our Undemocratic Constitution*.

Mann, Thomas and Norman Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*.

Spitzer, Robert J. *The Politics of Gun Control*, 7th edition.

Neustadt, Richard, *Presidential Power and Modern Presidents*.

Watts, Duncan, *Understanding American Government and Politics*

In addition to the required books, there are additional readings on the syllabus that will be marked with an asterisk (*). These materials will be e-mailed to you, or you can locate on the Internet.

Warning: In this class you may be exposed to ideas that challenge what you already believe or you may hear, read, or discuss ideas and concepts that you may not like. Additionally, you may have your own prejudices challenged or ideas shall be discussed that may address controversial subjects or ideas. If any of the above poses a problem for you then you are advised to drop the course.

Requirements: There are several requirements for this class.

Four Question Papers	60% of your final grade
Final	30% of your final grade
Class Participation	<u>10% of your final grade</u>
Final grade	100%

The **Question Paper** will consist of four papers, each 750 words, that will require you to answer one of the main questions examined in this class. These papers will require you to incorporate class readings, discussion, and at least two not class readings for each paper. Each paper will be

worth 15% of your final grade and you will have the option of rewriting the first three papers. The topics for the paper will be drawn from the questions or topics in the class.

The **Final** will be take-home, the format and design to be determined.

Participation rewards class effort and work. You are expected to do the readings and assignments, attend class, and participate. Everyone is expected to “pull their weight.”

The **Extra Credit Projects** give you an opportunity do some extra work and observe how the political process operates. The extra credit project will be worth a maximum of 5% of your final grade. There are four options for extra credit: Sign up to be an election judge; Attend the Minnesota political caucuses; attend a public meeting or a presentation related to American politics; or write a short book review on one of the books we are reading in the class or on another book about American politics. More details on the extra credit will be described in class.

Final note: I will miss two classes in November where I will travel to Moscow, Russia. However, the Moscow trip may be cancelled and I will then adjust the class appropriately. More details to come.

Class Organization (Subject to change or modification)

September 6

Introduction to the class: What is politics and political science, are the two related in anyway and why should you care?

Question I: **What does it mean to be American?** **(Are we not simply a white Christian capitalist country?)**

September 11

Who and what is America, what do we believe, and what makes us so special (at least in our minds)?

Readings:

Watts, chapter 1,

Critchlow, introduction.

September 13

Are Millennials unique and why do they hate politics so much?

Readings:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/25/the-gops-millennial-problem-runs-deep/>

<http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/>

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/>

Question II:

**How democratic is the Constitution
and is the system rigged to favor a few?**

September 18-

September 20

Why we wanted independence and our own constitution

Readings:

Watts, chapter 2,

Federalist Papers 10 and 51 (find any copy on-line and read it).

Please also read chapter 1 of:

<https://cryptome.org/2015/09/hofstadter-american-political-tradition.pdf>

September 25

Is the Constitution out-of-date and do we need a new one?

Readings:

Levinson, chapters 2, 5.

September 27

American Politics in the Age of Slavery

Readings: Critchlow, chapters 2-5.

What do states do?

Readings: Watts, chapter 3.

October 2

Finish: What do states do.

How do I do my own research in political science?

Readings: None .I will demonstrate a couple of website where you can gather political science data and information.

October 2

First paper due by the beginning of class time.

Question III:
Are the richer getting richer, why does the economy suck,
and will I have to live forever in my parent's basement?

October 4

Creating the Winner-Take All Economy

Readings:

Hacker and Pierson, chapters 1-3,

“Harder for Americans to Rise From Lower Rungs, ” located at

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/us/harder-for-americans-to-rise-from-lower-rungs.html?_r=0

October 9

A Short History of American Capitalism

Readings:

Hacker and Pierson, chapters 4, 7, 9.

October 11

The Rise of the American Empire

Readings: Critchlow, chapters 6, 7.

Question IV:
What is news and is there anything true on Facebook?

October 16

Politainment!

Readings:

Politainment (To be e-mailed to you),

“How Millennials’ political news habits differ from those of Gen Xers and Baby Boomers,” located at

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/01/political-news-habits-by-generation/>

Question V:
Does my vote matter, does voter fraud exist, and
who cares about politics anyhow!

October 18

Who votes and why and making sense of the polls

Readings:

Watts, chapter 8

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/why-voter-id-laws-arent-really-about-fraud/>

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2014/10/geeks-guide-political-polling>

October 23 Second paper due by class time.

Question VI:

**How powerful is the president and what is
this stupid thing called the electoral College?**

October 23

Presidential Overview

Readings:

Watts, chapter 4,

Neustadt, chapter 3.

October 25

10/18/12/270: Presidential Elections and the Electoral College (Why your vote does not matter).

Question VII:

Is America really that polarized?

October 30

The Roots of Polarization

Readings:

Mann and Ornstein, chapters 1-3, and 111-127.

<http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

<http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/26/the-political-typology-beyond-red-vs-blue/>

November 1

Finish The Roots of Polarization.

American Politics from the Cold War to the 21st Century

Readings: Critchlow, chapters 8,9.

Question VIII:

Do special interests run everything?

November 6

Interest Groups and Special Interests

Readings:

Watts, chapter 10,

Spitzer, chapter 4.

November 8

Finish Interests Groups and Special Interests

Who Won, Who Lost, and What it Means!

No readings.

November 8 Third paper due by class time.

November 13 No class.

Readings:

Spitzer, chapter 1.

November 15 No class.

Readings:

Spitzer, chapter 3.

Question IX:

Why can't Congress get anything done?

November 20

Congressional Overview and Design

Readings:

Watts, Chapter 6.

November 22 No class, Thanksgiving!

November 27

How a bill does not become a law

Readings:

Spitzer, chapter 5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQIKiag>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUDSeb2zHQ0>

Question X:

**What does the Bill of Rights protect
and how does a case get to the Supreme Court?**

November 29

Supreme Court Overview

Readings:

Watts, chapter 7

Greenhouse, chapter 1

December 4

Readings:

Greenhouse, chapters 3-6

Watts, chapter 11.

December 4 Fourth paper due by class time.

Question XI:

**What does the Second Amendment Mean and
Why Can't We Regulate Guns?**

December 9

Spitzer, chapter 2

Question XI:

So who really governs America?

December 13 Conclusion: So is anyone in charge?

Final Exam: Scheduled for December 18, 7:45-9:45 AM, Room 1S Giddens.

Additional Course Information

This is additional information that either you should know about the class or which I am required to post in this syllabus. Please be aware that by taking this class you agree that they apply to you and this course unless otherwise amended or noted. (In other words if you violate any of these rules, your attendance in this class constitutes a waiver from the claim that you did not understand or know them).

Copyright notice: Reproduction, distribution, or publication (on-line or otherwise) of transcribed or taped versions of my lecture or course materials are not permitted without my express consent.

Disability-Related Accommodations: If you need disability-related accommodations for this course please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Accommodations are set up through the Disability Services Office. Please contact the Director of Disability Services, at 651.523.2521.

Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, and Stalking: Hamline University also provides academic and other accommodations to students who have experienced sexual assault, relationship violence (physical, emotional, or other form of abuse by a dating or other intimate partner), or stalking. For more information about Hamline's policy and the resources available to you, consult Hamline's website or contact our Title IX Coordinator and Associate Dean of Students, Patti Klein, 651-523-2421, pklein01@hamline.edu.

Copyright Laws: Federal copyright law permits individuals to make copies of materials for their own "fair use." If there are additional materials for this class, you are advised that under federal law you may make a copy for your own personal and educational use.

Course Rules: There are several basic rules for this course. It is assumed that you understand these rules, and that by taking this class you agree that they apply to you and this course unless otherwise amended or noted. (In other words if you violate any of these rules, your attendance in this class constitutes a waiver from the claim that you did not understand or know them).

- 1. Follow the Rules.** All the University and college rules are applicable in this class, including the general rules on academic honesty. The honor code is located at:

http://bulletin.hamline.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=253#aca_honorcode

My own personal policy on academic dishonesty is that any infractions of academic dishonesty will result in at least failure of this class.

I hate giving a lecture on academic dishonesty to adults, but let me outline a few points for you to consider in terms of what constitutes plagiarism.

- * Copying any work off the Internet, out of any written materials, or from another student without giving credit to that work.
- * Submitting work produced by someone else and claiming it as your own.
- * Quoting or paraphrasing work produced by someone else and claiming it as your own.

The above three points are not the sum of what plagiarism or academic dishonesty constitutes. In this class you are expected to produce work that is of your own creation. Yes, you are expected to do research and cite other sources, but you may not claim those other sources as your own work product.

2. **Be Creative and Daring.** I have no monopoly on knowledge and do not enforce either PC or a party line. While I may have particular views on a subject, what I care more about is that you reach your conclusions and find ways to support your positions. Hence, I invite disagreement and discourage silence out of fear of what you think I or other students may think. However, seek to support your conclusions and disagreements; that is the goal of school and education, i.e., reasoned argument.

3. **Be Vocal.** Class is more fun if you talk and share your views. All of us can contribute unique views and observations and my hope is that all of you are active participants in the course.

4. **Rewriting Assignments.** Unless otherwise noted, you have the option to rewrite any assignment you turn into me until you are happy with it or disgusted with me or the paper. I encourage that you rewrite assignments. It is my belief that you will learn more by rewriting than by simply turning a paper in once and praying for the best. Thus, if you turn your assignments paper in early enough I will grade them and give you an option to rewrite.

5. **Late Papers.** Papers are due by class time on the due date. Late papers or assignments will be docked one letter grade per day.

6. **Plan Ahead.** Students will tell you that my assignments can not be completed on time if you start them the night before. My assignments take time and thought. Use both wisely.

7. **Work Together.** I encourage you to work together.
8. **Avoid Disappearing.** Students occasionally get into trouble, panic, fail to turn a paper in, or fall into other problems. Then they disappear for several weeks. Avoid this. If there is a problem come and see me as soon as possible. Hiding and ignoring me or the problem will not make it go away, and I will not come looking for you. I do not plan to take attendance but if absences get to be a problem I will take actions such as pop quizzes that will be incorporated into your class participation grade.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes: The Political Science Department has established these learning outcomes for this class.

Write clearly, effectively and in an organized way about domestic and international politics.

Speak clearly, effectively and in an organized way about domestic and international politics.

Demonstrate knowledge of and critical thinking about major theories, concepts, qualitative or quantitative methods of political science and their application in political practice.

Complete a political science research project using appropriate methodological tools and research materials.

Identify and critically analyze differences across cultures, genders, religions or other value systems in the study of politics.

Hamline Plan: This class fulfills Hamline Plan D & S. Please refer to http://www.hamline.edu/uploadedFiles/Hamline_WWW/Offices_-_Admin/Learning_Outcomes/Page_Content/HP%202015%20Learning%20Outcomes.pdf for more information.

University-Wide Learning Outcomes: If you want to know what you are supposed to know by the time you graduate from Hamline please see: <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/university-outcomes.html>.