

AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESS
University of Pittsburgh
Political Science 0200 (34677)
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:15am
Lawrence Hall 106L
Spring 2004

Professor: Jennifer Nicoll Victor, Ph.D.
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Office: 4R13 Wesley W. Posvar Hall, Department of Political Science
Office Hours: T/Th 2:00pm – 3:30pm
Course Website: <http://courseweb.pitt.edu> (on Blackboard5, use your Pitt e-mail login)

I. Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to American political institutions and public policy formation. No prerequisite classes or prior knowledge are required to enroll. In this class students will read a general textbook of American politics and an anthology of modern and classic political theory. Students will be challenged to demonstrate an understanding of political theory by applying their knowledge to current political events.

II. Course Goals

Although students enroll in this class for any number of reasons, the instructor designed the readings, lectures, and materials with some goals in mind and will have them in mind while designing tests, assignments, and other graded materials. The primary goal for this course is to help students think critically about the impact of politics on American society. The second goal is to help students develop a basic understanding of the institutions that form our government. The third goal of this class is to help students improve their individual research, writing, reading, and analytical skills.

III. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

There are five graded requirements for this course, described below. Grades will be calculated on a typical A-F scale where,

100-97 A+	79-77 C+
96-94 A	76-74 C
93-90 A-	73-70 C-
87-89 B+	69-67 D+
86-84 B	66-64 D
83-80 B-	63-60 D-
	<60 F

Make-up exams are conducted at the instructor's discretion and are RARELY granted. Make-up exams will be closed-book essay exams that test material more in-depth than the scheduled exams.

Attendance/Quizzes (10%). Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester. You will receive points each time you attend class when attendance is taken. Occasionally, short unannounced quizzes will be given at the beginning of a class period. Any such quizzes or assignments will be incorporated into this portion of your grade.

Exam I (20%). This will be an in-class exam covering material from the first third of the course (Rules of the Game). The exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions (closed book, closed-note) based on material presented in class and in the readings. The exam will be in-class on **Tuesday, February 3**. This is the **ONLY** day to take the exam. If you do not come to class on this day or you arrive late, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

Exam II (20%). This will be an in-class exam covering material from the second third of the course (People and Politics). The exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions (closed book, closed-note) based on material presented in class and in the readings. The exam will be in-class on **Thursday, March 4**. This is the **ONLY** day to take the exam. If you do not come to class on this day or you arrive late, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

Research Paper (25%). Follow the research paper assignment handed out with this syllabus on the first day of class (available on the course website). You will write a 5-7 page research paper in which you define, describe and apply collective action problems to some aspect of the American Political Process. The assignment will be completed in three parts. First, you will turn in an *outline* assignment on **Thursday, March 18**. Second, you will hand in an introduction and bibliography on **Tuesday, March 30**. Finally, you will turn in your outline (with comments), introduction (with comments) and final draft of your research paper on **Thursday, April 15**, in class. I will not accept final papers that do not include the first two portions (with instructor comments) of the assignment. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted.**

Final Exam (25%). This will be an in-class exam covering material from the entire course (comprehensive), though concentrating on material from the last third of the course (Institutions). The exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions (closed book, closed-note) based on material presented in class and in the readings. The exam will be in-class on **Monday, April 19th, from 10:00am to 11:50am**. This is the **ONLY** day to take the exam. If you do not come to class on this day or you arrive late, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

IV. Following Political Developments in the Media

Students are encouraged to follow current political events. A familiarity with current happenings around you will facilitate your ability to understand the material. Along with any local papers you may read, I recommend that you read *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* with frequency. You can sign up to receive daily e-mail news updates from the *New York Times* on their website. Additionally, you may want to examine news-magazines for more in-depth coverage of particular issues and events.

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report and *National Journal* are two particularly informative periodicals. Other options include *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *The Economist*.

If you prefer using an electronic form of news, the following websites are particularly good:

<http://www.nytimes.com>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com>

<http://www.allpolitics.com>

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>

V. Student Responsibilities

A. *Class Attendance and Participation.* Learning is an *active*, rather than *passive*, exercise. Accordingly, every student is expected to attend class as well as be prepared to ask questions about and comment on the readings. You need to complete the daily reading assignment *prior* to the class meeting. You will be much more successful in this class if you attend regularly, take notes, pay attention, and participate.

B. *Readings.* As is the case with attendance, keeping pace with the reading is essential to succeeding in this class. It is *your* responsibility to obtain copies of the readings prior to the date we will discuss them in class. I will do everything I can to make this task easier for you. You will be much more successful in this course if you complete the assigned readings and take notes on them.

C. *Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity.* Any student engaged in any academic misconduct *will receive an F on the offending exam or assignment.* Egregious violations will result in an F grade for the course and will be reported to the appropriate Dean's office. These violations include cheating on an exam, using someone else's work as your own, and plagiarizing the written word. Plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without providing credit or citation) is a serious offense. *If you have any questions at all about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or academic misconduct, please ask the instructor.*

D. *Students with Disabilities.* If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please let me (the instructor) know and contact the Office of Disability Resources and Service, 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/(412) 383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. All discussions with me regarding disabilities are confidential.

VI. Teaching Strategy

While lectures are important because they help to distribute necessary information and facts, they are not usually the most effective way to learn information. For this reason, we will do a variety of activities in the classroom. Students will be expected to participate in class discussions and work together in critical thinking groups. We may watch a film and engage in interactive activities in the classroom. I hope that the variety

of educational stimuli will help students to absorb more information. However, a certain amount of lecturing is necessary.

VII. Reading Assignments

The reading assignments are chosen to buttress and expand on the analytic foundation laid in class. **Please notify the instructor about problems obtaining the readings as soon as possible.** The following materials are required and can be found at the campus Book Center:

Bianco, Willaim T. 2001. *American Politics: Strategy and Choice*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Kernell, Samuel and Gary C. Jacobson. 2003. *The Logic of American Politics*, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. CQ Press. (Website companion: <http://logic.cqpress.com>)

Lowi, Theodore, Benjamin Ginsberg, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2002. *American Government: Power and Purpose*, 7th ed. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapters 14, 15, 16 (pp. 578-688). In a Custom Course Reader assembled by the University of Pittsburgh Book Center for PS0200, American Political Process (CRN 34677).

VIII. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

T, Jan. 6 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

RULES OF THE GAME: THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Th, Jan. 8 WHY GOVERNMENT?
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 1 (pp. 3- 28)
 Bianco, Chapter 1

T, Jan. 13 THE CONSTITUTION
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 2 (pp. 31-66)
 Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 2 (Constitution, pp. 552- 561)

Th, Jan. 15 PLURALISM
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 3 (Federalist No. 10, pp. 562-565)
 Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 4 (Federalist No. 51, pp. 566-568)
 Bianco, Chapter 2 (pp. 16-35)

T, Jan. 20 COLLECTIVE ACTION AND THE PRISONERS' DILEMMA
READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 3 (pp. 36-66)

Th, Jan. 22 FEDERALISM
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 3 (pp. 68-99)

T, Jan. 27 CIVIL RIGHTS
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 4 (pp. 101-141)

Th, Jan. 29 CIVIL LIBERTIES
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 5 (pp. 143-185)

T, Feb. 3 **EXAM I**

PEOPLE AND POLITICS: VOTING, PARTICIPATION, AND GOVERNMENT

Th, Feb. 5 PUBLIC OPINION
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 10 (pp. 355-386)

T, Feb. 10 VOTING, CAMPAIGNING, AND ELECTIONS I
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 11 (pp. 389-425)

Th, Feb. 12 VOTING, CAMPAIGNING, AND ELECTIONS II
READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 4 (pp. 67-90)

T, Feb. 17 POLITICAL PARTIES I
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 12 (pp. 427-467)

Th, Feb. 19 POLITICAL PARTIES II
READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 5 (pp. 91-120)

T, Feb. 24 INTEREST GROUPS I
READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 13 (pp. 469-501)

Th, Feb. 26 INTEREST GROUPS II
READINGS: Review Bianco, Chapter 3 (pp. 36-66)

T, Mar. 2 MEDIA/EXAM REVIEW
Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 14 (pp. 503-535)

Th, Mar. 4 **EXAM II**

T/Th, Mar. 9/10 **No Class. Spring Break.**

INSTITUTIONS: RULES, POLITICIANS, AND GOVERNMENT

T, Mar. 16 WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
READINGS: *None.*

Th, Mar. 18 CONGRESS I

READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 6 (pp. 187-236)
Paper Outline Due Today

T, Mar. 23 CONGRESS II
 READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 6 (pp. 121-146) (review pp. 30-33)

Th, Mar. 25 THE PRESIDENCY
 READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 7 (pp. 239-277)

T, Mar. 30 THE BUREAUCRACY
 READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 8 (pp. 279-317)
Paper Introduction Due Today

Th, Apr. 1 THE SEPARATION OF POWERS
 READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 7 (pp. 147-173)

T, Apr. 6 THE JUDICIARY I
 READINGS: Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 9 (pp. 319-352)

Th, Apr. 8 THE JUDICIARY II
 READINGS: Bianco, Chapter 8 (pp. 174-189)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: PEOPLE, POLICY, AND GOVERNMENT

T, Apr. 13 PUBLIC POLICY: MONETARY, FISCAL, AND BUDGET POLICY
 READINGS: Course Reader: Lowi, et al. Chapter 14.

Th, Apr. 15 PUBLIC POLICY: SOCIAL AND FOREIGN POLICY
 READINGS: Course Reader: Lowi, et al. Chapters 15, 16
Final Paper Due Today

Monday, April 19 Final Exam (10:00am-11:50am)