

Introduction to U.S. Politics: Institutions and Issues

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is an introductory course in the politics of the United States. We will cover a large range of topics, institutions, and issues driven by historical documents and supplemented by classic Political Science analysis.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Two papers, each of 1250–1500 words (approx. 5–6 pages),
- (2) A Midterm Examination,
- (3) A final paper of 2000–2500 words (approx. 8–10 pages),
- (4) Regular class attendance and participation. Each class meeting will begin by setting a group agenda on the board. As such, are you required to come to each class with a *typed* reading question in advance to contribute get us started each meeting. Be prepared to present your question at the beginning of class and turn in the question at the end of each session.

LATE PAPER POLICY: Except in documented cases of illness or emergency, late papers will be penalized a half 5 percentage points per day. However, each student may, at his or her discretion, take a 24-hour extension for *one* of the papers, no questions asked (If you are using your extension please indicate this on the first page of your paper). Should you find yourself in the position that you have to turn in work late, stay in touch with me! I don't really care *why* your work is late (we're all adults here), but you are always better off keeping me posted on what is going on.

GRADES: First paper 15%; second paper 15%; midterm 20% final paper 35%; attendance and participation 15%. *Any student who receives a failing grade for attendance and participation will receive a failing grade for the class.*

PLAGIARISM: If you, even for a moment, think that you need to plagiarize, please come see me. If you think you can get away with it, you are wrong. *Proven plagiarism of any kind may result in automatic failure of the course, and will be referred to the University for further disciplinary action.*

CLASS SCHEDULE:

[Note: this syllabus assumes a 15-week semester, with course sessions meeting twice per week]

1) “Beginnings”

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Book I, Chapters 1-3.
- John Locke, Fundamental Compact of Carolinas
- The Mayflower Compact

2) Founding

- Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, 1776.
- The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Conference, 1848.

- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”, 1852.
 - Black Panther Party Platform and Program, “What we want. What we believe.” 1966.
- 3) Re-founding: The U.S. Constitution
- Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, 1777.
 - The Constitution of the United States, 1787.
 - Federalist Papers 10, 15, 39 & 51.
 - Anti-Federalist Papers, Essays of Brutus, II and V
- 4) Public Ideologies
- Tocqueville, “The Principle of Sovereignty of the People in America” & “Why it can strictly be said that the people govern in the United States” in *Democracy in America*.
 - Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Parts 1 and 2.
 - Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz,”
- 5) Federalism
- Federalist Papers 44-46.
 - Thomas Jefferson, “The Kentucky Resolutions”
 - “Statement and Proclamation of Governor George C. Wallace, University of Alabama, June 11, 1963,”
 - United States v. Lopez, 514 U.S. 549 (1995), excerpts.
- 6 & 7) Individual and Group Interests
- The Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.
 - Abraham Lincoln, “The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions”
 - Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”
 - Reverend Henry McNeal Turner, “I Claim the Rights of a Man”
 - Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
- 8) Congress 1
- Federalist Papers 52-53, 59, 62-63.
 - V.O. Key "The Voice of the People: An Echo"
- 9) Congress 2
- Richard Fenno, "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration."
 - Kahn and Kenney *Spectacle of US Senate Campaigns*.
- 10) Congress 3
- David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*
- 11) Congress 4
- Gary Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*
- 12) The Presidency (4 Sessions)
- Federalist Papers Nos. 51, 68, 69, 73, 74
 - Woodrow Wilson, "The President of the United States"
 - James Bryce, “Why Great Men Are Not Chosen Presidents,” 1888.
- 13) The Presidency 1

- Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, Chapters 1-3.
 - Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, Chapters 1 & 3.
- 14) The Presidency 2
- Theodore Lowi, *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled*, Chapters 1-4, 7.
- 15) The President Speaks
- George Washington, First Inaugural Address
 - Abraham Lincoln to Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864
 - Franklin D. Roosevelt, "First Inaugural Address"
 - Richard Nixon, "Checkers" Speech
 - Ronald Regan, "A Time for Choosing" 1964
 - Barack Obama, "A More Perfect Union," 2008
- 16 & 17) The Supreme Court and the Appellate System
- *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)
 - Robert McCloskey, *The American Supreme Court*
- 18 & 19) The Court and Social Change, The Cases
- *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1954)
 - *Bowers v. Hardwick* 478 U.S. 186 (1986)
 - *Lawrence v. Texas* 539 U.S. 558 (2003)
 - Gerald Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope*, Chapters 1, 2-5, & 12-14.
- 20) Electoral Participation 1
- Alex Keyssar, *The Right to Vote*, Selections
 - Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship*, Part 1: Voting.
 - Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"
- 21) Electoral Participation 2
- Rosenstone and Hanson, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, Chapters, 1, 2 & 5.
 - Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule*, Chapters 1 & 6.
 - Manza and Uggen, *Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy*, Chapters 1-3.
- 22) Civic Participation
- Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 2, Part II, Chapters 4-7.
 - Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 15.
 - Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*, Chapters 1, 2 & 7.
- 23) Infrapolitics
- James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Chapters 3 & 7.
 - Cathy Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance"
 - Robin Kelly, "Shiftless of the World Unite!" in *Race Rebels*.
- 24) Political Parties, History and Theory
- Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Part II, Chapter 2, "Parties in the United States."
 - Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System*, Chapters 1, 2 & 6.
 - John Aldrich, *Why Parties*, Chapters 1, 2 & 9.

- Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule*, Chapter 5.
- 25) Political Parties and Machine Politics
- Plunkitt of Tammany Hall
 - Steven Erie, *Rainbow's End*, Chapters 1, 6 & 7.
- 26) Public Opinion
- Tocqueville, "The Omnipotence of the Majority in the United States and its Effects," in *Democracy in America*.
 - Walter Lippmann, "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" in *Public Opinion*.
 - Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*, Chapters 1, 2 & 3.
- 27 & 28) Social Movements
- Douglas McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, Chapters 1-3.
 - Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, Selections.
- 29) Prisons and Politics
- Marc Mauer *Race to Incarcerate*
 - Bruce Western, "Punishment and Inequality in America" Chapters 1-3.
 - Loïc Wacquant, "Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh."
- 30) 21st Century U.S. Politics?
- Zadie Smith, "Speaking in Tongues"
 - Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"
 - Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens."