

Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2018

University of Rochester-PSC105

Monday and Wednesday 9:00-9:50 a.m.

Gavett Hall 202

Professor Kroeger

Office: 307 Harkness Hall

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:00am-11:30am and by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

TBA

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of American political institutions, processes, and behavior. In this course students will learn how to think about the political world systematically. We will discuss the origins of the current governmental system in the U.S., the structure of the U.S. government, and how theories of American government apply to current events and problems that the government and citizens face today. This class is recommended for those thinking about a major or minor in political science or those who want to know more about the American political system and how to think about politics systematically.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend lectures every Monday and Wednesday, attend recitation on Fridays, and keep up with the readings. All students will be assigned to a recitation section, which meets once a week. Recitation attendance is mandatory to receive points in the "participation" component of the course. Active, respectful, and thoughtful participation in the recitation sections is expected. Readings are listed by class date, and I encourage you to complete the readings for the topic before the first lecture on that topic, as it will facilitate your learning and comprehension in lecture. It is expected that readings for the week will be finished before your recitation section since discussion of the readings will constitute a significant part of the recitation section.

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets twice weekly for 2 hours per week. The course also includes recitations for 1 hour per week. In this course, students will complete the enriched activities using readings and other class materials. These activities include a combination of scholarly readings, current news, listening assignments (e.g., podcasts and documentaries), team-based work on a podcast, and simulation activities (e.g., a mock Congress activity). As part of this component of the course, students should keep up with current events (I will suggest ways to do so).

Grading Components

Midterm exam: 25% (**October 24th**)

Final exam: 35%

Short assignments: 25% (**First due September 17th, Second due November 19th**)

Participation: 15%

Late Assignments

If you do not have an extension, and you turn in an assignment late, you will be docked one third of one letter grade for every 24 hours that the paper is late, with late penalties accruing from the time the paper is due. For example, if your paper earned a B+, but you turned it in a few hours past the time it was due, you will receive a B; if you turned it in 30 hours past the time it was due, you will receive a B-.

Final Exam

The final exam schedule is set by the registrar. Check here for the date and time:

<https://www.rochester.edu/registrar/examschedule.html>. I will send an email with the information. Barring extraordinary circumstances, there will be no make-up midterm or final exams.

Academic Honesty

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at:

<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index.html>

Disabilities and Accommodations

This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resources:

1-154 Dewey Hall

disability@rochester.edu

(585) 275-9049

Required Texts

There is one book required for class. This textbook is available via Amazon for around \$52.00 to buy and \$24.00 to rent. The bookstore will have copies available. The other readings are posted on Blackboard.

- Ken Kollman. *The American Political System*. 2017. New York: W.W. Norton. 3rd Edition. (**Textbook**)

Throughout the semester, I will send newspaper articles and other short pieces that deal with topical issues. These are considered required reading.

Course Outline

DATE	TOPIC	READING
August 29	<i>Lecture:</i> Course Introduction	None
September 5	<i>Lecture:</i> Introduction and Constitutional Design	Textbook: Chapters 1 and 2
September 7	<u>Recitation:</u> Professor Kroeger leads recitation (we will all meet at 9am today, in lecture room) Start thinking about bill topic for mock Congress	Brutus. <i>The Antifederalist, No. 1.</i> http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/brutus-i/
September 10 and 12	<i>Lecture:</i> Federalism	Textbook: Chapter 3
September 14	<u>Recitation:</u> Compare institutions and policies across cities or states (choose a city or state in preparation)	*Bring computer
September 17 and 19	<i>Lecture:</i> Congress Bill assignment due at 9am on September 17th	Textbook: Chapter 5
September 21	<u>Recitation:</u> Mock Congress activity	Mayhew. <i>Congress: The Electoral Connection.</i> Pages 13-19 and 81-105.
September 24 and 26	<i>Lecture:</i> Presidency	Textbook: Chapter 6
September 28	<u>Recitation:</u> Debate (randomly assigned sides) on presidential power	Read: Neustadt. <i>Presidential Power.</i> Pages 3-9. Listen to: https://www.npr.org/2017/07/27/539825453/the-presidential-pardon-power-what-are-its-limits
October 1 and 3	<i>Lecture:</i> Bureaucracy and the Administrative State	Textbook: Chapter 7 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kVqzOt-T_c Activity: Come up with all of the regulations you've interacted with this am
October 5	<u>Recitation:</u> Notice and comment activity	*Bring computer Listen to: https://www.npr.org/2017/12/24/573275481/new-tax-code-has-long-route-ahead-before-it-can-be-implemented Watch: https://archive.org/details/tobacco_poy27a00
October 8 and 10	<i>Lecture:</i> Judiciary	Textbook: Chapter 8

October 12	<u>Recitation</u> : Debate on election of judges	Rosenberg, Gerald. <i>The Hallow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?</i> Pages 1-7.
October 15	FALL BREAK	None
October 17	<i>Lecture</i> : Public Opinion	Textbook : Chapter 9
October 19	<u>Recitation</u> : Create and take surveys	Ahler and Sood. "The parties in our heads: Misperceptions about party composition and their consequences." <i>Journal of Politics</i> .
October 22	<i>Lecture</i> : Public Opinion continued	
October 24	MIDTERM EXAM	None
October 26	<u>Recitation</u> : Analyze survey responses	None
October 29 and 31	<i>Lecture</i> : Voting and Participation	Textbook : Chapter 10 Karpowitz, Mendelberg, Shaker. "Gender inequality in deliberative participation." <i>American Political Science Review</i> .
November 2	<u>Recitation</u> : Letter writing activity	Read : https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/03/06/what-calling-congress-achieves Putnam. <i>Bowling Alone</i> . Pages 15-28.
November 5 and 7	<i>Lecture</i> : Interest Groups and Social Movements	Textbook : Chapter 11
November 9	<u>Recitation</u> : Disentangling influence and campaign contributions activity	Strolovitch. <i>Affirmative Advocacy</i> . Pages 1-12.
November 12 and 14	<i>Lecture</i> : Political Parties	Textbook : Chapter 12
November 16	<u>Recitation</u> : Come up with a party platform	
November 19	<i>Lecture</i> : Elections Short assignment due at 9am on November 19th.	Textbook : Chapter 13
November 21	Class canceled for the start of Thanksgiving break	None
November 26	<i>Lecture</i> : Elections <i>continued</i>	
November 28	<i>Lecture</i> : Mass Media and the Press	Textbook : Chapter 14
November 30	<u>Recitation</u> : Podcast activity	Listen to a few podcasts in preparation for this recitation (I will email out a few).
December 3	<i>Lecture</i> : Mass Media and the Press <i>continued</i>	
December 5	<i>Lecture</i> : Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, Legal Issues	Textbook : Chapter 4
December 7	<u>Recitation</u> :	Gilens. <i>Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America</i> . Pages 1-4, 14-17.
December 10	<i>Lecture</i> : Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, Legal Issues <i>continued</i>	
December 12	<i>Lecture</i> : Course catch-up, wrap-up, and conclusion	Bring your questions!
December 20 at 8:30am	Final exam <i>tentatively scheduled</i> for this slot, but check registrar's website.	