Political Science 105 and History 168
Fall 2013
Lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays (and occasional Fridays), 11:00-11:50
Recitations on Thursdays and Fridays

Introduction to American Politics

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Office hours: Monday afternoons, 1:00-3:00, and Friday mornings, 9:30-10:30

Recitation leaders: Maricella Foster-Molina, Susanna Supalla, Svanhildur Thorvaldsdottir, and Yannis Vassiliadis

When did some states turn blue—and others red—in presidential elections? What are the origins of the modern Congress, including the filibuster-prone Senate and a House run by its majority party? Why did politicians begin to campaign for the presidency, rather than waiting on their front porches for voters to appear? How did voting rights—and other rights of citizenship—change over time? Drawing broadly on historical as well as contemporary evidence, this course will introduce students to the foundations of American government. We will examine political institutions as well as the linkages that connect institutions, political leaders, and ordinary citizens. This course is designed for freshmen considering a major, minor, or cluster in Political Science or History, but it is also appropriate for sophomores, juniors, and seniors who want a basic foundation in American political history and government.

All books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore. They are also on two-hour reserve at the circulation desk of Rush Rhees Library. (You might also consider online sources, including www.abebooks.com, for book purchases.) The required books are these—


William L. Riordon, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics, edited with an introduction by Terrence J. McDonald (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994). Be sure to get this exact edition—i.e., the book edited by Terrence McDonald.

All other readings are available at the course website on Blackboard. To access the Blackboard readings off-campus, you will first need to download and run VPN, so that your computer can be viewed as part of the University’s network. You can find VPN at http://rochester.edu/it/vpn/. If any link on the website does not work, please let Professor Gamm know immediately, by phone or e-mail, so he can address the problem.
Requirements

The course grade is based on class participation, three short papers, two hourly exams, and a final exam.

Class participation (20%). Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings, including lectures and recitations, having read the assigned material. The baseline participation grade is determined by participation in recitations, though it may be revised upward for students who also speak up in lectures. Participation requires good preparation (by doing the reading carefully in advance), active listening to other students, and smart questions. It’s always okay to take risks when you speak—either in asking questions or offering an answer even when you’re not sure you’re right. In this realm, as in most places, quality of contributions matters more than quantity.

Three short papers (30% total). In 500-700 words (about two pages), students should address three of the paper questions listed below. Keep papers short and to the point. No paper may exceed 750 words. Double-space the papers, use 12-point fonts, and no funny stuff with the margins; an inch on each side is about right. Students may write papers for any three of the nine units that include a paper question, though all students must submit a paper in at least one of the first three units that include a paper question. Students may write as many as five papers; in calculating the course grade, only the three highest paper grades will be included. (This policy does not include students who fail to submit papers in at least one of the first three units: in this case, students will receive a “0” for the missing paper and that “0” will be included in calculating the course grade.) Place your recitation leader’s name at the top of your paper. Papers are due no later than 12:30 on Tuesday afternoons. All papers should be submitted in two ways—1) electronically through Blackboard, and 2) as hard copies in your recitation leader’s box in Harkness 314. No late papers will be accepted without prior permission. Students must submit at least three papers to receive credit for the course.

Two hourly exams (25% total). The hourly exams will be administered during classtime on Monday, Sep. 30, and Monday, Nov. 11.

Final exam (25%). The date and time of the final exam are set by the registrar. The exam is a three-hour exam, which will be administered on Saturday, December 21, at 7:15-10:15 pm. Please note the time of this exam and make your holiday travel arrangements accordingly. Students must take the final exam to receive credit for the course.
WE THE PEOPLE
Sep. 4 Lecture
Sep. 6 No class

Kernell and Smith, *Principles and Practice*, pp. 707-27:
[Appendix] Constitution of the United States. (If you do not have access to the book yet, you can find the Constitution in many other places. Just be sure to read a version that includes all amendments.)


CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS, RESISTANCE, AND REVOLUTION
Sep. 9 Lecture
Sep. 11 Lecture
Sep. 13 Lecture/Discussion

No paper assignment this week.


Virginia Stamp Act Resolutions, 1765.

Soame Jenyns, “The Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies by the Legislature of Great Britain, briefly consider’d.”

John Dickinson, Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, I, II, IV. (Read each letter only to the point where it is signed, in italics, “A Farmer.”)

Thomas Hutchinson, Address to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 11 January 1773.

STATE CONSTITUTIONS
Sep. 16 Lecture
Sep. 18 Lecture
Sep. 19/20 Recitation

Paper due Sept. 17. What are the central features of government established by the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, and how does that framework differ from that embodied in the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780? What concerns and hopes motivated constitution writers in 1776-77, and what changed over the next four years to explain the adoption of a new model of government? In answering this question, be sure to draw on the original constitutions as well as on Wood. (You need not refer to Dinan in your paper.)


Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776.

Massachusetts Constitution of 1780.

THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

Sep. 23    Lecture
Sep. 25    Lecture
Sep. 26/27  Recitation

Paper due Sept. 24. In assessing the proposed Constitution of the United States, who better appreciated the emerging nature of the new American political system—the Anti-Federalists or the Federalists? Be sure to characterize the central arguments of both groups, drawing fully on the evidence and arguments of Kenyon and Wood.

Kernell and Smith, *Principles and Practice*, pp. 59-70:

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND INTERESTS

*Sep. 30*    First hourly exam
Oct. 2      Lecture
Oct. 4      Lecture
Oct. 7      No class—Fall break
Oct. 9      Lecture
Oct. 10/11  Recitation

Paper due *no later than the start of class* on Oct. 9. What are collective-action problems, how do interest groups overcome these problems, and, according to the evidence in these readings, what biases characterize decision-making and organized interests in Washington?

Kernell and Smith, *Principles and Practice*, pp. 1-24, 640-68:
ORIGINS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Oct. 14        No class
Oct. 16        Lecture
Oct. 18        Lecture/Discussion

No paper assignment this week.

Virginia Resolutions, 1798.
Republican Party Platform of 1860.
V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Knopf), 1949, pp. 3-12.

CONGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Oct. 21        Lecture
Oct. 23        Lecture
Oct. 24/25     Recitation

Paper due Oct. 22. According to Polsby, how has the House of Representatives changed over time? Drawing on Cooper and Brady as well as on Gamm and Shepsle, identify competing explanations for institutional change in Congress—in particular, explanations for a shift in the leadership styles of House Speakers and the emergence of standing committees.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER
Oct. 28  Lecture
Oct. 30  Lecture
Oct. 31/Nov. 1  Recitation

Paper due Oct. 29. How do presidents exercise their power and organize their staff? In what ways has the presidency changed since the early 20th century—in institutional organization, in the nature of presidential power, and in the use of appeals to the public—and when have crucial innovations occurred?

[7-3] Samuel Kernell, “from _Going Public._”

URBAN POLITICS
Nov. 4  Lecture
Nov. 6  Lecture
Nov. 7/8  Recitation

Paper due Nov. 5. According to Jane Addams, Lincoln Steffens, and George Washington Plunkitt himself (as told to Riordon), what accounted for the success of Tammany Hall and other political machines in American cities?

Riordon and McDonald, _Plunkitt of Tammany Hall_, pp. 1-134.

VOTING, ELECTIONS, AND THE MEDIA

Nov. 11  Second hourly exam
Nov. 13  Lecture
Nov. 15  Lecture

No paper assignment this week.

[11-3] Darrell M. West, “from _Air Wars._”
RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES
Nov. 18 Lecture
Nov. 20 Lecture
Nov. 21/22 Recitation

Paper due Nov. 19. How did Oliver Wendell Holmes evolve in his understanding of the Constitution’s guarantee of free speech? What justifications were offered in Brown v. Board of Education and in Roe v. Wade for the decisions of Supreme Court majorities to define other rights?

Kernell and Smith, Principles and Practice, pp. 156-73.

RED STATES AND BLUE STATES
Nov. 25 Lecture
Nov. 27 No class—Thanksgiving break
Nov. 29 No class—Thanksgiving break
Dec. 2 Lecture
Dec. 4 Lecture
Dec. 5/6 Recitation

Paper due Dec. 3. “How divided are we?” James Q. Wilson asks. How do he and other political scientists answer this question? In your paper, consider, too, the ways in which parties have changed in recent decades.

THE MODERN CONGRESS
Dec. 9        Lecture
Dec. 11       Lecture
Dec. 12/13    Recitation

Paper due Dec. 10. What challenges affect Congress's ability to function today, and what are the roots of those problems?

[6-1] Steven S. Smith, "Congress, The Troubled Institution."
[6-2] Sarah A. Binder, "The Politics of Legislative Stalemate."