

Political Science 202W
Fall 2025
Lectures on Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:25-11:15
Recitations on Mondays or Tuesdays

Argument in Political Science

Professor Alexander Lee, Harkness Hall 313

Email: alexander.mark.lee@rochester.edu

Undergraduate office hours: Wednesdays 11:30-12:15 [on discussion papers], Thursdays 11:15-12:15

Recitation leaders: Ben Goldstein (bgolds13@u.rochester.edu), Isabel Milner (imilner@u.rochester.edu), Joseph Jang (jjang11@u.rochester.edu), Danielle Colelli (dcolelli@u.rochester.edu)

Books. Three books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore and at various places online, including [AbeBooks](#) and [Amazon](#). Some of these books are also available as electronic editions through Rush Rhees Library:

1. Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels. *Democracy for Realists*
2. James Q. Wilson. *Bureaucracy*
3. Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. *Suburban nation*

Course website. Blackboard contains lots of information essential to the course—selected student papers (for discussion in recitation), links to all required readings not in the books listed above, and folders for uploading your papers each week. To access readings off-campus, you will need to download and run VPN (so that your computer can be viewed as part of the University's network). You can install VPN [here](#). *If any link on the website does not work, please let your recitation leader know immediately by email.*

Academic honesty. Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the University's Academic Honesty Policy. In this class, students are encouraged to discuss readings and course material with anyone they choose—including the professor, TA's, and other students. But, unless all assignments have been submitted, they may not share, receive, or discuss written work for this class, including outlines, plans, and notes for papers, except with Writing Fellows acting in their official capacity. Under no circumstances may students receive help of any sort with their papers from current or former students in this class.

Credit hours. This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets three times weekly for three hours per week. For the fourth credit hour, students should review the student papers in advance of recitation. This course also includes substantial reading and writing assignments, as well as a final exam.

Excused absences from class. *Please do NOT attend class if you are sick!* We recognize a number of reasons for legitimate absences from class: illness; severe injuries or other medical conditions; religious or cultural holidays; athletic or debate competitions; or weddings, funerals, or other major life-cycle events. *If you need to miss a recitation or lecture for an excused reason, be sure to notify your teaching assistant in advance.* As long as you notify them in advance, you will not be penalized for the occasional excused absence. We will also gladly share lecture notes for those with excused absences. Absences without prior notification will be treated as unexcused, except in cases of unexpected emergencies.

Paper guidelines and academic honesty. Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the University's [Academic Honesty Policy](#). In this class, students are encouraged to discuss readings and course material with anyone they choose—including the professor, TA's, and other students. But, unless all assignments have been submitted, they may not share, receive, or discuss written work for this class, including outlines, plans, and notes for papers, except with Writing Fellows acting in their official capacity. Under no circumstances may students receive help of any sort with their papers from current or former students in this class.

Keep papers short and to the point. Papers should be 800-1,000 words in length (about 3 pages). *No paper may exceed 1,000 words.* Double-space the papers, use 12-point font, and no funny stuff with the margins; an inch on each side is about right. Place your recitation leader's name at the top of your paper. **All papers are due in that week's Blackboard assignment folder no later than 1:00 p.m. on Thursdays.** Requests for extensions will be granted only on a case-by-case basis; except in the case of a genuine and unforeseen emergency, no late papers will be accepted without prior permission. If you do need an extension, contact your teaching assistant as early as possible.

Students are forbidden from using AI-powered tools, like ChatGPT, to summarize readings or to write drafts of papers. Not only will the use of these tools undermine the learning objectives of this course—to develop the ability to read with precision, to think clearly, and to respond to prompts with clearly argued papers grounded in evidence from the readings—but the use of these tools will, ironically, also make it *much harder* for students to complete required assignments and could trigger an academic honesty violation. **Every submitted essay must meet these two conditions:**

1. Include 8-10 citations, in parentheses, giving exact page numbers (or paragraph number, for a reading lacking page numbers) for ideas that come from the readings. About 3-5 of these citations should be for brief exact quotes, with the others being paraphrases of ideas. Because of this requirement, it is crucial that all students be using the same editions of the books. If you do not own or rent the required edition, you should plan to borrow a copy from the library to get correct page numbers for citations.
2. Include no material that does not appear in the assigned readings.

As long as you do the reading, outlining, and writing on your own—writing down page numbers as you take notes—there is no risk of you violating either of these rules. Papers that follow these rules will be graded normally. Should a paper violate one or both of these rules, it

will be returned ungraded and with no credit for the assignment, the presumption being that AI-powered tools were used exclusively or primarily to develop the paper. Should a second (or any other subsequent) paper violate these rules, both (or all) papers will be turned over to the Academic Honesty Board, and the absence of accurate citations and/or inclusion of non-assigned material will be regarded as [evidence of academic dishonesty](#).

Requirements and basis for grading

To receive credit for the course—to pass the course—you must, at minimum, attend recitation on a regular basis, submit at least five papers (according to the schedule below), and take the final exam. Anyone who does not fulfill these minimal requirements will not receive credit for the course.

Participation in recitation (15%). You are expected to attend lectures and recitations regularly. We will not penalize occasional absences for legitimate reasons, as defined above. Your participation grade is determined by attendance and active, informed participation in recitations. *You must attend recitation on a regular basis—defined, at a bare minimum, as a majority of recitations—to receive credit for the course.* If you cannot commit to doing that, however good your reasons, you should not take this course.

Brief pop quizzes (5%). At a handful of lectures, randomly chosen and unannounced in advance, we will distribute pop quizzes. These will be easy—a line or two at most—designed to give full credit to anyone doing the readings and showing up for (and paying attention to) lectures. Students will get half credit simply for writing their names, full credit if they also answer the question correctly. If you are not present, you cannot get credit for the quiz *unless you notified your teaching assistant, in advance of the lecture, that you cannot attend that lecture for some legitimate reason.* Anyone who notifies their TA in advance of the class of a legitimate reason for the absence will get full credit for any pop quiz that day.

Midterm exam (10%). Administered in class on Wednesday, October 15.

Short papers and the final exam are worth the remaining 70% of your grade.

The [final exam schedule](#) is set by the registrar. You must be in Rochester to take the exam in person, so please make your travel arrangements accordingly—taking into account that the exam could keep you on campus late that day.

You must write between six and eleven papers and write them on a regular basis throughout the semester. At least one paper must come from each of these five groupings*:

- Paper 1: Unit A or B
- Paper 2: Unit C or D
- Paper 3: Unit E or F
- Paper 4: Unit G or H
- Paper 5: Unit I or J
- Paper 6: Unit K, or L

You must submit at least six papers (according to this schedule) to receive credit for the course. If you write between six and nine papers, we drop the lowest grade. If you write ten or eleven papers, we drop the two lowest grades. Should you wish to count every paper grade, you may do so if you notify your teaching assistant by e-mail before the final exam. *The number of papers you write determines the relative weight of your papers and final exam—*

Six papers (five paper grades)	35% papers, 35% final exam
Seven papers (six paper grades)	40% papers, 30% final exam
Eight papers (seven paper grades)	45% papers, 25% final exam
Nine or ten papers (eight paper grades)	50% papers, 20% final exam
Eleven papers (nine paper grades)	55% papers, 15% final exam

Three anonymous student papers will be posted to the course website each Wednesday evening. You are responsible for reading those three anonymous papers as preparation for your recitation on Thursday or Friday; you should bring copies of those papers with you to recitation.

* THE FINE PRINT: If you skip one pair of units, you will receive a “0” as one of your paper grades, and this “0” may not be dropped. If you skip two pairs of units, you will receive two paper grades of “0,” and these grades may not be dropped. *You may not skip more than two pairs of units and still receive credit for the course. **Whether or not you skip any pairs of units, you still must write five serious papers to receive credit for the course.***

Unit A— Democratic Tyranny and Democratic Liberty

Aug. 25	Course introduction: Special lecture on how to write effective, strong papers
Aug. 27	Lecture
Aug. 29	Lecture
Sep. 2/3	Recitation (Tuesday/Wednesday)

Paper Due Aug 28: “The human heart,” Tocqueville warns, “nourishes a debased taste for equality, which leads the weak to want to drag the strong down to their level and which induces men to prefer equality in servitude to inequality in freedom.” What are the specific concerns that Tocqueville sees emerging, in both the political and social spheres, from widespread political equality? How are Calhoun’s critiques similar or different? How do Maddison and Dahl respond to these critiques?

The Federalist Nos. 10, 48, 51

Dahl, Robert A. *Democracy and its Critics*. Yale university press, 2008. Chapters 11-12

John C. Calhoun, excerpt from [*A Disquisition on Government*](#).

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer and transl. George Lawrence, Book I Chapter 3, 13.1, 13.3, 14.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.2, 16.1. Book II, Section 2: 1-6, Section 4:6.

Unit B—Voting

Sept. 8	Lecture
Sept. 10	Lecture
Sep. 12	No class

Sept. 15/16 Recitation

Paper due Sep 9. Why do Achen and Bartels think that democratic control of government is flawed? What are their views on the decision making processes of voters? How does Popkin agree and disagree with them?

Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. *Democracy for Realists : Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*, Princeton University Press, 2017. 1-51, 118-128.

Popkin, Samuel L. *The reasoning voter: Communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, 1991. Chapter 1

Unit C—Representation

Sept. 17 Lecture

Sept. 19 Lecture

Sept. 22/23 Recitation

Paper due Sept. 18. In *The Federalist* No. 35, Hamilton writes that “the idea of an actual representation of all classes of the people by persons of each class is altogether visionary.” How do Madison and Hamilton (writing in *The Federalist*) and Edmund Burke define effective representation? Does recent scholarship support the view of any particular side in this debate?

The Federalist Nos. 35 and 57

Edmund Burke, [Speech to the Electors of Bristol, England](#), 3 Nov. 1774.

Daniel M. Butler and David E. Broockman, “[Do Politicians Racially Discriminate against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators](#),” *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2011), 463-77.

Fenno, Richard F. Home style: *House members in their districts*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978. Chapter 7.

Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. "Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens." *Perspectives on politics* 12.3 (2014): 564-581.

Unit D—Polarization

Sept. 24 Lecture

Sept. 26 Lecture

Sept. 29/30 Recitation

Paper due Sept. 27: Why do Klein and McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal think America has become politically polarized? What evidence do they present for their arguments? How might they think polarization might end, and how does this differ from Acharya, Lee and Serlin’s argument?

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. MIT Press, 2016. Chapter 1

Acharya, Avidit, Alexander Lee and Theo Serlin. "How Polarization Ends" 2025 [Skip model section]

Klein, Ezra. *Why we're polarized*. Simon and Schuster, 2020. Introduction

Unit E— The Causes of Terrorism

Oct. 1	Lecture
Oct. 3	Lecture
Oct. 6/7	Recitation

Paper due Oct. 2. What is Pape's argument (taking into account his rejoinder) about the causes of suicide terrorism? What is Ashworth's critique of it? What are Lee and Gambetta and Hertog's arguments about the causes of terrorism, and are their arguments susceptible to versions of Ashworth's critique?

Lee, Alexander. "Who Becomes a Terrorist?: Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence." *World Politics* 63.02 (2011): 203-245. [Read p. 203-10 and p. 215-25]

Gambetta, Diego, and Steffen Hertog. *Engineers of jihad: The curious connection between violent extremism and education*. Princeton University Press, 2018. Preface

Pape, Robert A. "The strategic logic of suicide terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97.3 (2003): 343-361.

Ashworth, Scott, et al. "Design, inference, and the strategic logic of suicide terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 102.02 (2008): 269-273.

Pape, Robert A. "Methods and findings in the study of suicide terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 102.2 (2008): 275-277.

Ashworth, Scott, et al. "Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism: A Rejoinder." *Unpublished manuscript* (2008).

Unit F— Why is Europe richer than China?

Oct. 8	Lecture
Oct. 10	Lecture
Oct. 15	Midterm
Oct. 17	No class—Fall Break
Oct. 20/21	Recitation

Paper due Oct. 9: What is Jone's argument about why Europe is richer than China? How does Pomeranz critique this argument, and what is his alternative? What is Mokyr's argument about

technological divergence, and how does it relate to the economic divergence argument?

Jones, Eric. *The European miracle: environments, economies and geopolitics in the history of Europe and Asia*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. Ch. 1.

Pomeranz, Kenneth. *The great divergence: China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy*. Princeton University Press, 2009. P. 31-68

Mokyr, Joel. *The lever of riches: Technological creativity and economic progress*. Oxford University Press, 1992. Ch. 9

Unit G— Why is the US Richer than Latin America?

Oct. 22 Lecture

Oct. 24 Lecture

Oct. 27/28 Recitation

Paper due October 23rd: What is Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson's argument about the origins of economic divergence between western colonies? What is the evidence that they present? What are Albouy and Glaeser's critiques of their argument and evidence?

Acemoglu, Daron Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review* 91: 1369-1401. 2001.

Albouy, David Y. "The colonial origins of comparative development: an empirical investigation: comment." *American economic review* 102.6 (2012): 3059-3076.

Glaeser, Edward L., et al. "Do institutions cause growth?." *Journal of economic Growth* 9 (2004): 271-30

Unit H— Why Does(n't) Bureaucracy Work?

Oct. 29 Lecture

Oct. 31 Lecture

Nov. 1/2 Recitation

Paper due Oct. 30. What are the challenges of bureaucratic organization that Wilson describes? Why and how are some organizations able to overcome them? How does the situation described by Dasgupta and Kapur relate to this argument?

Wilson, James Q. *Bureaucracy: What government agencies do and why they do it*. Basic Books, 2019. Chapters 3-6.

Dasgupta, Aditya, and Devesh Kapur. "The political economy of bureaucratic overload: Evidence from rural development officials in India." *American Political Science Review* 114.4 (2020): 1316-1334. [Read 1316-23]

Unit I— The Great American Urban Planning Mess

Nov. 5 Lecture
 Nov. 7 Lecture
 Nov. 10/11 Recitation

Paper due Nov. 6. What do Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck think are wrong with American cities and suburbs? What are the *political* causes of those problems? How do the problems and solutions that Steiner describes in Rochester relate to this argument?

Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. *Suburban nation: The rise of sprawl and the decline of the American dream*. Macmillan, 2000. Introduction, Chapters 1,2,5,7.

Steiner, Jenna. "Infrastructure and Poverty: Removing Urban Freeways to Rectify a Planning Disaster." *J. Affordable Hous. & Cmty. Dev. L.* 27 (2018): 527.

Unit J— Affirmative Action

Nov. 12 Lecture
 Nov. 14 Lecture
 Nov. 17/18 Recitation

Paper due Nov. 13. What are the arguments that Sanders and Dunning and Nilekani offer that educational and political affirmative action might have null or negative effects? How do the other authors respond to these critiques? How do the different outcomes measured and different contexts studied by the authors affect the answers they give? What are the experiences described in the “Kindrow” exchange and how do they relate to these debates?

Sander, Richard H. "A systemic analysis of affirmative action in American law schools." *Stan. L. Rev.* 57 (2004): 367. [Read p. 368-370, 374-84, 425-54]

Chambers, David L., et al. "The real impact of eliminating affirmative action in American law schools: An empirical critique of Richard Sander's study." *Stan. L. Rev.* 57 (2004): 1855. [Read p.1855-88]

“The Candidate” and “The Candidate’s Story.” in Star, Alexander (ed.) *Quick studies: the best of Lingua Franca*. FSG, 2002, P97-112.

Dunning, Thad, and Janhavi Nilekani. "Ethnic quotas and political mobilization: caste, parties, and distribution in Indian village councils." *American political Science review* 107.1 (2013): 35-56. [Read p 35-41, 48-9]

Karekurve-Ramachandra, Varun and Alexander Lee. “Can Gender Quotas Improve Public Service Provision? Evidence from Indian Local Government.” *Comparative Political Studies*. Online Pre-Print. [Read p. 1-15]

Unit K— Why does the US has a weaker welfare state than Europe?

Nov. 19 Lecture

Nov. 21 Lecture

Nov. 24-8. No class—*Thanksgiving Break*

Dec.1/2 Recitation

Paper due Nov. 20. What are Starr and Skocpol's arguments for the failures of the US welfare state? What are the alternative arguments that they lay out? What is Katznelson's argument, and how does it relate to theirs'?

Starr, Paul. *Remedy and reaction: The peculiar American struggle over health care reform*. Yale University Press, 2013. Introduction.

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting soldiers and mothers: The political origins of social policy in the United States*. Harvard University Press, 1995. P. 1-30, 44-50, 55-62.

Katznelson, Ira. *When affirmative action was white: An untold history of racial inequality in twentieth-century America*. WW Norton & Company, 2005. Preface.

Unit L— Democratic Backsliding

Dec.3 Lecture

Dec. 5 Lecture

Dec. 8/9 Recitation

Paper due Dec 4. What is Levitsky and Ziblatt's argument and about the future of democracy in America? What is my response to that argument? How do different definitions of democracy shape both arguments?

Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. *How democracies die*. Crown, 2019. Chapters 1 and 8.

Lee, Alexander. "The Airline Dilemma: Why Democracy is in Decline Around the World, and Why it isn't Going Anywhere" Unpublished Manuscript. Chapters 1 and 3.