

PSCI-0200. Introduction to American Politics Previously PSCI-130

BELOW IS A PREVIOUS SYLLABUS TO GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT THE COURSE LOOKS LIKE. THIS IS **NOT** GOING TO BE THE EXACT SYALLBUS, BUT THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE, TOPICS COVERED, AND THE TYPES ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE SIMILAR.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to American politics suitable for both political science students and those who will choose other majors. The purpose of the course is to provide a wide-ranging factual and theoretical understanding of contemporary politics in the United States. We begin by looking at the structural and ideological foundations of the American political system. These concepts are then used to study a broad selection of topic areas concerning political behavior and political institutions.

To that end, this course will help you understand the structure and function of American government and will give you a structure and framework to use to analyze American politics. While we will cover contemporary events, the class is not a current events class. Nor is the class simply AP U.S. Government: this class will go well beyond the standard AP curriculum and incorporate some of the latest scholarship on American politics into the class as well. You're all very smart Penn students, so I know you can handle the challenge!

Text

Kollman, Ken. 2019. [Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives](#). 5th Edition. New York. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

I will refer to readings from this book as "RAP" on the schedule below.

I am not sure if students can purchase an older addition; I know new readings are added in different editions. But the 5th edition came out two years ago and there are many used copies available online. I would therefore recommend buying the fifth edition just to be certain.

Requirements

1. Paper #1 (15% of the final grade): The details about the paper options and deadlines are below.
2. Paper #2 (25% of the final grade): The details about the paper options and deadlines are below.

- You are to individually write these papers. You may bounce ideas and work on outlining your work with classmates, friends, family, tutors, etc. But the writing is to be done by you individually. All papers will be run through plagiarism software.
 - I deduct 2% of your paper grade for every 12 hours a paper is turned in late. I am giving you the paper topics at the beginning of the semester as well as choice on when you write your papers. This means that I am unlikely to be sympathetic if you ask for an extension because something comes up at the last minute.
3. Midterm exam (20% of the final grade): The exam will be a take-home exam where students can make use of notes and readings. Students will have approximately 38 hours to take the exam (which will not take anywhere close to that amount of time!)
 - Students are to take the exam individually and not discuss the exam with anyone else (whether part of PSCI 130 or not).
 - The exam will be submitted through plagiarism software.
 4. Final exam (30% of the final grade): The exam will be a timed exam on the date and time set by the college registrar office. The exam will not be a traditional blue-book exam despite being timed; instead, students will type out their answers and have access to their notes and readings.¹
 - Students are to take the exam individually and not discuss the exam with anyone else (whether part of PSCI 130 or not).
 - The exam will be submitted through plagiarism software
 - Anyone who is unable to take the final exam at this time will receive a “II” in the class and take the alternate final exam during the officially scheduled make-up exam time for the Political science department early in the Spring 2022 semester.
 5. Participation (10% of the final grade: 8% participation in section; 2% anonymous surveys)
 - The purpose of the recitations is two-fold. First, it is a place for students to ask questions about the lectures and the readings. Second, it is a place for students to engage in informed and in-depth discussions about the readings and podcasts. I will drop your lowest two weeks when calculating your recitation grade, so you can miss two weeks without it affecting your grade at all. Someone who simply attends recitation without participating will receive no higher than a “C” for their recitation grade. The expectation is that you will have read, in-depth, the assigned reading (or listened to the assigned podcast) before section. Your recitation grade is based on your recitation leader's assessment of the effectiveness of your recitation participation. Each recitation leader will make it clear what their specific expectations are for their section. Your recitation grade will count for 8% of your grade.
 - The remaining 2% comes in the form of overcoming a collective action problem. Over the course of the semester, I will ask students to take surveys or provide feedback of one form or another. For each task or survey, if 88% of the class participates, then everyone gets credit. If less than 88% participates, then no one gets credit. Each survey or task will receive 1 point for credit and 0 points for non-credit. At the end of the semester, everyone will receive the same grade for the 2%.

All assignments must be submitted to receive credit for the course. If you fail to complete any assignment, you risk a failing grade for the entire course even if you can pass numerically.

¹ If there are any students who would rather handwrite the exam rather type it, we can make arrangements for that.

Appealing a grade

I will work with the TAs to ensure consistent and fair grading takes places across assignments and graders. If you would like to appeal a grade, you must do so in writing within two weeks of the assignment being handed back. In the appeal, you must respond to the TA's comments or areas where points were taken off and justify why additional points are warranted. A note about appealing grades: Grade appeals *may* result in a lower grade than the grade originally given.

Due dates, late policies, and conflicts

There are four paper due dates.

- Paper #1: September 21
- Paper #2: October 5
- Paper #3: October 28
- Paper #4 November 30

Students will write two papers over the course of the semester. Students must write *either* paper #1 or paper #2. Students must write *either* paper #3 or paper #4. Papers must be submitted via Canvas by **10:00am** (15 minutes **before** class starts) on the due date. I will take 2% off every 12 hours the paper is late. **Details about the essays are available on Canvas under "Files/Paper topics"**.

The midterm will be made available via Canvas at 10am on Tuesday, October 12. There will not be a regular class held on October 12, but I will be available via Zoom to ask questions about the exam. The exam is due on October 13th at 11:59pm and must be submitted via Canvas. I will take 2% off every 12 hours the exam is late.

The final exam will be held during the allocated time decided upon by the registrar's office: **Friday, December 17 from 9:00-11:00**. There will not be make-up or early exams held during the semester. Anyone who is unable to take the final exam at this time will receive a "II" in the class and take the alternate final exam during the officially scheduled make-up exam time for the Political science department early in the Spring 2022 semester.

Students are responsible for taking the exam in a place with stable Internet access so that they can upload the exam to Canvas after taking the exam. There will be a 15-minute grace period after the exam ends to allow people facing technical difficulties to upload the exam (or email it to the instructors if absolutely necessary). After the 15-minute grace period; however, students will lose 1.25% every hour the exam is late up to two hours. After the two-hour mark, the exam will not be accepted and students will receive an "II" and have to take the final exam during the Spring semester. [Here](#) is where the university publishes final exam information. I will announce the date and time as soon as I know it, but you can also check for yourself.

Statement of academic integrity

Students are bound to uphold the Code of Academic Integrity. The code prohibits activities that "have the effect of intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance." Students are responsible for fully adhering to the code; the details can

be found online at <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/>. Please note that ignorance of these guidelines is no excuse for failure to comply with them.

Note that all work is submitted through Canvas, and I use turnitin.com to check for plagiarism on all assignments.

Penalties for academic dishonesty are up to the professor, which (in my case), definitely means receiving a 0 on the assignment in question and may include failing the course. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to speak with me, a TA, or someone in the library.

Electronic devices

Every student has the right to listen to the lecture undistracted by others' use of electronic devices. There is no reason that a cell phone needs to be audible or visible during class. If you must receive an urgent phone call or text during class, please step out into the hallway to do so. I also discourage you from using laptops during lecture. [Research](#) suggests you learn less by taking notes on laptops. In addition to tempting you to use web surfing, email and text messaging programs, having a laptop also is distracting to your fellow students. If there is student demand, I will designate a "laptop free" section of the classroom for students who wish to take notes using pen and paper.

Attendance and class recordings

Attendance at lectures is not mandatory. Attendance in recitations is expected. But if you are feeling at all sick or displaying any COVID-19 related symptoms, please be considerate of your classmates and stay home. I will make every effort to record all lectures and post them to Canvas. If you miss more than two recitations during the semester, you must be in contact with your TA or else be penalized in your grade. Also, if you miss a recitation for any reason, you must fill out a [Course Absence Report](#) to report the absence to your instructor. Failure to report your absence in a timely fashion (ideally before class but certainly soon after) will affect our willingness to work with you when it comes to making up missing participation points.

Soliciting feedback

Email should be used to ask short and straightforward questions. I will respond within 24 hours, likely sooner. Be sure to check the syllabus and Canvas before writing with a question that I may have already answered. Office hours are meant to ask substantive questions, follow up on discussion from class / a comment on a paper, or to ask for feedback on an idea for a paper. If you cannot come to my office hours, I will do my best to find a time to meet with you. But I do not write long and detailed substantive e-mails.

Communication

We all need to be flexible this semester! To that end, all students are required to have an email account that they check regularly. Not checking your email will not be an excuse for not knowing that the schedule changed. Additionally, everyone should **check their e-mail in the hour before each class** (lecture and recitation) just to confirm there has not be an unexpected shift to virtual.

COVID protocols

Everyone must wear an appropriately fitting mask (relatively tight, covering nose and mouth) during lecture and recitation. This rule will remain in place even if Penn and/or Philadelphia eases up on the restriction. Extra masks will be available in both lecture and recitation. There is no eating allowed in lecture or recitation. Drinking is allowed through a straw. Students who fail to comply with these rules will be asked to leave the classroom (regardless of Penn's official policy) and will be reported to the office of student conduct (so long as the mask restriction is in place at the university).

Campus resources

- [The Tutoring Center](#)
- [Marks Family Writing Center](#)
- [CAPS \(Counseling and psychological services\)](#)
- [Wellness at Penn](#)
- [Penn Violence Prevention](#)
- [Office of Student Disabilities Services](#)
- [Free access to the NY Times through the Penn library](#)

Schedule

Tuesday, August 31st: Introduction and what is at stake

Required reading:

None, but check out some of the suggested readings

Suggested readings:

- Packer, George. 2021. [“How America Fractured into Four Parts.”](#) The Atlantic. July/August.
- Ingraham, Christopher. 2020. [“The United States is Backsliding into Autocracy Under Trump, Scholars Warn.”](#) *Washington Post*. September 18.
- Norris, Pippa. 2021. [“It Happened in America. Democratic Backsliding Shouldn’t Come as a Surprise.”](#) *Foreign Affairs*. January 7. [Note: if you’re locked out of this article, it is available through the library]

Suggested listening:

- 2018. [‘How Democracies Die’ Authors Say Trump is a Symptom of ‘Deeper Problems’](#). *Fresh Air, NPR*. January 22.

Thursday, September 2nd: The logic of American politics

Required readings:

- RAP. 1-1. Olson Jr., Mancur. From *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. 1-19.
- RAP. 1-2. Hardin, Garrett. “The Tragedy of the Commons.” 20-33.
- Roberts, Siobhan. 2020. [“The Pandemic is a Prisoner’s Dilemma Game.”](#) *New York Times*. December 20.

Recitations: September 2 (Th) – September 3 (F). No recitation on September 6 (M)

1. Section introductions. 2. How do the most pressing policy issues of the day map onto core political science and economic theories? 3. Introduction to paper topics.

Section 1: The nationalization of politics, also known as: how do we protect minorities against the tyranny of the majority?

Tuesday, September 7th: Constitution (1/2)

This class will be a pre-recorded asynchronous lecture on account of Rosh Hashana and will be available on Canvas. **Do not come to an in-person class on September 7.**

Required readings:

- [The Constitution](#)
- RAP. 2-1. Brutus. “The Antifederalist.” 57-65.
- RAP. 2-2. Dahl, Robert A. from *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*. 66-70.
- Hannah-Jones. Nikole. 2019. [“Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans have Fought to Make Them True.”](#) *New York Times*. August 14.

Thursday, September 9th: Constitution (2/2)

Required readings:

- Jentleson, Adam. 2021. *Kill Switch*. Chapter 1 (“Birth of a Notion”). 17-41. [Available on Canvas]
- Thulin, Lila. 2019. [“The 97-Year-History of the Equal Rights Amendment.”](#) *Smithsonian Magazine*. November 13.
- Drutman, Lee. 2018. [“To Fix Congress, Make It Bigger. Much Bigger.”](#) *Washington Monthly*. November/December.
- 2018. [“If You Could Amend the Constitution.”](#) *New York Times*. July 7.

Interested in the Constitution? Here is a bit more for you (not required).

- 2020. [Danielle Allen on the Radicalism of the American Revolution – and its Lessons for Today](#). The Ezra Klein Show. Vox Conversations. July 3. [NOTE: The first part of this podcast in which Professor Allen offers an alternative interpretation of the Declaration of Independence is incredibly thought provoking.]

Recitations: September 9 (Th) – September 13 (M).

1. Section introductions for Monday recitations. 2. Amendment discussion – What are some potential amendments to the Constitution that you think are most important? Why is the proposed change necessary? How is your proposed amendment different from what we already have on the books? What would the framers think of each Amendment? Could such an amendment pass the high hurdles needed to change the Constitution? 3. Introduction to writing argument-based papers.

Tuesday, September 14th: Federalism (1/2)

Required reading (and viewing):

- [Federalism](#). CrashCourse video (10 minutes) with Craig Benzine (February 14, 2015).

- RAP. 3-1. Hammons, Christopher. From “State Constitutions, Religious Protection, and Federalism”. 85-92.
- RAP. 3-2. Riker, William H. From *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*. 92-105.
- Polimedio, Chayenne. 2018. [Why Federalism is hard](#). Vox. February 27.

Thursday, September 16th: Federalism (2/2)

There is no in-person class on September 16 on account of Yom Kippur. Instead of watching a pre-recorded asynchronous lecture by yours truly, you will watch a 45-minute talk by Professor Jamila Michener on her book titled *Fragmented Democracy* (you don’t need to watch the Q&A). The link is below. Again, do not come to an in-person class on September 16.

- Before watching Professor Michener’s book talk read this brief [description](#) of Medicaid so you know what it is (it’s not the same thing as Medicare) and understand how and why federalism plays an important role.
- [Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid Federalism and Unequal Politics](#). Video of a book talk by Jamila Michener (December 20, 2019).

Required readings before recitation (Thurs, Sept 16 – Mon, Sept 20):

- Selin, Jennifer. 2020. “[How the Constitution’s Federalist Framework is Being Tested by COVID-19](#).” Brookings Institute. June 8.
- Kettl, Donald F. 2021. “[How American-Style Federalism is Hazardous to our Health](#).” *Governing*. May 26.
- Badger Doug, and Robert Moffit. 2021. “[COVID-19 and Federalism: Public Officials’ Accountability and Comparative Performance](#).” The Heritage Foundation. July 26. [SKIM sections on “What Federal Officials Got Right” and “Where Federal Officials Got Policy Wrong”. CAREFULLY READ the sections about federalism & states’ responses.]

Recitations: September 16 (Th) – September 20 (M).

1. Federalism and COVID-19 discussion – What are main arguments of each of the three readings? In what ways did/is federalism affect/affecting how America responded/is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic? Do you think federalism, on average, made the American response to COVID-19 better or worse? What, if any, issue areas do you think benefit from the American federalism system? Why? What, if any, issue areas are uniquely worse off on account of the American federalism system? Why?

Tuesday, September 21st: Civil Rights (1/2)

Paper #1 is due at 10:00. Papers must be submitted via Canvas.

Required readings:

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. “The Rebirth of Caste (chapter 1)” in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. 25-73. [Available on Canvas]
- Chudy, Jennifer and Hakeem Jefferson. 2021. “[Support for Black Lives Matter Surged Last Year. Did It Last?](#)” *New York Times*. May 22.

- Astor, Maggie. [“Why Protest Movements are ‘Civil’ Only in Retrospect.”](#) *New York Times*. June 16.

Thursday, September 23rd: Civil Rights (2/2)

Required readings:

- Solomon, Marc. 2014. “Organizing for the Fight (Chapter 3)” in *Winning Marriage: The Inside Story of How Same-Sex Couples Took on the Politicians and Pundits—and Won*. Lebanon, NH: ForEdge. 79-101. [Available on Canvas]
 - Relevant (30,000-foot) background before reading this chapter: 1) Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) of Massachusetts ruled on November 18, 2003 that the MA Constitution requires that the state legally recognize same-sex marriage (*Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*). 2) Many were unhappy about this decision. Only way to overrule the SJC ruling is through changing the MA Constitution. 3) Changing the MA Constitution requires a majority support at two successive state constitutional conventions and then receive a majority of votes from the public during a regular November election. (Solomon notes the second way to amend the MA Constitution of page 85) 4) After various failed measures, the March 2004 convention passed an amendment to ban same-sex marriage but allow for civil unions (105-92). 5) While this process was happening, the new law of the land began to be implemented and the first same-sex marriages took place in May, 2004. 6) The 2004 election did not reveal extensive electoral backlash on state representatives and senators who opposed the amendment (that is, did not want to create an amendment banning same-sex marriage) 8) The chapter you will read starts in December 2004, meaning that same-sex couples had been marrying for seven months but the state legislature was months away from their second constitutional convention regarding same-sex marriage and civil unions. 9) The book is written in first-person format by [Marc Solomon](#) (gay rights advocate and previous executive director of MassEquality).
- Belluck, Pam. 2007. [“Massachusetts Gay Marriage to Remain Legal.”](#) *New York Times*. June 15. (a little post script to the Solomon piece)

Recitations: September 23 (Th) – September 27 (M).

1. Discussion of social movements – How do social movements—such as the movement for marriage equality or Black Lives Matter—translate their energy into policy change? What is the future of these sorts of movements in American politics?

Interested in Civil Rights? Here is a bit more for you. (not required)

- Stevenson, Bryan. 2015. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. [“The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration.”](#) *The Atlantic*. October.
- Hanna-Jones, Nikole. 2017. [“The Resegregation of Jefferson County.”](#) *New York Times Magazine*. September 6.
- Listen: [“If it ever happens, run.”](#) 2021. Criminal (episode 158). February 12.

Tuesday, September 28th: Civil Liberties (1/2)

Required readings:

- RAP. 4-4. Lewis, Andrew R. From *The Rights Turn in Conservative Christian Politics: How Abortion Transformed the Culture Wars*. 149-157.
- Listen: [The Crime of Refusing Vaccination](#). 2021. The Experiment. March 25.

Thursday, September 30th: Civil Liberties (2/2)

Required readings:

- Wheeler, Leigh Ann. 2013. “Solutions Must Be Found within Civil Libertarian Guidelines” in *How Sex Became a Civil Liberty*. Chapter 8. [PDF available on Canvas]. **Note: This reading explores the debates surrounding rape and sexual harassment laws from the 1970s to 1990s.**
- Armstrong, Ken. 2014. “Dollree Mapp, 1923-2014: ‘[The Rosa Parks of the Fourth Amendment](#)’”. The Marshall Project. December 8.
 - Before reading the Armstrong piece below, be sure you re-familiarize yourself with the [4th Amendment of the Constitution](#). If you want more background, you can watch the [Crash Course](#) on the 4th Amendment.

Required listening before recitation (Thurs, Sept 30 – Mon, Oct 4):

- [The Hate-Crime Conundrum](#). 2021. The Experiment. July 22.

Recitations: September 30 (Th) – Oct 4 (M).

1. Discussion – What happens when civil rights and civil liberties collide? Which is most important? Is hate-crime legislation a good thing or not? In what ways does the podcast about hate-crime legislation raise similar questions to Wheeler’s chapter that explores tensions between women’s rights and civil rights and to the podcast looking back in time about vaccine mandates? How do your opinions about what is right vary across the different cases?

Section 2: The Institutions of government; How do they function?

Tuesday, October 5th: Congress (1/2)

Paper #2 is due at 10:00. Papers must be submitted via Canvas.

- RAP. 5.1 Mayhew, David R. from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 159-171.
- RAP. 5.2 Fenno Jr., Richard F. from *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*. 172-176.
- Conroy, Meredith, Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux, and Anna Wiederkehr. 2021. [“Women of Color Were Shut Out of Congress for Decades. Now They’re Transforming It.”](#) *FiveThirtyEight*. January 18.

Thursday, October 7th: Congress (2/2)

- RAP. 5.3 Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins from *Setting the Agenda*. 177-196.
- RAP. 5.4 Bernhard, William and Tracy Sulkin from *Legislative Style*. 197-205.
- RAP. 5.5 Lee, Frances E. from *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. 206-212.
- Balzelon, Simon and Matthew Yglesias. 2021. [“The Rise and Importance of Secret Congress”](#) *Slow Boring*. June 21.

Recitations: Oct 7 (Th) – Oct 11 (M).

1. Review for midterm exam.
2. Q&A
3. Writing discussion – what were some common mistakes in the first papers? How can students improve their arguments?

Tuesday, October 12th: Midterm Exam

The take-home, open-note, and open-book midterm will be made on Canvas and emailed to students at 9am on Tuesday, Oct 12th. **Students have until 11:59pm on Wednesday, October 13th to submit the exam.**

There will be no required class on Tuesday, October 12th. I will be available during our normal class time to answer questions about the exam, either in our classroom or in a Zoom room (depending on student preference).

Thursday, October 14th: Fall Break – Enjoy!

Recitations: Oct 14 (Th) – Oct 18 (M).

Nada (even on Monday, October 18). Enjoy the break.

Tuesday, October 19th: The Presidency

Required readings:

- RAP. 6.2 Cameron, Charles. from *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power*. 222-227.
- RAP. 6.3 Canes-Wrone, Brandice. from *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. 228-248.
- RAP. 6.4 Howell, William G. from *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. 249-262.

Interested in the presidency? Here is a bit more for you. (not required)

There are some **really** great podcast seasons that deal with the presidency. Here are a few that I loved and learned a lot from.

- [In Plain Sight: Lady Bird Johnson](#). Uncovers Lady Bird's surprisingly powerful role in the Johnson presidency and provides history-making revelations about Lyndon B. Johnson's time in office. Told in the former first lady's own words from over 123 hours of her audio diaries — most of it never-before-heard — "In Plain Sight" reveals how one vastly underestimated woman navigated the politics and polarization of her era to become one of the most influential members of the Johnson administration, even if we never knew it.
- [Slow Burn, Season 1: Watergate](#). You think you know the story, or maybe you don't. But Watergate was stranger, wilder, and more exciting than you can imagine. What did it feel like to live through the scandal that brought down President Nixon?
- [Slow Burn, Season 2: Clinton Impeachment](#). The saga of Bill Clinton's impeachment is rich with forgotten characters, surprising subplots, and opportunities to reflect on just how much America has changed over the past 20 years. Whether you're well-versed in the tale of Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, or you're fuzzy on the details, this season of Slow Burn will take you further into the story than you've ever been.

Thursday, October 21st: Bureaucracy

Required readings:

- Crash Course on [Bureaucracy Basics](#) and [Types of Bureaucracies](#) with Craig Benzine
- RAP. 7.2 McCubbins, Mathew D. and Thomas Schwartz. from “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms,” *American Journal of Political Science* 287-301.
- RAP. 7.3 Moffit, Susan L. from *Making Public Policy: Participatory Bureaucracy in American Democracy* 302-321.

Recitations: Oct 21 (Th) – Oct 25 (M).

1. Review key theories from readings – What are the steps in veto bargaining? When do presidents pander to the public and when do they lead? How does “first mover advantage” apply in presidential unilateral action? How do the police patrol and fire alarm models of congressional oversight of the bureaucracy differ? What is “learning in public”? 2. Broader discussion: Are presidents strong or weak? Can you think of any historical (or present day) situations in which we see some of the theories related to the president in action? In what ways do bureaucratic leaders need to act like politicians – seeking public approval, staking out claims about policy, building constituencies, and publicize actions?

Tuesday, October 26th: Judiciary

Required readings:

- RAP. 8.1 Rosenberg, Gerald N. from *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* 323-329.
- RAP. 8.5 George, Tracey E. and Lee Epstein, “On the Nature of Supreme Court Decision Making,” *American Political Science Review* 380-386.
- Listen (while taking a walk or washing dishes): [“The Myth of the “Student Athlete”](#) 2021. The Experiment. July 29.

Thursday, October 28th: Case study of checks and balances: Nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court

Paper #3 is due at 10:00. Papers must be submitted via Canvas.

- Listen: [“The Bidding of Biden to Boo Bork.”](#) 2018. Whistlestop.
 - The podcast sets the scene for lecture, so be sure that you listen to it before class.
- Not required. But if you were enthralled in Part 1 of the podcast and want to know how everything works out, you can listen to part 2 before lecture. [“The Nomination of Judge Bork Part 2”](#). Whistlestop. 2018.

Recitations: Oct 28 (Th) – Nov 1 (M).

1. Review main concepts from lecture and readings – How do the different branches of government work together (or sometimes do not work together), including checks and balances? 2. Discuss strength and weaknesses of different institutions. Which institution do you think is strongest? Weakest? Was this the intention of the Framers or not?

Section 3: The Public’s Influence on National Policy

Tuesday, November 2nd (Election Day): Public opinion (1/2)

Required readings:

- RAP 13.4 Achen, Christopher and Larry M. Bartels. from *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* 601-611.
- RAP 9.1 Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D. McCubbins. from *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* 387-399.
- RAP 9.2 Zaller, John R. from *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. 400-404.
- RAP 9.3 Kinder, Donald R. and Cindy Kam. from *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*. 405-411.

Thursday, November 4th: Public opinion (2/2)

Required readings:

- RAP 9.4 Cramer, Katherine J. from *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. 412-438.
- RAP 9.6 Mason, Lilliana. from *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. 451-463.
- Klar, Samara, Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. 2019. [“Is America Hopelessly Polarized, or Just Allergic to Politics?”](#) *New York Times*. April 12

Interested in public opinion? Here is a bit more for you. (not required) Also, sign up for PSCI-230 with yours truly!

- Dunn, Amina et al. 2020. [“Voters Say Those on the Other Side ‘Don’t Get’ Them. Here’s What They Want Them to Know.”](#) Pew Research Center. September 23.
- Klein, Ezra. 2014. [“How Politics Makes Us Stupid.”](#) *Vox*. April 6.

Recitations: Nov 4 (Th) – Nov 8 (M).

1. Discuss main concepts from lecture and readings – What are the main theories and ideas about how Americans form public opinion attitudes? What goes on underneath the surface and leads us to answer “I believe XX” to a pollster? Are Americans polarized? If so, on what dimension(s)? How might we reduce polarization?

Tuesday, November 9th: Campaigns, voting, and elections (1/2)

- RAP 10.3. Hersh, Eitan D. from *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. 479-487.
- RAP 14.2. from *Campaigning to the New American Electorate: Advertising to Latino Voters*. 633-643.
- Matthews, Dylan. 2017. [“A Massive New Study Reviews the Evidence on Whether Campaigning Works. The Answer’s Bleak.”](#) *Vox*. September 28.
- Hopkins, Dan. 2018. [“What We Know About Voter ID Laws.”](#) *FiveThirtyEight*. August 21.

Thursday, November 11th: Campaigns, voting, and elections (2/2)

Required readings:

- RAP 10.1 Wong, Janelle S., Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn. from *Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and their Political Identities*. 465-472.

- RAP 10.2 Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler. from *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*. 473-478.
- RAP 12.2 Campbell, Angus. Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald Stokes. from *The American Voter: An Abridgement*. 537-543.

Interested in campaigns, voting, and elections? Here is a bit more for you. (not required)

- RAP 13.3. Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer L. Lawless. from *Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics*. 586-600.
- Sides, John, Michael Tessler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Soul of America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [Whistlestop with John Dickerson](#). A truly excellent podcast that offers “bite-size stories from presidential history.” While there are great episodes about the presidency and relationships between the presidency, Congress, and the Courts, my favorite episodes are where John Dickerson zooms in and discusses one (often crucial) aspect of a random political campaign. These are generally the earlier episodes in the podcast (from 2015-2016).

Recitations: Nov 11 (Th) – Nov 15 (M).

1. Discussion about election reform – How should America reform its electoral system? Automatic voter registration? Same-day voter registration? More (or less) in-person early voting? No-excuse absentee voting or vote-by-mail? Restore voting rights to formerly incarcerated people? Require identification for voting? Election Day is a national holiday? Other ideas? When discussing various proposals, be sure to think about what sorts of people would benefit or lose out from these various reforms and which party would be politically (dis)advantaged with various reforms.
2. Should voting (showing up at the polls) be mandatory? If everyone voted, would the results be different?

Tuesday, November 16th: Political parties (1/1)

Required reading (and viewing):

- [“How the Republican Party Went from Lincoln to Trump.”](#) (video) 2016. Vox. July 20.

NOTE: It is important to read the following three readings in order

- RAP 12.1 Aldrich, John H. from *Why Parties? A Second Look*. 521-536.
- RAP 12.3 Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. from *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. 544-553.
- RAP 12.4 Kollman, Ken. “Who Drives the Party Bus?” 554-556.

Thursday, November 18th: Interest groups (1/2)

Required reading:

- RAP 11.1 Kollman, Ken. from *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies*. 489-503.
- Lacombe, Matthew. 2021. “Weaponized Group Identities and the Health of Democracy: How Groups Can be Good at Democracy, but Bad for It” in *Democratic Resilience: Can the United States Withstand Rising Polarization?*, ed. Robert C. Lieberman, Suzanne Mettler, and Kenneth M. Roberts (New York: Cambridge University Press). [Available on Canvas]

Recitations: Nov 18 (Th) – Nov 22 (M).

NOTE: There will be recitation on Monday, November 22nd (the Monday before Thanksgiving). The TAs will discuss whether students in these sections want to have an in-person class or a zoom class.

1. Discussion about political parties – Why does America have only two parties? How are the readings on political parties in dialogue with each other? On what do they disagree? Are there any points of agreement? What role do parties play, and what role *should* parties play? Has our understanding about the role of parties changed since 2016?

Tuesday, November 23rd: Interest groups (2/2)

According to the university schedule, 11/23 is a Thursday schedule. Depending on students' travel plans, we will either have an in-person class (with a recording) or a synchronous recorded lecture.

Required reading:

- Allard, Nick. 2008. "Lobbying is an Honorable Profession: The Right to Petition and the Competition to be Right." *Stanford Law and Policy Review* 19:1 23-68.
- Drutman, Lee. 2015. "[How Corporate Lobbyists Conquered American Democracy.](#)" *The Atlantic*. April 20.
- Pildes, Richard. 2020. "[Small Dollars, Big Changes.](#)" *The Washington Post*. February 6.
- "[How Blue Cities Became So Outrageously Expensive.](#)" 2021. *Ezra Klein Show*. July 23. [NOTE: You only need to listen to the first 35 minutes of the podcast (about citizen voice and infrastructure) but you may enjoy the second part as well!]

Thursday, November 25th: Thanksgiving

Recitations the week of (and the Monday after) Thanksgiving

While there is a lecture on 11/23, there will not be recitations this week. That means students assigned to Thursday and Friday recitations do not have recitation on 11/23 and 11/24. Additionally, students in Monday recitation sections will not have section on Monday, November 29th (the Monday after Thanksgiving) either.

Tuesday, November 30th: Media (1/2)

Paper #4 is due at 10:00. Papers must be submitted via Canvas.

Required reading (and listening):

- RAP 14.1 Baum, Matthew A. from *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age*. 629-632.
- Slow Burn. 2017. "[Judy](#)". Season 5, Episode 7.

Thursday, December 2nd: Media (2/2)

Required reading:

- RAP 14.3 Allcott, Hunt and Matthew Gentzkow. from "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." 644-655.
- Kurtzleben, Danielle. 2018. "[Did Fake News on Facebook Help Elect Trump? Here's What We Know.](#)" NPR. April 11.
- Mitchell, Amy, Mark Jurkowitz, J. Baxter Oliphant, and Elisa Shearer. 2021. "How Americans Navigated the News in 2020: A Tumultuous Year in Review." Pew Research Center. February 22. [Available on Canvas]

Recitations: Dec 2 (Th) – Dec 6 (M).

1. For the most pressing topics of today – how are different news organizations covering the topic? What about non-news organizations? Is there a topic where there is relatively similar coverage with respect to tone, language, and expected effect on audience? 2. For Monday recitation section – any questions about material as we wrap up the semester?

Tuesday, December 7th: Public Policy

Required reading:

- RAP 15.1 Mettler, Suzanne. from *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy*. 657-671.
- RAP 15.2 Campbell, Andrea Louise. from *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. 672-677.

Thursday, December 9th: Wrap up and review

Recitations: Dec 9 (Th) – Dec 10 (F).

1. Review for final exam. 2. Q&A