

AMERICAN POLITICS

Politics 20- Summer 2019

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Class meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9am-12:30pm
Office Hours: Thursdays 12pm – 2pm, (location TBD).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will engage in a broad exploration of the social forces and political institutions that shape American politics. We will investigate how social groups mobilize to make political demands, and how the design and structure of American government determines which political voices are heard and which groups are represented. Students will become familiar with enduring debates and core concepts that help explain the institutions, attitudes, and actions that shape American politics. Along the way, we will bring the “big ideas” to life by drawing on salient issues of today’s political environment, including racial and economic inequality, polarization and resentment, voting rights, same-sex marriage, gerrymandering, and threats to democracy. Students will also be introduced to examples of influential political science research that demonstrates a diverse array of research methods used in political analysis. Students will emerge from this course with a keener awareness of the historical context, social forces, and governmental structures that shape political life in the United States today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Demonstrate factual understanding of the U.S. political system including the influence of historical context on the design and function of governmental institutions.
2. Critically evaluate claims made in social science research, press coverage, and political communication by drawing on core concepts, theories, and foundational knowledge of American politics.
3. Analyze contemporary political events and debates by applying core concepts and theories of political science to assess the power dynamics shaping observed political outcomes.

UCSC Politics Undergraduate Program Learning Objectives (PLOs)

1. Understand the origins, development and nature of political institutions, practices, and ideas;
2. Place particular political phenomena in broader historical, cross-national, cross-cultural and theoretical context;
3. Demonstrate familiarity with various theoretical approaches to the study of politics, and their application in different geographic and substantive areas;
4. Critically evaluate arguments about political institutions, practices and ideas based on logic and evidence.
5. Develop and sustain coherent written and oral arguments regarding political phenomena, theories, and values based on appropriate empirical and/or textual evidence and logic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student success will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Participation and Attendance (20%) – Regular attendance and **engaged participation** at class meetings is the foundation for student success in this course. Students who actively engage during class meetings – by asking questions, commenting, and taking detailed notes – are far more likely earn higher grades and *enjoy* the class. There are *many* ways to contribute in class (see below!). Find the ways that work for you.

As a condensed summer course, missing any full class session (which equates to a full week of classes) means missing a substantial amount of class material, and will require considerable work and attention to catch up. More than one unexcused absence will significantly impact a student's participation/attendance grade. Contact the instructor *in advance* of any expected absences.

Current Events Memos (10%) – Students will write two brief memos in which they apply course concepts to a current political issue or event of their choosing.

Memo #1 is due *in class* on Wednesday, July 31 (Week 1)

Memo #2 is due *in class* on Wednesday, August 21 (Week 4)

Quizzes (20%) – Four quizzes (in weeks 1, 2, 4 and 5) will assess student comprehension of course material and the week's readings. Students will access quizzes via Canvas, and will have 15 minutes to complete the quiz once beginning. Quizzes may be completed any time before Friday at 11:59pm for a given week. Though quizzes are "open-note," they must be completed individually, not in groups.

Midterm Exam (20%) – A mid-term exam will be available on Canvas beginning Monday, August 12 (Week 3). Once students begin, they will have two hours to complete the. Exams must be completed on Canvas by Friday, August 16 at 11:59pm.

Analytical Paper (30% total) – For the final paper project, students will focus on a political issue they find especially interesting or important, and will investigate how particular political actors and institutions have shaped debate.

Proposal (5%) – Students will turn in a brief proposal in class on Wednesday, August 7th. The instructor will provide feedback and recommendations to guide completion of the final paper.

Final Paper (25%) – Due Friday, August 30th by 11:59pm. Upload to Canvas.

(No late submissions accepted.)

***** Late assignments** (*Current Events Memos* and *Paper Proposal*) - In such a condensed course, late assignments cause significant disruptions. One full letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late, and will not be accepted after the third day late. Extension requests due to unexpected emergency must be accompanied by the current working draft of the assignment, which will impact the final grade.

***** Quizzes, Midterm Exams, and final papers will not be accepted after deadlines/du dates.**

EXPECTATIONS

While we will collectively craft course *Principles of Community* (our class constitution) on Day 1, below are several expectations that should guide how we all show up and engage with each other during class:

Preparation – please arrive *on time*, having completed readings assigned for the class meeting.

Avoid Distractions – phones and electronic devices should be silenced and kept out of sight during class meetings. **Students are encouraged to take notes *by hand*** since a) laptops are often distracting to students using them as well as to students sitting nearby, b) solid research has demonstrated that students retain information better when taking notes by hand, and c) discussion is a major component of this course, and is often hindered when students are focused on their screens. Contact the instructor to request accommodations to use a laptop to take notes in class.

Keep up with the news! – Students should keep up with current political events by reading articles published by major, reputable news sources. With the 2020 Presidential campaign and debates heating up, there should be plenty to pay attention to! Work to relate current political issues and events to course topics.

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGED PARTICIPATION

Below are a few suggestions for ways students can cultivate engaged participation in this course:

- **Comment and Question:** Come to class with at least one question and one comment responding to the assigned reading.
- **Request Clarification:** ask the instructor or speaker to clarify a point.
- **Reflect Back:** In response to a comment made by the instructor or another student, “reflect it back” to make sure you’re hearing it right. “It sounds like what you’re saying is...”
- **Particular Passages:** point to a specific passage from the reading, either to raise a question, or to connect the passage to a bigger debate or discussion.
- **Play “Devil’s Advocate”:** Respectfully present an alternative point of view for consideration. “Well, how would we respond to someone who argued...”
- **Pose Questions to the Group:** during discussion, encourage your peers to respond to a question or issue you find intriguing, or confusing, or feel conflicted over.
- **Connections:** call attention to political issues today that you think relate to the concepts or theories under discussion. Or, point out how one concept relates to another concept we have discussed.

CITATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF SOURCES IN PAPERS

All courses in the Politics Department use one of two standard forms of citation (1) parenthetical or in-text citations and (2) footnotes. For the in-text system the department follows the Modern Language Association (MLA). For footnotes, the Chicago Manual of Style. Please familiarize yourself with the style guides for the two systems, which can be found on the Politics website (<https://politics.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/citation.html>). For this course, you can choose either citation style. Please be consistent with the style throughout your paper.

IMPORTANT 2019 SUMMER SESSION DEADLINES

Session 1:

Drop: Monday, July 1

Request for “W”: Friday, July 12

Session 2:

Drop: Monday, August 5

Request for “W”: Friday, August 16

8-Week:

Drop: Monday, July 8

Request for “W”: Friday, July 26

10-Week:

Drop: Monday, July 8

Request for “W”: Friday, July 26

Neither Summer Session nor instructors drop students for non-attendance or non-payment. Students must drop themselves. Dropping results in full tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

For all dates and deadlines, including ‘change of grade option’ (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: <https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>

For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email summer@ucsc.edu.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, please contact the DRC office, located in Hahn 125 or at 831-459-2089 or drc@ucsc.edu.

TITLE IX

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus [resources](#), reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#) and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu.

The Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office is located at 105 Kerr Hall. In addition to the [online reporting option](#), you can contact the Title IX Office by calling 831-459-2462.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree.

All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

COURSE MATERIALS

One textbook is required for this course, and is available for purchase at the Bay Tree Bookstore or online (including cheaper *used* and *rental* options*) at sites like amazon.com.

Required text:

The Logic of American Politics, 8th edition, Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck, Sage, CQ Press.
(Referred to as LOGIC hereafter.)

* *The textbook may be rented via Amazon for ~ \$21.*

* The textbook is also on reserve at McHenry Library for short-term loan.

All additional readings are available on the course Canvas site in the "Readings" folder (Files>Readings). All readings on Canvas are labeled according to the class session by which they should be read (W1M = Week 1, Monday). For these readings, students should concentrate on answering the following questions:

1. What **question** motivates the research?
2. What is the **central argument** or main point of the author?
3. What **methods** are used and what **evidence** is provided?
4. What are the **implications**? (Why does it matter?)

COURSE OUTLINE AND MEETING SCHEDULE

PART ONE: INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT or, “The Playing Field & the Rules of the Game”

WEEK ONE

Monday, July 29- *Foundations: Constitution and Course Introductions*

- LOGIC: Ch. 2.
- Federalist Papers 10 and 51

Wednesday, July 31- *Federalism: Layers of power*

- LOGIC: Ch. 3.
- Miller, Lisa, “The Invisible Black Victim: How American Federalism Perpetuates Racial Inequality in Criminal Justice.”

*****Memo #1 due in class.**

WEEK TWO

Monday, August 5- *Congress: Representing districts in D.C.*

- LOGIC: Ch. 6.
- Fenno, Richard F., *Home Style*, Introduction.
- Iyer and Gaskins, “[Redistricting and Congressional Control: A first look](#)”

Wednesday, August 7- *The Presidency: POTUS, Power, and the Public*

- LOGIC: Ch. 7.
- Druckman and Holmes, “Does Presidential Rhetoric Matter? Priming and Presidential Approval.”
- Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* Ch. 4.

*****Paper proposal due in class.**

WEEK THREE

Monday, August 12- *The Courts: The “Chief Referee” (Oyez, Oyez!)*

- LOGIC: Ch. 9.
- Giles et al., “The Supreme Court in American Democracy: Unraveling the Linkages between Public Opinion and Judicial Decision Making.”

PART TWO: POLITICAL IDENTITY, COMPETITION, AND ACTION or, “Players, Strategy, and Success”

Wednesday, August 14- *Public Opinion: What we think about when we think about politics*

- LOGIC: Ch. 10.
- Bartels, “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind.”
- Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*, Ch. 1.

*****Midterm due Friday, August 16 by 11:59pm. Complete on Canvas.**

WEEK FOUR

Monday, August 19- *Elections: Who wins and why?*

- LOGIC: Ch. 11.
- Sides et al., *Identity Crisis*, Ch. 8.
- Zukin, "[A Primer on Pre-Election Polls...](#)"

Wednesday, August 21- *Parties and Social Movements: The Power of Groups*

- LOGIC: Ch. 12.
- McAdam and Kloos, *Deeply Divided*, Introduction.

*****Memo #2 due in class.**

WEEK FIVE

Monday, August 26- *Interest Groups: "Organized Combat"*

- LOGIC: Ch. 13.
- Hacker and Pierson, Ch. 4-5.

Wednesday, August 28- *Power and the Playing field, or, What do we do now?*

- Slater and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, Ch. 7, "The Unraveling."
- Gilens and Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens."
- Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* Ch. 7.
- Ripley, "[The Least Politically Prejudiced Place in America.](#)"

*****Final Paper due Friday, August 30 by 11:59pm. Upload to Canvas.**