

Introduction to American Politics

Political Science 105
Spring 2011
MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m.
106 Bausch & Lomb

Professor Valeria Sinclair-Chapman
335 Harkness Hall
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Office Hours
Mondays, Wednesdays 12-1
or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Gary Hollibaugh
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Thursdays, 2-3:30

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Tuesdays, 2:30-4:00

Course Description

This course will examine how the government of the United States is organized, the rationale behind its organization, and the ways citizens, political actors, and political institutions interact to achieve political goals. As we consider the foundations of American government, major political institutions, and mechanisms that link citizens and government, we will make particular note of the diversity of the American experience as evidenced in research on race and gender. This course is appropriate for political science majors who wish to gain a foundation in American politics as well as for non-majors who simply wish to gain a better understanding of American government and processes.

Objectives

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and race
É"Vq"fgxgnqr"uwf gpvuø"etkvkecn"v j kpmkp i "cpf"cpn{ vkecn"umknnu"v j tqw i j"encuu"fkuewuukqp"cpf" y tkvvgp"
assignments

Required Texts

Bianco, William. 2001. *American Politics*
Kernell Samuel, and Steven Smith, editors. 2007. *Principles and Practice of American Politics*
Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2010. (3rd edition). *Culture War?*

Grading

Participation 10%; Short Papers 15%; 3 Exams, 25% each

Reading and any additional assignments should be completed before class on the day assigned. Lectures from guest speakers and TAs are important contributions to the class and considered fair game for exams. Pay careful attention to the syllabus and to any adjustments that may occur. You are responsible for material presented in lectures and discussed in class regardless of your attendance. Notes will not be supplied for students who have missed class, so plan to make other arrangements. Late and make-wr"cuuk i p o gpvu"y knn"dg"cnmqy gf"qpn{"y kvj"cfqevqtøu"pqvg"qt"qvjgt" equally serious documented reason for the absence. Athletes and other students who will miss class due to extra- or co-curricular travel should inform the assigned TA and me of the relevant dates early in the semester. Students with any other special needs should meet with me early in the semester so that proper accommodations can be made.

Class participation and attendance accounts for 10% of your final grade. Obviously those who do not attend class cannot participate in class discussion. Attendance in lectures and discussion sections will be taken regularly throughout the semester. Because the exchange of ideas is an important part of learning, you are encouraged to frequently ask questions and share your informed opinions during regular class and in discussion sections. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, students should use professional language in class discussions and written work.

Two short papers will be used to calculate 15% of your final grade. These short assignments may involve research online or in the library and require the analysis of course readings and/or current events. Papers should be 2-3 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and a 12-point font. Your opinion alone is not sufficient; support your arguments with evidence from course readings or other documented sources. You are required to complete at least two short papers to receive full credit, failure to do so will result in a grade of zero for the missing work. Papers should follow proper writing and grammar rules and must be turned uploaded to myROCHESTER before class on the date assigned. Late short papers will not be accepted. Paper topics will be provided in class. Scheduled due dates are: Feb 11 (civil rights), Mar 4 (Congress), Mar 25 (presidency), and Apr 18 (political autobiography).

Exams constitute 75% of your final grade. Three exams are each worth 25% and will take place during class on Feb 21, Apr 4 and April 27 (dates may change). Make-up exams will be administered only with prior approval.

Extra credit may be earned by attending U of R lectures on topics directly related to U.S. politics and writing a brief summary and response paper (1-2 pages). Be sure to include the title of the lecture, name of the speaker, and date of the presentation on the first page. Each response paper is worth one additional point on your final grade. Response papers must be submitted to your TA within 7 calendar days of the event (including weekends). A maximum total of 3 points may be granted to any individual student.

Academic honesty is expected. Turn in material that you have completed yourself. Absolutely no e j gcvkpi"qt"rnc i kctku o "*wukp i"uq o gqpg"gnugøu"y qt fu"qt"kf gcu"y kvj qwv"rtqr gt"ekvcvkqp+"y knn"dg" tolerated. Both cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will be reported for disciplinary action. Please refer to the University Handbook and/or speak with the instructor if you have any questions in this area.

Course Outline

Jan 12

Introduction and Course Overview

Political Foundations

Jan 14

Designing Institutions

What makes decision-making institutions matter? What factors influence the likelihood of cooperation and compromise in political decision-making?

Discussion: 5-15 pm, 58-66

Feb 9, 11

Lingering Issues/ New Frontiers

J q f i g . " P c v j c p . " õ R q n k v k e c n . " E w n v w t c n " H k i j v u " T g o c k p . ö " *Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2010
(electronic); õ G p e n q u w t g " 4 " q h " F q F F " 3 5 2 6 0 4 8 < " " S w e n k h k e c v k q p " U v c p f c t f u " h q t " G p n k u v o g p v . "

Mar 28, 30, Apr 1

The Judiciary

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(KS) ô Scalia, A Matter of Interpretation (excerpt) pp. 378-395; Breyer, from Active Liberty, pp. 396-407; J c o knvqp."ōHgfgtcnkuv" Pq0"9: .ö" r r0"632-415; *Carp, Manning, Stidham, "The Voting Behavior of George W. Bush's Judges,"* 429-447

Apr 4 (M) Exam 2

Linkage Mechanisms

Apr 6, 8, 11

Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Dkcpeq."ōXqvgtu"cpf"Xqv g" Fgekukqpu.ö" r r0"89-; 2=ō Y kppki "cpf" J qn fki "Gngevkg"Qhhkegö" r r0" ; 3-120; (KS) ô Popkin, The Reasoning Voter (excerpt) pp. 511-518

Apr 13, 15, 18

Public Opinion

(KS) ô Cu jgt."ōCpcn { | kpi "cpf"Kpvgt r tgvki "Rqnu.ö" r r0"66: -478="Ue j wfuqp."ō C o gtkecøu"Ki pqtcpv" Xqvgtu.ö"6; 4-499

Apr 20, 22, 25

Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, *Culture War?* (Read entire book)

Apr 27 (W) Exam 3