

Political Science 202W

Fall 2023

Lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays (and occasional Fridays), 10:25-11:15

Recitations on Thursdays or Fridays

Argument in Political Science

Professor Gerald Gamm

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Office hours (PSCI 202W only): Monday afternoons, 1:00-2:00

Additional office hours: Monday afternoons, 2:00-3:00

Recitation leaders: [Garrett Briggs](#), [Nick Cavallerano](#), [Sam Eichel](#), [Alec Ellison](#), [Matan Kotler-Berkowitz](#), [Isabella Rocha](#), and [Elsa Vellone](#)

This course introduces students to the questions, concepts, and analytical approaches of political scientists and emphasizes careful reading and analytical writing. For its subject matter, this class focuses on the tension between majority rule and minority rights in the American political tradition. Topics include tyranny of the majority, slavery, constitutional design, representation, the paradox of voting, collective action problems, political ambition, the development of the American party system, congressional organization, racism and civil rights, women's rights, substantive due process, the politics of contraception and abortion and LGBTQ rights, partisan polarization, and democratic erosion. Readings are drawn from classic texts in American thought—the Declaration of Independence, *The Federalist*, Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, speeches by Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, Supreme Court cases—as well as from books and articles written by contemporary political scientists.

Books. Five books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore and at various places online, including [AbeBooks](#) and [Amazon](#). *Be certain to get the correct translation of Tocqueville; our edition is translated by George Lawrence and edited by J. P. Mayer.* All of these books are available on reserve and some are also available as electronic editions through [Rush Rhees Library](#):

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated by George Lawrence.
2. Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Congress at the Grassroots*
3. John Aldrich, *Why Parties?: A Second Look*.
4. Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*.
5. Nancy Woloch, *Muller v. Oregon*

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

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 [Academic Honesty Policy](#). In this class, students are encouraged to discuss readings and course material with anyone they choose. Once 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

All papers are due in that week's Blackboard assignment folder no later than 1:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. Requests for extensions will be granted only on a case-by-

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 recitat

Unit A Parchment Barriers

Aug. 30 Lecture

Sept. 1 Discussion:

Unit C Representation

Sept. 18 Lecture
Sept. 20 Lecture
Sept. 21/22 Recitation

Paper due Sept. 19. Drawing on each assigned reading, consider the ways in which representatives should (or do) relate to their constituents.

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

Melancton Smith, [Objections to the Constitution in the New York Ratifying Convention](#), 20-23 June 1788.

The Federalist Nos. [35](#), [55](#).

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Congress at the Grassroots*, 1-88.

[Do Politicians Racially Discriminate against Constituents?
A Field Experiment on State Legislators](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2011), 463-77.

Unit D Social Choice and the Origins of American Political Parties

Sept. 25 No class Yom Kippur
Sept. 27 Lecture
Sept. 29 Lecture

No paper assignment.

John Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, 3-43, 67-101.

Unit E Democratic Tyranny

Oct. 2 Lecture
Oct. 4 Lecture
Oct. 5/6 Recitation

Paper due Oct. 3.

Unit F Democratic Liberty

Oct. 9 Lecture
Oct. 11 Lecture
Oct. 12/13 Recitation

Paper due Oct. 10. Drawing on Tocqueville and Dzur, consider how Tocqueville values the deferential aspects of jury service, in contrast to the democratic and participatory venues of town government and civil associations. How, according to Putnam, has associational life changed in the contemporary era, and why does that matter?

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer and transl. George Lawrence, 61-72, 87-98, 189-95, 235-45, 262-76, 286-94, 301-11, 395-400, 509-28.

_____ [ng Social Capital](#) *Journal of Democracy* 6 (Jan. 1995), 65-78.

_____ *Political Theory* 38 (2010), 603-30.

Unit G Collective Action and the Rise of Mass Party Politics

Oct. 16 No class Fall Break
Oct. 18 Lecture
Oct. 20 Lecture

No paper assignment.

John Aldrich, *Why Parties?*, 30-32, 43-50, 102-29.

_____ [The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920](#)
American Historical Review 89 (1984), 620-47.

Interlude

Oct. 23 Review/Q&A
Oct. 25 Midterm Exam
Oct. 26/27 Recitation/Discussion

Unit H Ambition, Slavery

