

POL 203Y: U. S. POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Tues 6 pm

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the U.S. national government and politics. We will discuss the foundations of the federal government system and its institutions. Applying the logic of politics, we will analyze the institutions of the U.S. governing system to see what function they play and why. In this class, we will evaluate how power is wielded within and between these institutions. We will critically evaluate the outputs of these institutions. By the end of the course you should have assimilated the basic concepts and information about both U.S. politics and the study of politics. Most importantly, you will have learned to think about the essential questions raised by these concepts.

In the fall we will focus on:

- 1) Foundations. Key concepts of political science and foundations of the U.S. government.
- 2) Institutions and national policy-making: The elected institutions of United States federal government: Congress and the executive, and the interest groups that seek to influence them.

In the spring, we will turn our attention to the public in political life:

- 3) Division and conflict. The expression of public opinion, social and political divisions and the role institutions play in exacerbating, reconciling or resolving these differences.
- 4) Forces of change and agents of stability. How formal and informal institutions provide stability, but allow opportunities for change.

We will conclude by evaluating whether America is unusual (and if so, why?).

Class Lectures and Tutorials

There is one two-hour lecture each week. In these lectures, I will raise and discuss central issues and questions, engage with (and occasionally dispute) the readings, and imbue the course with current political events. Some weeks there will also be tutorials led by a teaching assistant. All students will be expected to sign up for, and attend, one of these tutorial sessions. During these sessions, you, the students, will take center stage as you engage your peers in a discussion, game and/or simulation focusing on the week's topic(s). Your active participation in and contribution to the discussions are required.

Attendance and illness

Attendance in lecture and tutorial is required. If you are not feeling well, *or had flu-like symptoms 24 hours before class*, you should not come to class or tutorial. Email your teaching assistant. Pending full details of university policy from www.preparedness.utoronto.ca, no medical note is necessary if you are just missing a week and all

and will require you to display your factual knowledge about the foundations of the U.S. government and an understanding of the key political science concepts. There is a final examination at the end of the year that will include a couple of essays. Prior to the final exam, I will distribute a list of essay questions that I will use to draw the final exam.

Students with special needs are encouraged to make arrangements with the university for a special administration of the tests.

If you miss a term test with an excusable absence, you must notify the instructor or your teaching assistant by phone or email before the test administration. If you miss fail to notify us in advance, we will dock your test grade by 10%. In this communication, you should provide reliable contact info so we can inform you of when there will be a make-up test. It is your responsibility to take a make-up test as soon as you are able, so you will need to prioritize scheduling a make-up. Whenever possible, we expect that you will make up the test within one week of the original administration (but not less than 24 hours after the symptoms of your illness disappear). If you miss a make-up test without a legitimate excuse, or the instructor does not accept your excuse, you will be given a grade of zero for the test.

Quizzes

There will be two types of quizzes administered in this course, one is a closed-book quiz administered by your teaching assistants in your tutorial. The second is open-book and taken at your convenience on the course's Blackboard site. Both types of quizzes will have no more than ten questions on it. Students are advised to prepare for possible quizzes using resources on the textbook's website.

Quizzes during tutorials are closed-book and will confirm that you have completed and understand the required reading for the week and are familiar with major current public affairs in the news. As a result, if you are sick, you should notify your TA in advance of the tutorial. These quizzes will be graded and returned to you at the next session of your section. Your single worst quiz result will not count towards your final grade. Missing a quiz without an acceptable reason will result in a zero. If you miss a quiz with an acceptable reason, your quiz grade will be calculated solely from the quizzes you did take.

On select weeks, there will be an announcement in class, during tutorials and/or Blackboard announcing an open-book quiz that must be completed on-line that week. This quiz will confirm that you have completed and understand the required reading. Each quiz will contain no more than ten questions. All questions will be fill-in-the-blank, true/false, matching or multiple choice. No points will be awarded if the quiz is not completed before the deadline.

Assignments

Survey Data Assignment: In the spring, we will ask you to analyze some U.S. opinion data using data and web-based software at: <http://sda.berkeley.edu>. First, you will use the data to describe a set of attitudes or behaviours with a short explanation accompanied by a table and/or graph of your results. You will be graded on the clarity and accuracy of your explanation and results. For extra credit (3 marks), you can repeat the results over time or in comparison to data in Canada and elsewhere found here: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/datalib/major/sda.htm>

Simulations: There are two simulations requiring that every student assume a defined role. In December, we simulate Presidential media relations. In March, we will simulate Congressional committee deliberations. Your grade for each simulation depends on your active participation in your assigned role, the completion of a role-specific task (like the writing of a newspaper story covering the President) and/or a response paper. Details about both simulations will be posted Blackboard. If class is disrupted by the H1N1 pandemic, the second simulation may be cancelled or reduced in size or scope. As a result, a small assignment may be substituted or additional weight will be given to participation and/or quizzes.

Participation

Participation is essential to an enjoyable and productive learning experience. All students are expected to attend tutorials ready and willing to make thoughtful contributions to the discussion. Just showing up and attending tutorials is necessary but not sufficient to get a good ('B') participation grade. Contributions to an interesting thread on the Blackboard discussion forums are considered to be equivalent to speaking during class, so the best participation grades will reflect regular contributions during tutorials and/or on-line. All students are encouraged to visit the discussion boards at least once a week to join conversations about the class readings and current events, or to ask or answer questions raised by other students about the readings. In some weeks, a teaching assistant will moderate a virtual conversation on a particular topic.

You are also encouraged to post any questions you have about the readings prior to class and tutorials on Blackboard.

Grading Policy

Late assignments will be penalized 3% per day for the first ten days of lateness. After ten days of lateness, the teaching assistants and the instructor will refuse to accept the work for grading.

All matters of grading, exemptions, and discipline procedures will be handled in accordance with the Faculty of Arts and Science Academic Handbook. Extensions and excused absences for non-health reasons may only be granted prior to the day of the deadline, exam or quiz. Any student who believes that any work has been unfairly graded may ask the instructor to re-evaluate his or her work. Grading appeals should be submitted with a cover letter explaining the basis of the appeal to the instructor or the teaching assistant. No oral or emailed appeals will be considered. Please do not seek to discuss grades with the instructor or the teaching assistants until the Monday following our return of the marks. Such re-marking may involve the entire piece of work, and may raise or lower the mark. All other appeals and complaints will be handled in a manner consistent with the regulations described in the handbook.

See <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/main/faculty/resources/faculty/acaresources> for the complete handbook.

Plagiarism - Turnitin.com

On all work you complete for this course, all passages, ideas or information culled from other people or sources must be attributed to them.

Students agree that by taking this course all required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **Turnitin.com** for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the **Turnitin.com** reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the **Turnitin.com** web site.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Contact

Questions and concerns

Students are encouraged to post all questions about the course material and current events on Blackboard, in the appropriate discussion forum. These forums will be moderated by teaching assistants and the instructor with the hope of ensuring that every question receives an answer before the next class.

For personal concerns, questions that do not receive an answer on Blackboard, or to discuss class material that has left you thoroughly confused, the first person you should approach with questions or concerns is your teaching assistant. Each teaching assistant will notify their tutorials how (and when) to best contact them. Following the return of marks, if you want to discuss your grade, your teaching assistant is the most appropriate person to contact initially even though they may not have personally graded your work. All such discussions, though, must occur no earlier than the Monday following the return of the grades.

Instructor meetings and contact

You are welcome to meet with the course instructor. My office hours are before class on Tuesday afternoons and by appointment through e-mail. Because I work from home most days, email is the best way to reach me. Via email, I am happy to arrange a phone conversation at a mutually agreeable time.

Because it is difficult to get to know many students in a large class, any group of four or five students is invited to arrange Dutch-treat dinners with me on or near campus (before class?), or in Mississauga near my home. I especially look forward to talking to you about topics related to the course or current political events.

Schedule

Part I: Foundations

15-Sep Intro: Do Institutions Matter?

22-Sep Prisoner's Dilemma & Tragedy of the Commons

Tutorial: Isle of Ted Game.

Virtual Conversation: Will freedom to breed ruin us all? Should Western governments provide incentives for families that have one or fewer children?

Logic of American Politics textbook ("Logic"), Ch. 1

Knoke, David. 1988. "Incentives in Collective Action Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 53(3), pp. 311-329 [\[JSTOR\]](#)

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons" *Science*, pp. 1243-1248. [\[JSTOR\]](#)

Case Study: Jehl, Douglas. "Arkansas Rice Farmers Run Dry, and U.S. Remedy Sets Off Debate" *New York Times*. Nov. 11, 2002. p. A1

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/11/national/11RICE.html?scp=1&sq=arkansas%20rice%20farmers&st=cse>

29-Sep Precursors, Revolution and Nation-Building

Logic, Ch. 2.

Iroquois Constitution: Laws of Emigration, Rights of Foreign Nations, Rights and Powers of War, Treason or Secession of a Nation, Rights of the People of the Five Nations

http://tuscaroras.com/pages/history/iroquois_constitution_1.html or

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Iroquois_Constitution (Recommended:

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/In_what_ways_is_the_iroquois_constitution_different_to_the_us_constitution)

Declaration of Independence (Logic, Appendix 1)

Articles of Confederation <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/artconf.htm>

Annapolis Convention http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/annapoli.asp

Roche, John P. 1961. "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action." *American Political Science Review* 55(4), pp. 799-816.

6-Oct Constitutional Convention & Constitution

Tutorial: Discuss Federalist Papers, rights of individuals or "good governance"?

Federalist Papers 10, 45, 48 & 51 <http://www.constitution.org/afp/afpchron.htm>

Brutus, Anti-Federalist Paper # 1, 3 <http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus01.htm>

<http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus03.htm>

Constitution of the United States (Logic, Appendix 2)

Borowiak, Craig. 2007. "Accountability Debates: The Federalists, the Anti-Federalists, and Democratic Deficits," *Journal of Politics* 69:4 (November): 998-1014.

13-Oct Ratification, Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties

Logic Ch. 5

Rights of Man http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp

Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10 of Constitution, see Appendix 2)

20-Oct Federalism, Civil War and Reconstruction

Tutorial: What motivated Northern antipathy to slavery and secession?

Logic, 3 & pp. 138-153
Dred Scott: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2932.html>,
Abraham Lincoln, "House Divided" speech and Gettysburg Address:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2934.html>
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp
Listen to [partial] dramatization: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc5VEBPz8LE>
"Africans in America," PBS Narrative, Part 4:
Start here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/narrative.html>

27-Oct Civil Rights and Lawmaking

Logic, Ch. 4, & pp. 293-307
Lee, Taeku. 2008. "Race, Immigration and the Identity-to-Politics Link." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 457-478
<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.051707.122615>

3-Nov Judiciary and Civil Liberties Today: Privacy and Sodomy
Tutorial: Who (if anyone) should regulate family law and morality? Are there limits to a citizen's right to privacy?

Logic, Ch. 9
Supreme Court decision, Lawrence v. Texas
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZS.html>
Summary and edited opinion:
<http://www.law.duke.edu/publiclaw/supremecourtonline/editedcases/lawvtex.html>
Recommended: Richards, David. The Sodomy Cases. University Press of Kansas. 2009.
<http://www.kansaspress.ku.edu/ricsod.html>

10-Nov Urban Politics and Local Elections

Tutorial: Why is there an urban-rural divide in US politics? & Review of "Foundations"

Bissinger, H. G. "Prayer for the City" [PFC], preface- Ch. 3; 9
News from previous week on local, state and special federal elections in the U.S.

17-Nov **Term Test 1: Foundations**

Part II: Institutions and National Policy-making

24-Nov President and Bureaucracy

Tutorial: Powers of the President; simulation planning.

Logic, Ch. 7 & 8
Lizza, Ryan "The Gatekeeper: Rahm Emanuel on the Job" *The New Yorker*
Moe, Terry. "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure." Available on Blackboard.
Recommended: Wilson, J. Q. *What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (Basic Books, 1989), pp. 315-345.

1-Dec President and Media. Film: "The Press Secretary

Tutorial: Presidential Press Briefing Simulation

Logic, Ch. 14
Kernell, Samuel. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 4th Edition. Introduction.

WINTER BREAK

5-Jan Congress

Logic Ch. 6
TBA

12-Jan Interest Groups: Venues and Strategies

Logic, Ch. 13
Wright, John. "One Thing You Need to Know... Interest Groups."
Birnbaum, Jeffrey. *The Money Men*, 2000. Ch. 8 (pp. 168-192) "Lobbyist Envy."
Kitschelt, Herbert. 1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 16:57-85.

19-Jan Film: "Taking on the Kennedy's"
TAKE HOME TEST DUE

26-Jan Campaigns and Elections: Do Campaigns Matter?

Holbrook, Thomas. *Do Campaigns Matter?* (Sage, 1997), Ch. 2
Campbell, James E. *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections* (The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1997), Ch. 1

2-Feb Public Opinion

Tutorial: Are voters hopelessly ill-informed? How do they manage to make decisions in both high-visibility and low-visibility elections? Do politicians invest heavily in persuasion because people's views are so easy to manipulate or because they are so difficult to manipulate?

Logic, Ch. 10
Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation" *American Political Science Review*. 89: 543-564.

9-Feb Parties and Party System: Why Party? Why two parties?

Logic, Ch. 12

16-Feb NO CLASS - READING WEEK

23-Feb Racial Divisions and Domestic Policy

Tutorial: Discuss *Prayer for the City*; Why are business interests so strong?

PFC, Ch. 4-8; 10-11; 13-14; 18
Godwin, R. Kenneth and Barry J. Seldon. 2002. "What corporations really want from Government: the public provision of private goods." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett Loomis, *Interest Group Politics*. 6th Ed., pp. 205-224.

2-Mar Civil Controversies: Film: "School Prayer" <http://www.schoolprayer.com/>

God, Country and Social Capital

Tutorial: What is social capital? How does it help solve collective action problems? Is it always desirable? Is the U.S. facing a crisis?

PFC, Ch. 12

Putnam, Robert. 1993. "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life." *The American Prospect*.

Alan Wolfe. 1997. "[Is civil society obsolete?](#)" *The Brookings Review*. Washington: 15(4); pp. 9-13.

Galston, William A. and Peter Levine. 1997. "[America's civic condition: A glance at the evidence.](#)" *The Brookings Review*. Washington: 15(4); pp. 23-27

DiIulio, John J. "[The Lord's work.](#)" *The Brookings Review*. Washington: 15(4); pp. 27-32

9-Mar TBA

Data assignment due.

16-Mar Congress simulation time / TBA

23-Mar America the Unusual & Prospects for Reform

Tutorial: What makes the U.S. unusual? Is America so unusual??

Logic, Ch. 15

Kingdon, John W. *America the Unusual*

Shafer, Byron. 1998. "American Exceptionalism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 445-63

Recommended: Feld, Scott L. and Bernard Grofman. 1987. "[Necessary and Sufficient Conditions...](#)" *American Journal of Political Science* 31(4):709-728

30-Mar No class (Passover)

Final Exam = TBA