

POL 203Y1Y

U.S. Government and Politics

2016-2017

Professor Ryan Hurl

Meeting Code: LEC 5101

Lecture Times: Wednesday, 6-8pm

Location: LM 159 Lash Miller Chemical Laboratories

Office: Sidney Smith 3108

E-mail: ryan.hurl@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Fridays, 12-2pm or by appointment

Course Description

The spectacle of American politics is both interesting and alarming to Canadians—and this has never been more true than in 2016. This course will give you an opportunity to enjoy the spectacle of American political theatre, while at the same time helping you achieve a deeper understanding of the ideas, institutions, and interests that shape American political life. To achieve this, you will have to move beyond the day to day political coverage provided by journalists or talk shows—as essential as those sources of information might be. You will have to learn about the basic structure of American political history, not out of historical curiosity, but because we cannot understand the American present without understanding the American past. You will have to learn a great deal about the character of American constitutionalism and American law. You will have to discuss some of the most contentious political issues in American politics: racism, religion, environmentalism, inequality, immigration. For better or worse, we are likely to spend a good deal of time talking about Donald Trump. This course will help you to develop your abilities to write and think about these issues using the tools of political science. At the same time, and just as importantly, we will develop our abilities to critically analyze the claims of social science—we will learn that it is not un-scientific to treat the claims of science with skepticism (particularly where political science is concerned.) Hopefully, we will enjoy ourselves as well—our discussion of the USA will be open, contentious (but friendly), and controversial. Like it or not, the USA remains the most important nation in the world, and it is worth taking some time to understand it.

Teaching Assistants:

Alix Jansen, alixjansen@gmail.com
 Matthew Lesch matt.lesch@utoronto.ca
 Clifford Smith clifford.smith@utoronto.ca

Tutorial Times and Locations:

Tutorial	Day	Time	Room Number	TA
POL203Y1 TUT 0101A	W	1200 1300	RL 14081	Smith
POL203Y1 TUT 0101B	W	1200 1300	UC 248	Jansen
POL203Y1 TUT 0201A	W	1300 1400	RL 14081	Smith
POL203Y1 TUT 0201B	W	1300 1400	UC 248	Jansen
POL203Y1 TUT 0301B	W	1600 1700	SS 1078	Smith
POL203Y1 TUT 0301B	W	1600 1700	SS 2101	Jansen
POL203Y1 TUT 0401A	W	1700 1800	SS 2101	Jansen
POL203Y1 TUT 0401B	W	1700 1800	SS 1078	Smith

TUTORIAL DATES

There will be SEVEN tutorials each term. PLEASE MARK DOWN THE DATES CAREFULLY!

Tutorial One: SEPTEMBER 21st

Tutorial Two: OCTOBER 5th

Tutorial Three: OCTOBER 19th

Tutorial Four: NOVEMBER 2nd

Tutorial Five: NOVEMBER 16th

ENROLLING YOURSELF IN A TUTORIAL: GOOD LUCK.

You can enroll yourself in a tutorial through BLACKBOARD on Thursday 15th, September 16th, at 12 noon

To enroll in a group, go to the POL 203 Blackboard page-- Select "Tools" under Course Menu--

select the UT Group Self Sign Up -- Enroll in a tutorial

Blackboard

Course resources and materials are available online through Blackboard, accessible via the University of Toronto's Learning Portal (<https://portal.utoronto.ca/>) You are expected to check the course site on Blackboard on a regular basis. You must have a valid UTORid account to access the Learning Portal/Blackboard. It is your responsibility to obtain a UTORid if they do not already have one. Information and assistance on setting up a UTORid account is available at Information Commons at Robarts Library (help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/2/accounts-and-passwords.html).

Email Communication

You should try to raise substantive, course related questions during class, tutorials, and office hours; Professor Hurl (that's me) is almost always available to talk after class, and I can make special appointments if you cannot make my regular office hours. Try to think of email as a last resort, not the primary way to raise questions!

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/usgovernmentandpolitics/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

I post links to articles that I find interesting and/or relevant to the course on this Facebook page.

Course Requirements

Mid-Year Exam 25% *This exam will take place during the exam period in December*

Final Exam: 30% *This exam will take place during the exam period in April/May*

The end of term exam and the final exam will be based upon short answer and essay questions.

Rough Draft of Research Paper: 5% February `12th

The rough draft of your paper must be a complete version of your paper, including footnotes and bibliography. The research paper must be 10-12 pages in length (Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced) not including the bibliography. Additional details regarding the research paper will be provided on Blackboard and discussed in lecture and tutorial.

Final Draft of Research Paper: 30% DUE MARCH 30th

BOTH THE ROUGH DRAFT AND FINAL DRAFT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO TURNITIN. IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO USE TURNITIN FOR WHATEVER WEIRD REASON, LET YOUR TA KNOW RIGHT AWAY

Late Penalties: All assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for every day they are late, up to two full letter grades.

Class Participation: 10%

Students are expected to attend lectures and tutorial sections, complete all readings and assignments, and discuss the material covered by the class in an intelligent and respectful manner.

In addition, students should stay informed of current affairs in American politics-- the following website is a good one to follow: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>

Missed Tests

Students who miss a term test will be assigned a mark of zero for that test unless they are granted special consideration. If the mid-term test (in December) was missed for reasons entirely beyond the student's control, a written request for special consideration may be submitted to the instructor within one week of the missed test. This request must explain the reason for missing the test and include appropriate documentation (e.g. Verification of Student Illness or Injury form).

A student whose explanation is accepted by the instructor will be granted a makeup test.

If the student is granted permission to take a makeup test and misses it, then he or she is assigned a mark of zero for the test unless the instructor is satisfied that missing the makeup test was unavoidable. Students are not automatically entitled to a second makeup test.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services
<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Notice of Collection

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. The information on medical certificates

is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering accommodations for academic purposes based on medical grounds. The department will maintain a record of all medical certificates received. At all times it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-946-5835. Address: Room 201, McMurrich Bldg., 12 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1.

TURNITIN!

I am required by the university to include the following statement regarding turnitin.com:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

You have the right to choose NOT to allow your paper to be submitted to turnitin.com. If you choose to exercise this right, you **must** provide an annotated bibliography, and you may be required to undergo an oral examination based upon your paper. Should you elect not to send your paper to turnitin.com, please inform your teaching assistant during the first tutorial.

Plagiarism—Don't Do It.

If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an "F" for the paper, an "F" for the course, and numerous other punishments too hideous to recount. **You are responsible for making sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism.** In particular, this means that you must properly footnote your sources, in addition to avoiding the more obvious types of plagiarism. If you have any doubts about whether something constitutes plagiarism, don't do it. Your teaching assistants and I can answer your questions regarding proper footnoting/citation practices. Please consult us if you have any concerns.

For further information on academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

What can I do to succeed in this course?

What can I do to succeed academically in this course?

Attend the lectures and be an active participant

You should use the lecture to ask questions—about the lecture itself, about the readings, about the assignments, about anything you can think of. I strongly advise that you take notes using paper/pen/pencil—recent studies suggest that this improves your ability to retain information. While I do not ban laptops, I ask as a courtesy that you refrain from watching videos, checking Facebook, playing video games etc.

Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard after each lecture. The slides are in NO WAY a substitute for attending the lecture—in fact, they will only contain an outline of the lecture, along with occasional graphs, charts, images, etc.

Teaching Assistants

You should contact your teaching assistant for all issues related to the course—details regarding assignments, questions about the readings, and so forth.

Visit Office Hours

Both the teaching assistants and Professor Hurl (that's me) will hold office hours. Professor Hurl's office hours will be weekly; your teaching assistants will let you know their tutorial schedule.

I strongly advise that you make use of the office hours, early and often. Ask me about the readings, ask me about the lectures, ask me about the essay assignment—anything you can think of. The only thing I ask is that, for any issues related to absences, illnesses, or late assignments, contact your ta first.

.The Writing Centres : Use Them!

This course will help you develop your ability to write a grammatically correct, thematically coherent, and logically compelling essay. However, I strongly encourage you to work with your college's writing centre. <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>

Please note: individual appointments can be hard to come by at the end of the semester; try to schedule your appointments as early as possible.

(Personal note: as an undergraduate, I took ALL of my essays to the writing centre before submitting them. Not only did this help to improve my writing—it also helped me to avoid procrastinating.)

Texts

Donald Critchlow, *American Political History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 (available through Amazon Kindle)

https://www.amazon.ca/American-Political-History-Introduction-Introductions-ebook/dp/B00PAXBBR8/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1472663072&sr=8-1

Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison (Publius.) *The Federalist Papers*. (can be accessed on-line at...

http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=788&chapter=108558&layout=html&Itemid=27

Ryan Hurl *Understanding America Government* . Open-access textbook, “beta-version” NOT FOR CITATION IN THE REAL WORLD (yet) Available under “course materials” in Blackboard.

Other readings will be available on Blackboard in pdf form (under Course Materials.)

Lectures and Readings

Week One 9.14 Political Science and American Politics in 2016: An Introduction to Advanced Trump Studies

Understanding America, Chapter One

Week Two 9.21 From the Revolution to the Constitution (that no one liked)

Understanding America, Chapter 2

American Political History, Introduction and Chapter One

Recommended Reading: *Federalist Papers* #1-9

Week Three September 28th The Constitution of 1787, The Problem of Faction, and the Early, Hate-Filled Years of American Politics.

Federalist Papers #10, #47, #51

American Political History, Chapters 2-4

Week October 5th Critical Junctures, Federalism and American Political Development: From one disaster (Reconstruction) to another (the New Deal)

Understanding America, Chapter 3

American Political History, Chapters 5-7

Week 5 October 12th Let the Culture Wars Begin! American Federalism and Political Development from the “Great Society” (1960s) to Today

Understanding America, Chapter 3

American Political History, Chapters 8-9

National Federation of Independent Businesses v. Sebelius 567 U.S. ____ (2012), 132 S.Ct 2566 (edited version available under course materials)

Weeks 6 October 19th Stranger Things: An Introduction to the USA's peculiar Parties and crazy Elections

Understanding America, Chapter 4, Part One

Weeks 7 October 26th Unexpected Developments: Parties and Elections in the 21st Century

Understanding America, Chapter 4, Part Two

Week 8 November 2nd Campaign Finance Laws: Authoritarian, Unconstitutional, Useless (!)

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission 558 U.S. 310 (2010) (edited version available under course materials)

Robert Boatright "Campaign Finance Reform in the United States."

John Samples, *The Fallacy of Campaign Finance Reform* (excerpts)

Week 9. November 9th No Matter What Happens, Everyone Loses: The 2016 Election and the Future of American Politics

Readings TBA

Week 10 November 16th Inefficient by Design: The Structure and Development of Congress

Understanding America, Chapter 6, part one

Barbara Sinclair, "Congressional Reform."

Week 11 November 23rd Parliament of Whores: Congress in the Era of Political Polarization

Thomas E. Mann and Norman Ornstein *It's Even Worse than it Looks* (excerpts)

Theda Skocpol “Naming the Problem: What it will take to counter extremism and engage Americans in the fight against Global Warming.”

Week 12 November 30th Congress Makes a Pork-Filled, Badly Designed, Doomed to Fail Law that No One is Happy With: Comparing the House and the Senate

Understanding America, Chapter 6, part two

Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Legislation* (excerpts)

WINTER TERM READINGS AND LECTURES

(I’ll let you know when the time is right.)