

June 27, 2016

## **POL 203Y: U. S. POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

MTWR 2 - 4 pm

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**Office Hours:** Before class, Tuesdays and Thursdays, TBA

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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, the historic underpinnings of these institutions and the challenges they pose for policy-making and reform. We will pay special attention in this term to the on-going Presidential election campaign.

We will focus on:

- I. Foundations. Key concepts of political science and foundations of the U.S. government.
- II. Parties, Campaigns and Election 2016. A new president will be elected this year. Really.
- III. Modern Presidency. The President, the media and how the two interact.
- IV. Division and conflict. The expression of public opinion, social and political divisions and the role parties and groups play in exacerbating, reconciling or resolving these differences.
- V. Beyond the electoral arena. How formal and informal institutions like the courts and civil society provide stability, but allow opportunities for change.

We will conclude by evaluating whether America is unusual and the role played by its institutions, its unique history or the opinions held by its citizens.

### **Class Lectures and Tutorials**

There are up to four two-hour lectures 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 sessions will be devoted to special activities like a simulation, or audio-visual presentations. On Wednesdays, there will also be tutorials led by a teaching assistant. During most of these tutorials, 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. You may be asked to post a comment on the discussion forums or complete a brief assignment to make-up for your missed participation in tutorials.

## **Required Reading**

Kollman, Ken. *The American Political System*. W.W. Norton.

There are several readings that are available on Blackboard or on-line in e-journals made available through the library.

You must also follow U.S. politics and current events on a regular, on-going basis. Any list of useful resources must include the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* and blogs they manage include the Times' Upshot and the Post's Monkey Cage. Some insightful and timely podcasts are available for free from National Public Radio (npr.org) and the New Yorker Magazine (newyorker.com) or through the iTunes store. There are many websites and blogs that regularly cover U.S. Politics. Several worth mentioning include <http://www.vox.com/> , <http://www.politico.com/> , and <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>. Specialized sites include <http://www.factcheck.org/> , which fact checks campaign claims, an often-sensationalist hub for Trump supporters <http://www.breitbart.com/>. The latest polling data and commentary on the latest trends in public opinion can be found at <http://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster> or <http://pollingreport.com/> , or <http://fivethirtyeight.com/> .

## **Course Blackboard Site**

The Blackboard website is accessible when you log into <http://portal.utoronto.ca> using your UTORid. On Blackboard website you will find course readings, updated versions of this syllabus, details of all assignments, class discussion forums and the course gradebook.

From time to time, class announcements & material will be delivered via e-mail through Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to maintain their e-mail addresses in good working order and to ensure that the e-mail address known to the university (and listed on Blackboard) is accurate. Failure to receive important class announcements & messages are NOT legitimate excuses for missing class work.

## **Grading**

Final Exam (TBA) = 35%

Term Test I, July 7 = 20%

[Mini] Term Test II, July 21 = 10%

Simulation participation and response papers = 10%

Survey data assignment = 10%

Quizzes (On-line, open book), June 30, July 5, 14, August 2 = 5%

Campaign Update Presentation (Mondays, each student assigned a different date) = 5%

Participation (in-class and on-line) = 5%

## **Tests and Exams**

There will be two term tests that will take place during lecture as indicated in the schedule below. The first term test will consist of primarily of multiple choice questions, and will require you to demonstrate your factual knowledge about the foundations of the U.S. government and an understanding of the key political science concepts. A second term test will consist of about 20-30 multiple choice questions and will focus on the presidency and the 2016 election.

There is a final examination at the end of the year that will be multiple choice plus an essay. Prior to the final exam, I will distribute a list of essay questions that I will use to draw the final exam.

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. 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 five days of the original administration. 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 are four open-book quizzes scheduled during the term. Each one will be taken on the course's Blackboard site. This quiz will confirm that you have completed and understand the required reading. Each quiz will contain no more than ten questions and will be due by midnight on the day of the quiz. No points will be awarded if the quiz is not completed before the deadline. Students are advised to prepare for possible quizzes using resources on the textbook's website. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to also administer closed book quizzes in lecture or in tutorials if and when we suspect that students are not properly preparing for class.

### **Assignments**

*Survey Data Assignment:* 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 is one simulation of Presidential media relations. Every student must assume a defined role. Your grade for the 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 the simulation will be posted Blackboard.

*Campaign Update Presentation:* Working alone or in pairs, each student will prepare a very brief (4 minutes or less) presentation about something that happened on the campaign trail or that one expects will impact on the election. You will be assigned a date to make this presentation. Each presentation will focus on something different and will strive to connect that event to class concepts and/or an evaluation of whether the event will be a "game changer."

### **Participation**

Participation is essential to an enjoyable and productive learning experience.

All students are required to visit the discussion boards at least once a week to ask a question or posit a connection between a reading and a current event. These contributions must be made at least 90 minutes BEFORE the relevant lecture.

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. Some weeks, the TA will moderate a virtual discussion on-line.

### **Grading Policy**

Late assignments will be penalized 3% per day for the first four days of lateness. After four 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. No appeals will be considered after Monday, June 17. 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. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with a severe penalty. It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. Please see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> for more information and tips on how to avoid plagiarism.

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.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. The instructor of this course is determined to ensure that every student is given an opportunity to excel in this course and demonstrate their mastery of the material. 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](mailto: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 within two class sessions.

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 two classes 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 Tuesdays and Thursdays, but I will usually be available every day of the week. Outside of office hours, 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 three students is invited to arrange Dutch-treat lunches with me on or near campus. Dinners may be possible, especially if we meet near my home in Thornhill. I especially look forward to talking to you about topics related to the course or current political events.

## **Schedule**

Part I: Foundations

27-June Introduction

28-June Prisoner's Dilemma & Institutions  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 1

29-June Precursors, Revolution and Nation-Building

Articles of Confederation, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/artconf.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp)  
Declaration of Independence, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/declare.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp)  
Roche, John P. 1961. "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action." *American Political Science Review* 55(4), pp. 799-816.

Tutorials: Island of Ted Simulation

30-June Constitutional Convention & Constitution  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 2  
\*\* Quiz (On-line, open book) \*\*

4-July Ratification, Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties

Constitution of the United States (Appendix)  
Federalist Papers 10, 45 & 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>

5-July Federalism and Lawmaking  
\*\* Quiz (On-line, open book) \*\*  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 3 & pp 163-169.  
Schoolhouse Rock "How a Bill Becomes a Law" [YouTube](#)

6-July Civil War, Reconstruction, Civil Rights

Tutorials: Discuss Federalist Paper # 10; What are the downsides of the size principle for political minorities? How well do rights documents protect minorities from democratic majority? What institutional mechanisms protect minorities in the US?

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 4  
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](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp)  
Listen to [partial] dramatization:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc5VEBPz8LE>  
Recommended: "Africans in America," PBS Narrative, Part 4:  
Start here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/narrative.html>

7-July \*\*\* Term Test I \*\*\*

Part II: Parties, Campaigns and Election 2016

11-July Parties and Party System: Why Party? Why two parties?  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 12

12-July Campaigns and Elections: Do Campaigns Matter?  
Film: "Taking on the Kennedy's"  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 13

13-July Campaign 2016 in Context  
Steger, W. (2013), *Polls and Elections: Two Paradigms of Presidential Nominations*.  
*Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 43: 377–387.  
Vavreck, Lynn. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*.  
Princeton University Press, 2009, Ch. 4.

Tutorial discussion: 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?

- 14-July Conventions and Party Platforms (GOP Convention starts Monday, July 18)  
\*\* Quiz (On-line, open book) \*\*  
Carsey, T.M., Green, J.C., Herrera, R. and Layman, G.C., 2006. State Party Context and Norms among Delegates to the 2000 National Party Conventions. *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 6(3), pp.247-271.  
Ritter, K.W., 1980. American political rhetoric and the jeremiad tradition: Presidential nomination acceptance addresses, 1960–1976. *Communication Studies*, 31(3), pp.153-171.  
Lovett, J., Bevan, S. and Baumgartner, F. R. (2015), Popular Presidents Can Affect Congressional Attention, for a Little While. *Policy Studies Journal*, 43: 22–43

### Part III. Modern Presidency

- 18-July Presidency  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 6  
Lizza, Ryan “The Gatekeeper: Rahm Emanuel on the Job” *The New Yorker*
- 19-July Media  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 14
- 20-July Presidential Press Briefing Simulation  
Tutorial: Simulation will begin/end in tutorials.

### Part IV. Division and Conflict

- 21-July Public Opinion  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 9  
\*\*[Mini] Term Test II \*\*
- 25-July Opinions: Immigration and Terror threats, oh my!  
Jennifer Merolla, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan and Chris Haynes (2013). “Illegal,” “Undocumented,” or “Unauthorized”: Equivalency Frames, Issue Frames, and Public Opinion on Immigration. *Perspectives on Politics*, 11, pp 789-807.  
TBA
- 26-July Political Participation  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 10  
\*\*Simulation Response Paper due by midnight via turnitin.com\*\*
- 27-July Interest Groups & Social Movements  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 11  
Tutorials: data analysis assistance
- 28-July Congress  
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 5  
\*\*Data Analysis due by midnight\*\*

1-August No class: holiday

Part V: Beyond the electoral arena

2-August Judiciary and Precedence: Privacy and Sodomy (and ultimately gay marriage)

\*\* Quiz (On-line, open book) \*\*

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 8

Supreme Court decision, Lawrence v. Texas

Summary and edited opinion:

<http://www.law.duke.edu/publiclaw/supremecourtonline/editedcases/lawvtx.html>

Recommended full text: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZS.html>

Posner, Richard A. "Eighteen Years On: A Re-Review (reviewing William N. Eskridge, Jr., *The Case for Same-Sex Marriage: From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment* (1996))." *Yale Law Journal* 125 (2015): 533.

[http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12082&context=journal\\_articles](http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12082&context=journal_articles)

Virtual Conversation: Who (if anyone) should regulate family law and morality? Are there limits to a citizen's right to privacy?

3-August Courts and Social Controversies: Film: "School Prayer" <http://www.schoolprayer.com/>

4-August God, Country, Social Capital and Social Policy

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

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

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

Tutorial discussion: Can interest groups be regulated? Is there a downside to unchecked organized interests in a democracy?

8-August Conclusion and Assessment

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

**Final Exam TBD**