



POL 203Y1Y

U.S. Government and Politics

2018-2019

Professor Ryan Hurl

Meeting Code: LEC 5101

Lecture Times: Thursday, 6-8pm

Location: Sidney Smith 2117

Office: Sidney Smith 3133

E-mail: ryan.hurl@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Fridays, 3-4pm or by appointment

Course Description

The spectacle of American politics is both interesting and alarming to Canadians—and this has been particularly true in the past several years. 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 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, and so on. This course will help you to develop your abilities to write and think about these issues, using some of the tools of political science. At the same time, and just as importantly, we will develop our ability 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.

Course Objectives

- Understand the structure of the American Constitution, and explain the purposes behind the major features of the American constitutional order: the separation of powers, bicameralism, federalism, electoral institutions, enumerated powers, the federal judiciary, the federal executive, and the Bill of Rights.
- Understand the major stages in American political development: the Revolutionary Era, The Civil War-Reconstruction Era, The Progressive Era, The New Deal-Great Society Era, and the Era of Divided Government
- Understand how federalism has changed over the course of American history
- Understand how the American party system operates, and how the major political ideas that animate the main political parties have changed over time
- Understand the major factors that shape American elections and the choices of American voters.
- Understand the law-making process, and the changing institutional features of the House of Representatives and the Senate
- Understand the role played by the President in the political system, and the way in which the executive branch has evolved into the “administrative state”
- Understand the role of interest groups in influencing American politics
- Assess the ways in which American public opinion is “exceptional” or unusual, and the difficulties involved in measuring public opinion
- Understand the distinctive characteristics of American public policy and law, particularly in relation to the question of race

Teaching Assistants:

Nicholas Fraser nicholasar.fraser@mail.utoronto.ca

Alix Jansen alix.jansen@mail.utoronto.ca

Michele St-Amant <michele.stamant@mail.utoronto.ca>

Tutorial Times and Locations not yet available!

TUTORIAL DATES

There will be tutorials each term, and will take place every other week starting on September 20th. PLEASE MARK DOWN THE DATES CAREFULLY!

ENROLLING YOURSELF IN A TUTORIAL: GOOD LUCK.

As soon as we receive our tutorial room assignments from the faculty of Arts and Sciences, you will be contacted with information about the date and time for enrolling in tutorials.

There will be EIGHT tutorials each term—the tutorial weeks will be indicated on the weekly readings/lecture topics list below.

Quercus

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

<http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/>

Email Communication

You should try to raise substantive, course related questions during class, tutorials, and office hours. I am almost always available to talk after class, and I can make special appointments if you cannot make my regular office hours. You can also send your questions to me by email, but try to think of email as a last resort, not the primary way to raise questions...

All questions dealing with attendance, illness, etc. should first be submitted to your teaching assistant.

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: 15% *This exam will take place during the exam period in December. It will be a multiple choice exam.*

Final Exam: 30% *This exam will take place during the exam period in April/May
The final exam will be based upon short answer questions.*

Essay Proposal/Outline/bibliography: 5% The essay proposal/outline should be submitted to your teaching assistant and to TURNITIN (electronic versions in both cases; no hard copies needed) The proposal is due NOVEMBER 15th!

Rough Draft of Research Paper: 5% January 31st **SUBMIT YOUR PAPER BY MIDNIGHT ON THIS DATE!**

*The rough draft of your paper must be a **COMPLETE** version of your paper, including footnotes and bibliography. The research paper must be 10 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.

The Rough Draft of the Paper must be submitted to turn it in. In addition, send an electronic version of your paper to your teaching assistant.

Final Draft of Research Paper: 35% DUE MARCH14th SUBMIT YOUR PAPER BY MIDNIGHT

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 3 percentage points 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/>

Grade “Clarifications”

If you wish additional clarifications on your grades, whether for the mid-term, rough draft, or final paper, please do the following:

- a) Submit a written request to your teaching assistant within one week of receiving the grade; the request should explain your questions and concerns, and can be submitted by email*
- b) Your ta will respond to your request, and if you still seek further clarification, forward your initial request, along with the ta’s response, to the instructor (Dr. Hurl)*

Missed Tests

Students who miss the 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>

PLEASE DISCUSS YOUR ACCESSIBILITY RELATED ISSUES WITH DR. HURL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! (email communications are fine...)

Notice of Collection of Medical Information

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/>



The Look I get when I see a high plagiarism score on Turnitin.

Don’t end up in my “basket of deplorables”: understand what plagiarism is, and don’t do it.

What can I do to succeed 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.

- **Begin working on the Essay Assignment as soon as possible.** In addition, you should plan to make use of your college's writing centre prior to submitting the paper.
- **Make use of Office Hours.** If there are issues in the readings that you do not understand, then you should make every effort to my input during office hours.
- **Do Some Additional Reading.** If you are entirely unfamiliar with American politics and American political history, it would probably be a good idea to do some additional reading. The following books are both short and informative, and all are available on-line.

Donald Critchlow, *American Political History: A New Introduction*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2015 (available on-line through the U of T library)

Morton Keller, *America's Three Regimes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. (available on-line through the U of T library)

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. You should contact your teaching assistant FIRST regarding administrative issues (e.g. absences from tutorials, missed exams, etc.) If you have questions about the CONTENT of the course, you can go directly to Dr. Hurl....

Visit Office Hours

Professor Hurl (that's me) will hold weekly office hours. (Friday afternoon, 3-4pm, Sidney Smith 3133 or by appointment)

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

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

Michael Greve, *The Constitution: Understanding America's Founding Document*. Washington: AEI Press, 2013 (available on Kindle for less than \$10) (listed as Greve in the readings)

Ryan Hurl *Understanding America*. Open-access textbook, "beta-version" Available under "course materials" in Quercus.

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

In some cases, links to on-line articles are provided.

Please note that the course assumes that you have at least SOME background in American history. If you do not, I highly recommend that you consult the books by Critchlow and Keller mentioned above (*American Political History: A Brief Introduction* and *America's Three Regimes*.)

Lectures and Readings

Week One 9.7 Political Science and American Politics in 2018: An Introduction to Advanced Trump Studies

Understanding America, Chapter One

Greve, chapter one

Sven Steinmo, "The United States: Strong Nation, Weak State." Pp 149-162

Sven Steinmo "Evolutionary Narratives." (recommended)

Week Two 9.14 From the Revolution to the Constitution

Understanding America, Chapter 2

Federalist Papers #1-9

The Declaration of Independence

Greve, Chapters 2-3

Week Three 9.20 The Constitution of 1787 and The Problem of Faction

TUTORIAL ONE

Federalist Papers #10, 47-51

Greve, chapter 4

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from the Federalist Papers: #14, #15, #22, #37-51

Steinmo, "Strong Nation, Weak State" pp 162-169

Week 9.27 Critical Junctures, Federalism and American Political Development: Revolution, Civil War and Reconstruction, New Deal

Understanding America, Chapter 3

Federalist Papers #17

Greve, chapter 5

Steinmo, "Strong Nation, Weak State." Pp 169-177

Week 5 10.4 Let the Culture Wars Begin! American Federalism and Political Development from the "Great Society" (1960s) to Today

TUTORIAL TWO

Understanding America, Chapter 3

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

Weeks 6 10.11 Democrats and Republicans: Introducing the USA's peculiar parties

TUTORIAL THREE

Understanding America chapter 4

Weeks 7 10.18 Unexpected Developments: Parties and Elections in the 21st Century

TUTORIAL FOUR

American Government and Politics in the Information Age

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=64>

Chapter one “Communication in the Information Age,” chapter eleven “Campaigns and Elections.”

Week 8 10.25 Money and Elections: The Debate over Campaign Finance Reform

TUTORIAL FIVE

Peter H. Schuck *One Nation Undecided: Clear Thinking about Five Hard Issues that Divide Us*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Chapter 4 “Campaign Finance.” (available on-line through the library website)

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

Week 9 11.1 The 2016 Elections and the Future of American Politics

Nicholas Jacobs and James Ceaser “The 2016 Election: By the Numbers and In Historical Perspective.”

Byron Shafer and Regina Wagner “Modern Eras and Alternative Futures: The 2016 Election in the Longest Run.”

John Sides, Michael Tesler, Lynn Vavreck “How Trump lost and won.”.

NOVEMBER 8th READING WEEK NO CLASSES

Week 10 11.15 Inefficient by Design: The Structure of Congress

TUTORIAL SIX

Understanding America, Chapter 6

Federalist Papers #62-66

Week 11 11.22 The Development of Congress

TUTORIAL SEVEN

Barbara Sinclair, “Congressional Reform.”

Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking* (excerpts)

Week 12 11.29 Congress in the Era of Polarization

Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking* (excerpts)

Understanding America, Chapter 6, part two

TUTORIAL EIGHT