



POL 203Y1Y

U.S. Government and Politics

2019-2020

Instructor: Dr. Ryan Hurl

Meeting Code: LEC 5101

Lecture Times: Thursday, 6-8pm

Location: Sidney Smith 2135

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 evident over 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. We will 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. We will learn a great deal about American constitutionalism and American law. We will 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 ability 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 political science. Our discussion of the USA will be open, contentious, controversial, but hopefully enjoyable. By the conclusion of the course, you will have developed a better understanding of the most powerful nation in the world.

Key Course Objectives

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

Teaching Assistants:

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....

Zain Asaf : zain.asaf@utoronto.ca

Nicholas Fraser: nicholasar.fraser@mail.utoronto.ca

Jonah Goldberg : jonah.goldberg@mail.utoronto.ca

Ashley Splawinski: ashley.splawinski@mail.utoronto.ca

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 Quercus on a regular basis.

You must have a valid UTORid account to access Quercus

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: 10% *This exam will take place during the exam period in December. It will be a multiple-choice exam.*

Final Exam: 35% *This exam will take place during the exam period in April/May*
The final exam will be based upon short answer questions.

Essay Assignment (Rough Draft): 10% DUE DATE: December 1st

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 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. **NO HARD COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED***

Length: Approximately 10-12 pages (double spaced, 12 point)

- *Topic: All of the essays in the class will upon topics related to the “Political Economy of Post-Industrial America” project. Students are expected to share information and coordinate their projects (the teaching assistants and the course instructor facilitate this.) You will be entirely responsible for the written components of your paper. In other words, while the project of assembling and sharing information will be collective, you will be evaluated solely on the basis of your own individual contribution.*

Additional information on the research project will be provided in lectures/tutorials/ and on Quercus.

Final Draft of Research Paper: 35% DUE FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14th
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% total (5% each term)

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.

Students are also expected to participate in the POL 203 2019-2020 collective research project, "The Political Economy of Post-Industrial America."

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE THEIR RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER

(THIS WILL TYPICALLY INVOLVE FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICULAR CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE STUDENT, AND THEN POSTING THAT INFORMATION.)

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. 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

- **Begin working on the research project as soon as possible.** This should be easy, as you will be given some specific instructions on how to begin the project.
- **Make use of Office Hours.** If there are issues in the readings or lectures that you do not understand, then you should make every effort to consult with Dr. Hurl 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 Quercus prior to 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.

Office Hours

Dr. Hurl will hold weekly office hours. (Friday afternoon, 3-4pm, Sidney Smith 3033 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.)

REQUIRED TEXTS

(In an attempt to use as little paper as possible, I would like you to consider using electronic versions of the readings for the course.)

Michael Greve, *The Constitution: Understanding America's Founding Document*. Washington: AEI Press, 2013 (available for Kindle through the Amazon website 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.

John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck, *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018 (available on the U of T library website and Amazon)

Major Recommended Readings:

Donald Critchlow, *American Political History: A Very Brief Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Morton Keller, *America's Three Regimes: A New Political History*. Boulder, CO.: NetLibrary, 2007. (available through the U of T library website)

Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *The Broken Branch: How Congress is failing America and how to get it back on track*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 (available on the U of T library website)

Publius (Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison) *The Federalist Papers*. Ed. Clinton Rossiter. New York: New American Library, 1964
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp

Sven Steinmo, *The Evolution of Modern States: Sweden, Japan, and the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2010. (available through the U of T library website)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Ed. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012

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 1 /September 5th: Political Science and American Politics in 2018: An Introduction to Advanced Trump Studies

Understanding America, Chapter One

Greve, chapter one

Identity Crisis chapter one "Fayetteville."

Week 2/September 12th From the Revolution to the Constitution

TUTORIAL #1

Understanding America, Chapter 2

Identity Crisis chapter two "Whaddaya Got?"

Federalist Papers #1-9

The Declaration of Independence

Greve, Chapters 2-3

Sven Steinmo, "The United States: Strong Nation, Weak State." Pp 149-77 (recommended)

Sven Steinmo “Evolutionary Narratives.” (recommended)

Week 3 September 19th The Constitution of 1787 and The Problem of Faction

Federalist Papers #10, 47-51

Greve, chapter 4

Identity Crisis Chapter 3 “Indecision.”

Week 4 September 26th Critical Junctures, Federalism and American Political Development: Revolution, Civil War and Reconstruction, New Deal

TUTORIAL #2

Understanding America, Chapter 3

Greve, chapter 5

Identity Crisis, chapter 4 “The Daily Donald Show.”

Week 5 October 3rd Let the Culture Wars Begin! American Federalism and Political Development from the “Great Society” (1960s) to Today

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)

Identity Crisis chapter 5, “Hiding in Plain Sight.”

Weeks 6/October 10th Democrats and Republicans: Introducing the USA’s peculiar parties

TUTORIAL THREE

Understanding America, chapter 4

Identity Crisis, chapter 6, “Cracks in the Ceiling.”

Byron Shafer and Regina Wagner, “The Trump Presidency and the Structure of Modern American Politics.”

Weeks 7 October 17th Unexpected Developments: Parties and Elections in the 21st Century

Identity Crisis, Chapter 7, “The Trump Tax.”

Byron Shafer and Regina Wagner. “Affirmations for an Aging Electoral Order: The Mid-Term Elections of 2018.”

Week 8 October 24th Money and Elections: The Debate over Campaign Finance Reform

TUTORIAL FOUR

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

Week 9 October 31st The Future of American Electoral Politics

Identity Crisis, chapter 8 “What Happened?” and chapter 9 “The Soul of a Nation”

NOVEMBER 4th to 8th READING WEEK NO CLASSES

Week 10 November 14th Inefficient by Design: The Structure of Congress

TUTORIAL FIVE

Understanding America, Chapter 6

The Broken Branch, Chapters 1-2 (recommended)

Week 11 November 21st The Development of Congress

TUTORIAL SIX

The Broken Branch, Chapters 3-5 (**recommended**)

Barbara Sinclair, “Partisan Polarization and Congressional Policy-Making.”

Week 12 November 28th Congress in the 21st Century

TUTORIAL SEVEN

The Broken Branch, Chapters 5-7 (recommended)

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez and Theda Skocpol “Congress makes Tax Policy: Democrats and Republicans at Two Critical Junctures.”