**PS 111: Introduction to American Politics Spring 2018**

**Instructor:** Alexander Furnas

**Lecture Time:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 10:00 AM. - 12:00 PM.

**Office Hours of Mr. Furnas:**TBD, Haven Hall 6564

The purpose of this course is to provide students with the tools to understand and engage with American Politics. Politics was famously defined by Harold Laswell as “Who gets what, when, and how.” In the contemporary American context, factors like historic inequality, racial attitudes, and partisan polarization deeply impact the political struggle over the allocation of scarce resources, and attention to a variety of policy priorities. This is evident, for example, in the recent conflicts over tax reform, healthcare, immigration and appointments, as a new administration and majority government seek to enact their preferred policies. While many students may find political concerns to be remote from their lives, these political struggles will end up impacting them in both immediately concrete ways, like access to education and the looming student loan crisis, to more fundamental questions, like trade-offs between privacy and security and the powers of the state. Throughout the course, current events will be used whenever possible to illustrate the material being taught. This will contextualize contemporary issues through an analytic look at the institutions, attitudes and behaviors that shape American political outcomes. While the topics covered by this course will inevitably relate to sensitive, political and personal topics, the tone of the course will be analytical. We will examine together how a variety of forces and factors shape contemporary political conflicts, rather than debate the normative merits of those conflicts. By the end of this course students will be expected to demonstrate a careful understanding of the institutions of American Government, and how they interact with each other, as well as knowledge of the systematic modes and patterns of behavior and opinion of the American public. Students will be expected to be able to use the tools they learn to analyze an issue of current political significance.

**Evaluation:**

Six weekly short reaction papers: 60% (10% each)

Analytic Assignment Project: 20%

Participation: 20%

**Statement on Academic Integrity:**

The College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts at the University of Michigan is a community in which personal responsibility, honesty, fairness, respect, and mutual trust are maintained. Students must behave honorably and take responsibility for their own actions. In addition, students are expected to take constructive action if they witness or are aware of behavior that violates the standards of academic integrity. Any student determined to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty—including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, and attendance forgery—will receive no credit on the assignment, and the professor reserves the right to fail the student in the course. In accordance with University policy, all cases of misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs.

**Statement on Accommodations**

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let your GSI know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

**Statement on Religious and Academic Conflicts**

Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities.

It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies/Director of Graduate Studies. Final appeals will be resolved by the Provost.

**Statement on Students Representing U-M**

There may be instances when students must miss class due to their commitment to officially represent the University. These students may be involved in the performing arts, scientific or artistic endeavors, or intercollegiate athletics. Absence from classes while representing the University does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course missed during the period of absence. Students should provide reasonable notice for dates of anticipated absences and submit an individualized class excuse form.

**Grade Grievances**

If you believe that you have been unfairly graded, follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your instructor
2. Provide a brief explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair or in error.
3. If you believe the primary instructor’s response fails to address your claim of unfairness or error, you may petition the department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) at the latest within the first five weeks of classes following the completion of the course. You must convey in writing the basis for the complaint, with specific evidence in support of the argument that the grade either was given in error or was unfairly determined. This formal complaint also should summarize the outcome of the initial inquiry to the course instructor, indicating which aspects are in dispute. Within three weeks of the receipt of the petition, the DUS will determine whether to convene the Undergraduate Affairs Committee, the student, and the instructor(s) for a formal hearing. Departmental grade grievance procedures are outlined at http://lsa.umich.edu/polisci/undergraduates/advising.html under “Contesting a Grade.”

**Participation Grade:** Students will receive scores of 0-3 for each day’s participation. These scores will be determined as follows:

+1 point for class attendance

+1 for commenting in class

+1 point for a substantive comment that advances the discussion.

Scores for all classes will added, and the percentage out of total available points will be used to determine 20 percent of the final grade.

**Books for Purchase:** (the university’s bookstores) Textbook: Ken Kollman. 2017. *The American Political System.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Third Edition.

Reader: Ken Kollman. 2017. *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Fourth Edition.

The textbook and reader are available for purchase in the bookstores around campus (e.g., Ulrich’s). An E-version of the textbook (both downloadable and the web version) is available by going to the following URL:

http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=4294980699

The reader is vastly reduced in price if you purchase it shrink-wrapped with the textbook at the bookstore.

**Lecture and Reading Schedule:**

 

May 1: Syllabus, discuss class expectations, community inclusivity norms.

May 2: Key Concepts for Studying Politics

Textbook, Ch. 1

Olson, “Logic of Collective Action,” in Reader.

Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”, in Reader.

Kiewiet and McCubbins, “Logic of Delegation,” in Reader.

May 3: The Constitution

Textbook, Ch. 2 *United States Constitution* (find online)

Madison, “Federalist Papers 10 and 51*,”* in Reader.

Brutus, “Anti-Federalist, No. 1*,*” in Reader.

Dahl, “How Democratic Is the American Constitution?”, in Reader.

May 4: Constitution, Federalism

Textbook, Chs. 3

Madison, “Federalist Paper 39*,*” in Reader.

U.S. Supreme Court, *Arizona vs. United States (2012)*, in Reader

Riker, “Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance,” in Reader

May 8,9: Federalism, Civil Rights and Liberties

Textbook, Ch. 4

U.S. Supreme Court, *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (1954),* in Reader. U.S. Supreme Court, *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), in Reader

Supreme Court, *Obergefell v Hodges (2015),* in Reader

May 10: Civil Rights and Liberties

Tesler, “Post-Racial or Most-Racial?: Race and Politics in the Obama Era,” in Reader.

U.S. Supreme Court, *United States vs. Windsor* (2013), in Reader.

U.S. Supreme Court, *Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)* online.

May 11: Review

May 15: The Legislative Branch

Textbook, Ch. 5

Mayhew, “Congress: The Electoral Connection,” in Reader.

Fenno, “Homestyle*,”* in Reader.

Grimmer and Westwood and Messing, “The Impression of Influence,” in Reader

Cox and McCubbins, “Setting the Agenda,” in Reader.

May 16,17: The Legislative Branch and Presidency

Textbook, Ch. 6

Cameron, “Veto Bargaining*,*” in Reader.

Canes-Wrone, “Who Leads Whom?” in Reader.

Howell, “Power without Persuasion*,*” in Reader.

Kernell, “Going Public,” in Reader

May 18: Review

May 22: The Presidency and the Executive Branch

Textbook, Ch. 7

Wilson, “Bureaucracy*,*” in Reader.

McCubbins and Swartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked,” in Reader.

Carpenter, “The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*,*” in Reader.

May 23: The Federal Judiciary

Textbook, Ch. 8

Rosenberg, “Hollow Hope*,”* in Reader.

U.S. Supreme Court, *Lawrence vs. Texas (2003)*, in Reader.

May 24: Public Opinion

Textbook, Ch. 9

Lupia and McCubbins, “The Democratic Dilemma*,”* in Reader.

Zaller*, “*Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*,”* in Reader.

Kinder and Kam, “Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion,” in Reader

Cramer, “The Politics of Resentment” in Reader

May 25: Review

May 29: Public Opinion and Political Parties

Textbook, Ch. 12 Aldrich. “Why Parties?” in Reader.

Campbell, et al, “American Voter,” in Reader.

Cohen et al, “The Party Decides:” in Reader Kollman, “Who Drives the Party Bus?” (online)

May 30,31: Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements

Textbook, Ch. 11 Gilens, “Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America” in Reader

Kollman, “Outside Lobbying,” in Reader.

Bartels, “Unequal Democracy:” in Reader

June 1: Review

June 5: Participation

Textbook, Ch. 10

Wong et. al, “Asian American Political Participation,” in Reader.

Putnam, “Bowling Alone:” in Reader. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, “Polarized America*,*” in Reader.

June 6,7 Elections

Textbook, Ch. 13 U.S. Supreme Court, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), in Reader

U.S Supreme Court. *Shelby County,*

*Alabama v. Holder* (2013), in Reader

Koza et al, “Every Vote Equal:” in Reader.

Achen and Bartels, “Democracy for Realists” in Reader.

June 8: Review

June 12: Elections and the Media

Textbook, Ch. 14

Baum, “Soft News Goes to War,” in Reader.

Abrajano “Campaigning to the New American Electorate: Advertising to Latino Voters*,*” in Reader.

June 13,14: Economic Policy

Textbook, Ch. 15

Keynes, “The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money,” posted on Canvas.

Friedman*,* from “Capitalism and Freedom,” Posted on Canvas.

June 15: Review

June 19: Social Policy

Textbook, Ch. 16

Mettler, “The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy,” in Reader.

June 19: Review

June 20: In class project work/lab

June 21: In class project work/lab

June 22: In class project work/lab