

**POLI 10
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN (U.S.) POLITICS
Spring 2009
Lectures MW 10-10:50 SOLIS 107**

Note: Although it is unlikely, minor changes may be made to this syllabus throughout the quarter. You are responsible for any changes mentioned in class, even if you are absent. All changes will be posted on the class WebCt site.

Peter F. Galderisi

Office Hours: W 11-3:00 SSB448 (no office phone)
Email: pgalderisi@ucsd.edu --please feel free to email me with questions/concerns at any time.
I will check them at least every morning and early evening (except Fridays).

TAs: office hours and rooms TBA—check WebCt in the next few days

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Concentrating on the different formal and informal channels through which the American public can influence the decision-making process (and in turn be influenced by it), we will study the major governmental institutions' ability to represent the needs and demands of an increasingly varied constituency. We will emphasize that processes and outcomes are not always predictably related, or, in the least, are not related in ways that we would have preferred. Democratic processes, for example, do not always give us the outcomes we desire--a fact not lost on the Framers of the U.S. Constitution (or the current electorate).

Throughout the course we will attempt to integrate our knowledge of political processes and outcomes into an analysis of current political events. Politics and government, however, cannot be competently understood at one point in time. Since we must know where we have been to understand where we are going, we will also review the major changes that have transformed the U.S. political universe from its humble Constitutional beginnings into its present complicated state. We will also come to understand that much of what is in evidence today is a continuation of our past. Confusing presidential elections, battles between nationalists and states rights advocates, a lack of trust in government, and consternation over Supreme Court decisions have always been part of U.S. political culture.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To learn to think
2. To learn to think about U.S. politics
3. To learn to organize and articulate those thoughts
4. To learn that politics, just like life generally, is complex with few easy answers or solutions (for those, you can turn to cable)

CLASS FORMAT

Most of the class time will be taken up by my lectures (a necessary function of the class size). Discussion sessions will allow for (and will be formatted to accommodate) more open discussion. Students can, of course, raise their hands to ask a question at any time during the lecture. Please understand that, given the number of students in the class, I may have to limit how many questions I entertain (particularly from any one or two persons). Particularly, I will not allow the class to turn into an ongoing debate about any particular current politician, local issue, court decision, AIG bonuses, etc.. Please contact me during office hours or by email if you have questions that could not be answered during class.

REQUIREMENTS

1. One text, available at the campus bookstore, is required for this course: *The Logic of American Politics* (4th ed.) by Kernell, Jacobson and Kousser. You will also **need to purchase** a reader from University Readers the first or second week of class that will contain several lengthy essays to be reviewed for section discussion (Order online at <http://www.universityreaders.com/students> -- the first few selections will be available through an online link if the reader is not yet available for purchase). In addition, several other essays, court cases, commentaries, etc. of various lengths will be required and will be available online through the UCSD library server (access on campus or at home through a proxy server). The TAs will explain this process during sections the first week.

All readings serve as background to the lectures and discussions. Readings should therefore be completed in advance of the corresponding class lectures and section discussions.

2. Lectures will run in a logical sequence. Missing the first lecture of a sequence will often lead to confusion later on. **Attendance is therefore extremely important.** If you can't make it on time, on a regular basis, **please** drop the class (others are waiting to get in). Class time is for lecture, discussion, taking notes, and learning about the course material. It is not for reading newspapers, surfing the web, catching up on sleep, studying for other exams, answering cell phones*, or talking with your classmates. Not only is such behavior rude, it tends to distract other members of the class, thereby making it more difficult for them to learn. It will also **not be tolerated**. Please respect the lecturer and your fellow students. All of us are trying to concentrate on the material. I will be especially ticked off if I notice anyone using their laptops for other than taking notes. Several law schools (believe it or not) have been forced to place internet blockers in their classrooms. Please don't force us to begin that policy.

* Please notify the professor if an exception, due to a potential emergency situation, must be made.

3. Discussion section—each of you has been assigned a time and place to meet for discussions led by your TA. These **are not** optional. Attendance will be taken and 1 point will be deducted for missing each section for other than an excused absence as defined by university policy.

4. Exams, Assignments, Grading:

a. Midterm: Monday, May 4, in class (25% of total)—short essays (format to be discussed in class)

b. A short, 3-5 page take-home assignment due by the **beginning** of class, Monday, May 18 (25% of total). The topic for that assignment will be posted Monday, May 11. Because this is a take-home, we will expect a more polished performance than we expect for an in-class essay. Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty.

c. Final: Monday, June 8, 8-10:59 room TBA (40% of total)—short essays covering second half of class, one final, cumulative essay. **No early final** will be given so please adjust your travel accordingly. If you cannot make this date, please drop this class.

d. Section attendance and participation (10% of total)

POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

The death penalty--no exceptions! The U.S. Supreme Court will back me up on this. Enough said.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is the intentional use of another's words (by direct transcription) or ideas (by paraphrasing) without attribution. University prohibitions against plagiarism are rather clear. If you are not sure about the meaning of plagiarism, please ask me to clarify or go to the link below.

CHEATING:

Failure--no exceptions. "Cheating" includes working together on the midterm or final exam questions. You can help each other with general questions about basic concepts, facts, readings, lectures, citation style, etc. In fact, I strongly suggest you do so on a regular basis. On the other hand, collaborating on the essays or project themselves, either in preparation or final production, is strictly forbidden. If you are not sure about the distinction, please ask me to clarify.

Further information on violations of university academic integrity codes can be found at:

<http://www.ucsd.edu/portal/site/ucsd/menuitem.135225ab0c7ce3c0c0020010d34b01ca/?vgnextoid=f0f8f57e403bb110VgnVCM100000c7b410acRCRD>

POLICY ON WHINING

See "policy on cheating and plagiarism."

ROLE OF THE PROFESSOR AND THE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The professor is responsible for course organization, lectures, oversight of the grading process, and assignment of final grades. General questions about course material, concepts, lectures, and why the presidential election process is harder to understand than the BCS college football rankings should be directed to the professor. The teaching assistants are mainly responsible for overseeing discussion sections, grading, preparing for and reviewing exams with students, and assisting with class logistics.

A NOTE ON GRADING:

Any request for a grade review must be made to your TA in writing (typed) with a full explanation of why you are requesting the review *no sooner* than 24 hours after the midterm or take home assignment is returned, and no later than one week after. An appeal of that review can be made to the professor. Note that any review may result in a higher or lower grade (or no change).

REQUESTS FOR MAKE UPS, ETC.

Make ups or extensions on due dates can only be granted if you have and can document a legitimate, university approved reason. These include university sponsored travel, deaths in family, illnesses, etc. Again, university rules require that I have documentation for this. We'll discuss bureaucracies later in class. Incompletes can only be given to those with a valid, certified reason, and passable work *before* the final.

CLASS WEB PAGE

Changes to this syllabus, as well as any review guides, assignments, section discussion questions, emails, or date changes will be posted on the class web page (WEBCT). Please check it on a daily basis. Your TAs will review its use in section this week.

SCHEDULE:

I never give exact dates for each topic or reading (more on that in class). I will let you know where you need to be at the end of each class. The following is meant as a general guideline. More detailed descriptions of what will be discussed in section will be posted on the class WebCt page as the class progresses.

Week 1 Introduction: Democracy, Representation and Power

Kernell and Jacobson, Chapter 1, Chapter 15 (review briefly; all concepts will be covered as the class progresses)
Get ahead—start week 2 readings

Discussion section: Class logistics

Week 2 The Constitutional Rules of the Game

K&J, Chapter 2
the U.S. Constitution (Appendix in K&J)
Federalist #51 (Appendix)
Daniel Lazare, "The Frozen Republic" selections (UR)
Martin Diamond (1959), "Democracy and the Federalist" *The American Political Science Review*
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1951730.pdf>

Discussion section: The Constitution as instrument of democracy or risk aversion

Week 3 The Changing Constitutional Regime: the Nationalization of Power

A: K&J, Chapter 9, Chapter 4, pp. 130-132
Brown v. Bd. of Education (1954) http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0347_0483_ZO.html

B: Federalism and the changing landscape of the distribution of power

K&J, Chapter 3
Federalist #10 (Appendix)
McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0017_0316_ZO.html
Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0022_0001_ZO.html
U.S. v Lopez (1995)
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/search/display.html?terms=lopez&url=/supct/html/93-1260.ZS.html> ***

Discussion section: the national sovereignty/states rights balance

Week 4 The Right to Participate - Civil Liberties and Rights

K&J, Chapter 4 (especially pp. 113-116, 132-151), Chapter 5
Griswold v. Connecticut (1965) http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0381_0479_ZO.html ***
Texas v. Johnson (1989) http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0491_0397_ZS.html ***

Discussion section: the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) and the definition and enforcement of basic freedoms and rights

***Contemporary (1960s on) court cases can run over 100 pages. Skim through the material. Make sure you read the summary (syllabus), major opinion and at least one dissenting opinion.

Week 5 Introduction to Participation and the Electoral Process

- K&J, Chapter 10, Chapter 11 (421-435)
Thomas Patterson (2003), *the Vanishing Voter*, Chapter 1-“The incredible shrinking electorate” (UR)
Robert Putnam (1995) “Tuning in, tuning out” (*PS: Political Science and Politics*)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/420517.pdf>
Michael McDonald (2008), “The return of the voter” (*the Forum*)
<http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1278&context=forum>
Keeter and Tyson (2008), “Young voters in the 2008 election” (Pew Research Center)
<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1031/young-voters-in-the-2008-election>

Discussion section: exam review

MIDTERM—MONDAY, May 4, in class (please bring blue exam books)

Weeks 6-7 Parties and the Electoral Process

- K&J, Chapter 12, Chapter 14 (skim), Chapter 11 (remainder)
Anthony King (1981), “How not to elect presidents” (UR)
Bruce Altschuler (2008), “Selecting presidential nominees by national primaries” (*the Forum*)
<http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1206&context=forum>
James Fallows (2008), “Rhetorical questions” (*Atlantic Monthly Online*)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/fallows-debates>

Discussion sections: understanding parties and the electoral process--nominations, campaign finance, and the media

Week 8 Interest Group Politics

- K&J, Chapter 13, Chapter 8 (mainly 312-340)
Mancur Olson (1984), *the Rise and Decline of Nations*, Chapter 2-“the Logic” (UR)
Birnbaum and King, *Showdown at Gucci Gulch*, Chapter 1-“Showdown” (UR)

Discussion section: interest groups, democracy, and representation

Week 9 Congress: The People's Branch?

- K&J, Chapter 6
Mayer and Canon (1999), *the Dysfunctional Congress*, “Why don't we like congress?” (UR)
Anthony King (1997), “Running Scared” (*Atlantic Monthly Online*)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jan/scared/scared.htm>

Discussion section: Congress, democracy, and representation

Week 10 The President: Clark Kent, Superman, Peter Griffin, or None (All) of the Above?

- K&J, Chapter 7
James D. Barber (1978), “the Nixon brush with tyranny” (*Political Science Quarterly*)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2148845.pdf>
Michael Lyons (1997), “Presidential character revisited” (*Political Psychology*)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3792210.pdf>

Discussion section: Final Exam Review