Oxford College of Emory University

POLS 100: National Politics

Fall 2007
Library Study Room #2
4:00-5:15 TU & TH
Prerequisite: POLS 101

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Course Objective
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of politics in the American system and context. To begin, we focus on the fundamental principles underlying American politics and her culture. As such, we examine the derivation of the term politics as applied to our system to understand better why power is distributed the way it is. Part of that distribution is founded in her Constitutional framework explicitly and some is not. A deeper exploration of this framework leads us to the causes of political stability and instability through a closer examination of public opinion, political participation, and campaigns and elections. We spend the remainder of the course assessing political institutions and processes from a policymaking perspective; we view policy as a malleable process, a process having changed with our culture and institutional interactions. We spend some time examining why some policy remains stagnate and why some policy shifts. A case study of U.S. environmental policy concludes this course to thread together our understanding of American culture, opinion, participation, institutions and political change.

Text
Wilson and Dilulio, Jr., American Government, 10th Edition

Grades
A student’s grade is determined by his/her performance on 3 in-class NONCUMULATIVE exams. Each exam is worth 100 points. These exams are designed to assess both objective and subjective understanding of in-class lectures and reading assignments. Students are responsible for all assigned readings whether or not those readings are covered in the lectures. Reading assignments should be completed before class lectures. Changes in assigned reading will be announced by me if deviations from the course outline become necessary.

If you have questions, ask. I cannot address questions or concerns I am not aware of! I check my email several times daily. I am usually in my office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays except during lectures. I will gladly schedule individual meetings with students.
Course Outline

PART I: The American System

August 30

Introduction
Politics: What we mean by the term?
Why should we care?
Power, politics and legitimacy
Democracy: US Application (pp.1-12)

September 4

Democratic Theory
Defining Political Power, Distribution of Power, and Political Change (pp. 1-16)

September 6

American Political Culture
Attitudinal Foundations of American Politics
Defining Political Culture in general and in the American Context (pp. 75-97)

September 11

Introduction to the U.S. Constitution.
Creation, Debates, Compromises and Intentions (pp. 16-30)

September 13

Constitutional Framework
Individual Liberty v. Democracy
Constitutional Guarantees and Equality
Constitutional Reform (pp. 30-45)

September 18

Federalism
Debate and Meaning
Nullification, Dual Federalism and State Sovereignty
Federal-State Relations & State rivalry (pp. 48-66)

September 20

Federalism Continued
Federal Aid = Federal Control?
Devolution: Block Grants...what is driving devolution?
Congress and Federalism (pp. 66-75)

September 25

Exam I
### PART II: Opinions, Interests and Organizations

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| September 27 | **Public Opinion Introduced**  
Political Socialization (pp. 153-162) |
| October 2    | **Public Opinion Continued**  
Cleavages  
Political Ideology (measurement and meaning)  
Political Elites and Opinion Leaders (pp. 162-176) |
| October 4    | **Understanding Political Participation**  
(pp. 177-197) |
| October 9    | OFF MIDSEMESTER BREAK |
| October 11   | **The American Party System**  
(pp. 197-229) |
| October 16   | **Elections and Campaigns**  
Presidential v. Congressional  
Primary v. General (pp. 230-244) |
| October 18   | **Money and Elections**  
What decides the elections and what about policy? (pp. 244-263) |
| October 23   | **Interest Groups**  
Proliferation, Growth, Categorization  
Social Movements (pp. 264-276) |
| October 25   | **Interest Groups Concluded** (pp. 276-290) |
| October 30   | Exam II |
PART III: Political Institutions and Public Policy

November 1  Congress Introduced
   Members, Constituents, Representation, Relationships and Ideology (pp. 315-341)

November 6  Congress Continued:
   Organization, Committees
   Enacting Legislation and Gridlock
   Polarization and Leadership
   The Creation of law (pp. 341-366)

November 8  The American Presidency
   Evolution of the Office
   Electoral College (pp. 367-377)

November 13  Powers of the President
   Cabinet and Staff
   Character and Persuasion and Veto Powers
   Transitions (pp. 379-408)

November 15  Bureaucracy Introduced
   Bureaucratic Growth
   (pp. 409-427)

November 20  Bureaucracies Continued:
   Bureaucratic Procedure
   Agency Alliance
   Oversight and Reform (pp. 427-436)

November 22  THANKSGIVING BREAK OFF

November 27  The Judiciary
   Structure of Federal Courts
   Jurisdiction
   Getting to Court
   The Supreme Court in Action
   The Power of Federal Courts
   Checks on Power (pp. 446-467)
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| November 29| Public Policymaking Process Introduced  
Agenda Setting and Decision-Making (pp. 468-478)                                         |
| December 4 | Policymaking Continued  
Theories of Policy Making Explored (pp. 468-490)                                           |
| December 6 | Environmental Policy (additional handouts/materials) (pp. 559-575)                          |
| December 11| Environmental Policy (pp. 559-575)                                                          |
| December 13| Exam III (9-12)                                                                           |