POLS 100
National Politics
Spring 2007

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Office Hours by appointment
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11:30-12:45pm
208 Seney Hall
Prerequisite: POLS 101

Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of politics in the American context. As such, we will focus on the fundamental principles underlying American politics and culture. We will begin with the derivation of the term politics and the resulting power distribution of power yielded by our constitutional system. We will next turn to public opinion, political participation, and campaigns and elections as important aspects of the American system. We will spend the remainder of the course assessing political institutions and processes from a policymaking perspective with special focus on U.S. environmental policy.

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 and Thursdays except during lectures. I will gladly schedule individual meetings with students upon request.
Course Outline

PART I:  The American System

January 18  
Introduction  
Politics: What we mean by the term?  
Why should we care?  
Power, politics and legitimacy  
Democracy: US Application (pp.1-12)

January 23  
Democratic Theory  
Defining Political Power, Distribution of Power, and Political Change (pp. 1-16)

January 25  
American Political Culture  
Attitudinal Foundations of American Politics  
Defining Political Culture in general and in the American Context (pp. 75-97)

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

February 1  
Constitutional Framework  
Individual Liberty v. Democracy  
Constitutional Guarantees and Equality  
Constitutional Reform (pp. 30-45)

February 6  
Federalism  
Debate and Meaning  
Nullification, Dual Federalism and State Sovereignty  
Federal-State Relations (grants in aid and national requirements)  
State rivalry (pp. 48-66)

February 8  
Federalism Continued  
Federal Aid = Federal Control?  
Devolution: Block Grants...what is driving devolution?  
Congress and Federalism (pp. 66-75)

February 13  
Exam I
PART II: Opinions, Interests and Organizations

February 15  Public Opinion Introduced
Political Socialization (pp. 153-162)

February 20  Public Opinion Continued
Cleavages
Political Ideology (measurement and meaning)
Political Elites and Opinion Leaders (pp. 162-176)

February 22  Understanding Political Participation
(pp. 177-197)

February 27  The American Party System
(pp. 197-229)

March 1  Elections and Campaigns
Presidential v. Congressional
Primary v. General (pp. 230-244)

March 6  Money and Elections
What decides the elections and what about policy?
(pp. 244-263)

March 8  Interest Groups
Proliferation, Growth, Categorization
Social Movements (pp. 264-276)

March 12-16  SPRING BREAK

March 20  Interest Groups Concluded (pp. 276-290)

March 22  Exam II
### PART III: American Political Institutions and Public Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Congress Introduced</td>
<td>Members, Constituents, Representation, Relationships and Ideology (pp. 315-341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Congress Continued:</td>
<td>Organization, Committees, Enacting Legislation and Gridlock Polarization and Leadership The Creation of law (pp. 341-366)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>The American Presidency</td>
<td>Evolution of the Office Electoral College (pp. 367-377)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>No Class. Instructor Out</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>Powers of the President</td>
<td>Cabinet and Staff Character and Persuasion and Veto Powers Transitions (pp. 379-408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Bureaucracy Introduced</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Growth (pp. 409-427)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Bureaucracies Continued:</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Procedure Agency Alliance Oversight and Reform (pp. 427-436)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Public Policymaking Process Introduced</td>
<td>Agenda Setting and Decision-Making (pp. 468-478)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Policymaking Continued</td>
<td>Theories of Policy Making Explored (pp. 468-490)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Environmental Policy</td>
<td>(pp. 559-575)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Environmental Policy</td>
<td>(pp. 559-575)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Exam III (2-5pm)</td>
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