

PS11: Introduction to American Politics

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Spring 2007

Professor:

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Teaching Assistant:

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Class meets: BLOCK I: M, W: 3:00 – 3:50; F: 3:30-4:20 pm in Barnum 008

Note: Friday sessions will be at 3:30 OR at 2:30, depending on your assigned discussion section (see “Course Format” below)

Professor office hours: M, W: 4 – 5:30 pm in Eaton 306, and by appointment.
TA meetings by appointment

Course description:

This course provides an introduction to the American political system with an emphasis on examining the ways Americans influence their government. We will focus on developing a systematic way to think about political institutions, behaviors, and traditions in the United States. The course examines campaigns and elections, voting behavior, the media, interest groups, bureaucracy, congress, the presidency, and political parties. The interactions between citizens and governmental institutions are examined historically and through contemporary cases that examine electoral laws, federalism, civil rights and liberties, ballot initiatives, social movements, and campaign reform. Several forms of political participation are covered, including electoral participation, citizen groups, and protest.

I strongly encourage you to follow current events and to read a national newspaper, such as *The New York Times*, or watch *The News Hour* on PBS (Weekdays, 6pm WGBH 2; 11pm, WGBH 44) several times per week. I will be relying on current political issues and events for illustration, and I welcome your examples and observations in this regard.

Course format:

Class meets three times per week. Monday and Wednesday sessions will be conducted in a lecture format. Friday sessions, where noted in the syllabus, will be conducted in discussion groups. You are expected to come prepared to discuss issues raised in the readings. Please read the assigned materials *before class* on the date they are listed. In the discussion sessions, you will be expected to be able to talk about the readings for that day *as well as* the readings from previous lectures. Please also try to read each day’s readings in the order in which they are listed.

On the first day of class, you will be asked to select your first and second choice for discussion section times. One section is scheduled for Fridays, 3:30 - 4:20 (normal class time). The other section is scheduled for Fridays, 2:30 – 3:20. Before the first discussion section on Feb. 2, you will be notified of your assigned section. From then on, you will be expected to attend lecture on Monday and Wednesday from 3:00 – 3:50 and your discussion section. Please note, however, that Friday class sessions are occasionally held in lecture format from 3:30 – 4:20 instead of in discussion sections.

Required reading:

The following books are required reading for the course and are on sale at the college bookstore and on reserve in the library:

1. Kernell, S., & Jacobson, G. (2005). *The Logic of American Politics*, 3rd edition. CQ Press.
2. Serow, A., & Ladd, E.C. (2007). *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*, 4th edition. Lanahan Publishers, Inc.
3. Frantzich, S. (2004). *Citizen Democracy*, 2nd edition. Rowman and Littlefield.
4. Rosenstone, S., & Hansen, J. (2003). *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Longman Classics in Political Science. Pearson Education, Inc.

There are additional required readings for this course. “(B)” indicates that the reading is available electronically under “Assignments” on Blackboard. “(L)” indicates that the reading is in the Lanahan reader.

Course Website on Blackboard:

If you are already registered for PS11, you should have access to the course website on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.tufts.edu>). Follow the log-in instructions. There, you will find the syllabus, some course readings, and many links to websites that you may find useful as you work on assignments (under “External Links”). Your TA and I will use Blackboard to send emails to the class regarding announcements and possible syllabus changes or updates, and you will be required to use Blackboard to complete certain assignments.

If you are adding the course, please make sure to give me your full name when I sign your form so that I can make sure you get full access to the PS11 site. In the meantime, you can view the site as a guest by selecting “Course Catalog” from the main Blackboard site and following the appropriate links: “Tufts University Academic Course Sites,” → “School of Liberal Arts” → “Political Science” → “Schildkraut, Deborah.”

The registrar automatically enters your Tufts e-mail address from the directory as the email address associated with your membership in our class. If you would like to change the email address the registrar’s office sets for you, log in to Blackboard and then select “Personal information” → “Edit personal information.” It is your responsibility to make sure that your correct email address is entered in Blackboard.

Assignments and Grading:

Class participation:	10%
Paper #1:	10%
Midterm exam:	25%
Paper #2:	25%
Final exam:	30%

All assignments are graded out of 100 points. I use the chart below to convert numbers to letters:

97 – 100 = A+
94 – 96 = A
90 – 93 = A-
87 – 89 = B+
84 – 86 = B
80 – 83 = B-
77 – 79 = C+
74 – 76 = C
70 – 73 = C-
65 – 70 = D
Below 65 = F

Important Dates:

Fri., Feb. 2:	First day of discussion sections
Fri., Feb. 16:	Paper 1 due in discussion section
Mon., Feb. 19:	President's Day: NO CLASS
Thurs., Feb. 22:	MONDAY SCHEDULE
Fri., March 9:	Midterm exam
Fri., March 16:	Prospectus for paper 2 due in discussion section
Mon., March 19:	Spring break: NO CLASS
Wed., March 21:	Spring break: NO CLASS
Fri., March 23:	Spring break: NO CLASS
Mon., April 16:	Patriot's Day: NO CLASS
Wed., April 18:	Paper 2 due in class
Sun., April 22:	Screening of <i>In Our Own Backyard</i> , 7pm, Barnum 008
Fri., May 11:	Final exam: 8:30 am!

Weekly discussion questions:

Most weeks that your discussion sections meet, you are expected to post on Blackboard one question from readings and lectures from that week. The goal of this assignment is to prepare you for the discussion sections and to encourage you to think critically about course material.

Where appropriate, your TA will try to incorporate your comments and questions into that week's discussion. Your diligence in regularly completing this assignment will be factored into your grade for class participation. Questions should be posted no later than 9pm the day before your section meets. The earlier you post them, the greater the likelihood that your TA will be able to incorporate your observations into the discussion. You can find a guide to writing effective questions posted on Blackboard under "Assignments." READ IT!

To post a question:

- Log in to PS11 on Blackboard
- Select:
 1. "Communication"
 2. "Group pages"
 3. Your section
 4. "Group discussion board"
 5. The forum for the appropriate week
 6. Hit "Reply" to existing questions for that week or "add new thread".
- Then type your comments/questions and hit "Submit" on the bottom right

Paper #1:

You are to write a reaction paper due at the start of your discussion section on **Fri., Feb. 16**. This assignment will ask you to write about your own views on a particular political controversy that relates to course readings and discussions. I will provide a choice of topics in late September. Possible topics include the ability of citizens to hold meaningful political opinions (or lack thereof), the Electoral College, ballot reform, descriptive vs. substantive representation, and the privatization of government services. It is acceptable to write that you cannot arrive at a firm view, just as long as you substantiate your ambivalence with course materials. The paper is worth 10% of your course grade. There will be a five-point deduction for every day it is late. Grades are based on both substance and style. Problems with computers or printers are **not** acceptable excuses for late papers. Back up your work **OFTEN**. Proper grammar, correct spelling, and appropriate citation of sources are minimum requirements for acceptable papers. Be sure to see me or your TA if you have any questions regarding appropriate citation of sources. Two citation guides are posted on Blackboard under "Course Documents."

The paper should be 4 - 5 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with 12 point Times New Roman font. Please number your pages.

Paper #2:

You are to write a 10-12 page research paper due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, April 18**. You will be given a choice of topics in February. If you would like to create your own topic instead, you must get prior approval from your TA.

The goal of the assignment is to have you examine some contemporary political issue and connect that issue to larger themes in American politics. In essence, you will be using a contemporary issue as a case study to explore an enduring tension in American politics. For example, you might be asked to assess the current rules that dictate which candidates get to participate in presidential debates and use those rules to explore more fundamental questions about the two-party system and about representative government. You will be expected to draw upon primary sources – such as newspaper articles, campaign advertisements, or presidential debates – as well as secondary sources, such as political science research about the impact of debates on vote choice or about the historical role of third parties in American politics.

A 2-page prospectus (minimum) is due at the beginning of your discussion section on **Friday, March 16**. In this prospectus you should explain the thematic focus of your paper and summarize your argument as well as the main arguments of the research materials and sources you have gathered to date. You should also include a bibliography of the sources you have consulted thus far. The prospectus is not graded, nor will it be returned to you. But bear in mind that your diligence in meeting the prospectus deadline and the quality of the prospectus itself will be a factor in your grade.

The paper is worth 25% of your course grade. Papers handed in later that day on April 18 will be considered late. Late papers will receive a five-point deduction for every day they are late. Problems with computers or printers are **not** acceptable excuses for late papers. Proper grammar, correct spelling, and appropriate citation of sources are minimum requirements for acceptable papers. The paper should be double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with 12 point Times New Roman font. Please number your pages.

Examples of successful papers from previous years are posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents.”

Academic integrity:

Assignments that you submit for this course will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs if any evidence of academic dishonesty is detected. The Office of the Dean of Students publishes a thorough pamphlet on academic integrity and plagiarism. You can find it at: <http://studentservices.tufts.edu/dos/publications.htm>. When in doubt, cite!

Topics and Readings:

Week 1:

Fri., Jan. 19: Introduction

Week 2:

Mon., Jan. 22: The American Political System: Early Decisions

Reading:

- PS11 syllabus
- Logic: Ch. 1: pp. 3-27 (skim); Ch. 2: pp. 37-64 (skim 37-50)

Wed., Jan. 24: Constitutional Foundations

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 2: pp. 64-73
- *Declaration of Independence* (Appendix 2 in Logic, p. 591)
- *Articles of Confederation* (Appendix 1 in Logic, p. 587)
- *Constitution of the United States* (Appendix 3 in Logic, p. 594)
- (L) James Madison, "The Federalist," #10, p. 49.
- (L) James Madison, "The Federalist," #51, p. 97.
- (L) Richard Hofstadter: "The American Political Tradition," p. 43.

Fri., Jan. 26: Federalism

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 3: pp. 77-93, 97-109.
- (L) James Madison: "The Federalist," #s 39 and 46, p. 117.
- (L) David Osborne: "Laboratories of Democracy," p. 126.

Week 3:

Mon., Jan. 29: Congress

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 6: pp. 207-227, 233-254 (skim 235-244).
- (L) David Mayhew: "Congress: The Electoral Connection," p. 147.
- (L) Richard Fenno: "Home Style," p. 150.
- (L) Barbara Sinclair: "The '60 Vote Senate'," p. 162.

Wed., Jan. 31: Congress

Reading:

- (L) Michele Swers: “The Difference Women Make,” p. 168.
- (L) David Price: “The Congressional Experience,” p. 188.
- (L) Mark Monmonier: “Bushmanders and Bullwinkles,” p. 548.
- (B) Irwin Gertzog: “Congressional Women”

Fri., Feb. 2: Discussion: Introductions, discussion of topics from readings, lectures, assignments.

Reading:

- (B) Guide to writing effective discussion questions – under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 4:

Mon., Feb. 5: Bureaucracy

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 8: pp. 303-322, 329-331, 337-340.
- (L) Robert Reich: “Locked in the Cabinet,” p. 262.
- (L) James Q. Wilson: “Bureaucracy,” p. 274.

Wed., Feb. 7: The Presidency

Reading:

- (B) Alexander Hamilton: Federalist #69
- Logic: Ch. 7: pp. 264-298 (skim 280-290).
- (B) “Resolved, a broad executive privilege is essential to the successful functioning of the presidency.” Pro: Mark Rozell. Con: David Adler (from *Debating the Presidency*, Ellis and Nelson, eds., CQ Press, 2006, pp. 125-140).
- (B) “Resolved, great presidents are agents of democratic change.” Pro: Marc Landy. Con: Bruce Miroff (from *Debating the Presidency*, Ellis and Nelson, eds., CQ Press, 2006, pp. 179-197).

Fri., Feb. 9: Discussion: The Presidency and the Executive Branch

Reading:

- (L) Richard Neustadt: “Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents,” p. 199.
- (L) Arthur Schlesinger: “The Imperial Presidency,” p. 205.
- (L) Kenneth Mayer: “With the Stroke of a Pen,” p. 231.
- Remember to post discussion questions.

Week 5:

Mon., Feb. 12: Political Parties

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 12: pp. 461-485.
- (B): Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Ch. 8 (to p. 127)
- (L) Earl Black and Merle Black, "The Rise of the Southern Republicans," p. 527.

Wed., Feb. 14: Collective Action

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 1: pp. 10-18.
- Rosenstone and Hansen: Ch. 2, pp. 10-20.

Fri., Feb. 16: Discussion: Collective Action Problems, and the Tragedy of the Commons

Reading:

- (B) Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action."
- NOTE: You DO NOT need to post discussion questions today.

*****paper 1 due in discussion sections today*****

Week 6:

Mon., Feb. 19: President's Day observed; University holiday: NO CLASS

Wed., Feb. 21: Public Opinion: Measurement; Influences on formation

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 10, entire; Ch. 11: pp. 433-435.

Thurs., Feb. 22: More on public opinion

Reading:

- No additional reading. Finish Logic reading from 2/21.

Fri., Feb. 23: Discussion: Quality of Public Opinion; Survey Design

Reading:

- (L) Walter Lippmann: "The Phantom Public," p. 383.
- (L) V.O. Key: "Public Opinion and American Democracy," p. 387.
- Remember to post questions on Blackboard.

Week 7:

****Note: there is a lot of reading for this week****

Mon., Feb. 26 – Wed., Feb. 28: Electoral Participation

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 11: pp. 424-428.
- Rosenstone and Hansen: Chs. 1 (pp. 1-5), 2 (pp. 20-37), 3, 5, 6, 8.
- (B) Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Chs. 13 (to p. 247), 14.

Fri., March 2: Discussion: Electoral Participation

- No additional reading
- Remember to post questions on Blackboard

Week 8:

Mon., March 5: Campaigns and Campaign Finance

Reading:

- (B) “Campaign Finance Guide,” by the Campaign Legal Center.
 - Read pages 4-14 and 36-42.
 - See pp. 64-67 for valuable sources for more information.
 - See pp. 70-75 for useful glossary.
- Logic: Ch. 11: pp. 443-454.
- (B) Anthony Corrado and Thomas Mann: “Flap Over 527s Aside, McCain-Feingold Is Working as Planned,” May 20, 2004, from www.brookings.edu
- (B) David Magelby: “Change and Continuity in the Financing of Federal Elections” (SKIM). From *Financing the 2004 Election*, Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

Wed., March 7: Finding sources in Political Science

Session designed to help you find scholarly and contemporary material for paper #2.

- No additional reading

Fri., March 9: Midterm exam

NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS

EVERYONE TAKES EXAM on FRIDAY at 3:30 in BARNUM 008

Week 9:

Mon., March 12: Primaries

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 12: 486-492.
- (L) Dante Scala: “Stormy Weather,” p. 457.

Wed., March 14: Electoral Reform

Reading:

- (B) Patterson, Thomas. 2003. "The Vanishing Voter," Ch. 6 and the Afterward.

Fri., March 16: Discussion: Electoral reform

Reading:

- (B) "Rethinking the Vote," 2004. Ch. 1 (pp. 3-12 only) by Crigler, Just, and McCaffery, and Ch. 8 by Jeb Barnes.

- Remember to post questions on Blackboard

****Prospectus for paper #2 due in discussion sections today****

Week 10:

Mon., March 19 – Fri., March 23: Spring break: NO CLASSES

Week 11:

Mon., March 26: Media: News

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 14: pp. 541-547, 552-561, 563-565.
- (L) Katharine Graham: "Personal History," p. 629.

Wed., March 28: Media: News; Screening in class of *Journeys with George*

Note: DVD is also on reserve for our class in Tisch Media Center, call # DV4177.

Reading:

- (B) Sarah Vowell: "Democracy and Things Like That," from *The Partly Cloudy Patriot*, 2002.

Fri., March 30: Discussion of the news media

No additional reading

- Remember to post questions on Blackboard

Week 11:

Mon, April 2: Media: Campaign Advertising

Reading:

- (L) Kathleen Hall Jamieson: “Dirty Politics,” p. 480.
- (B) Freedman, P., Wood, W., and Lawton, D. 1999. “Do’s and Dont’s of Negative Advertising: What voters say about attack politics.”
- (B) John Geer: “Negativity, Democracy, and the Political System,” from *In Defense of Negativity*, University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Wed., April 4: The Federal Judiciary

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 9: pp. 346-349, 358-368.
- (L) Alexander Hamilton: Federalist #78, p. 283.
- (L) Eugene Rostow: “The Democratic Character of Judicial Review,” p. 288.
- (L) Peter Irons: “Brennan vs. Rehnquist,” p. 296.
- (B) Selections from *The Judicial Branch* (in one pdf file on Blackboard):
 - “Judicial Independence and the Majoritarian Difficulty” by Kermit Hall
 - “Judicial Activism and American Democracy” by Doris Marie Provine

Fri., April 6: Discussion of campaign advertising

No additional reading

- Remember to post questions on Blackboard

Week 12:

Mon, April 9: Civil Rights

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 4, entire (skim pp. 118-132).

Wed., April 11: Civil Liberties

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 5: pp. 155-197.

Fri., April 13: Discussion of the judiciary, civil rights and liberties

Reading:

- (L) Anthony Lewis: “Gideon’s Trumpet,” p. 317.
- (L) *Miranda v. Arizona*, p. 326.
- (B) “Translating the Vote: The impact of the language minority provision of the Voting Rights Act,” Oct. 2006 briefing from electionline.org.

Week 13:

Mon, April 16: Patriot's Day; University Holiday: NO CLASS

Wed., April 18: Initiatives

Reading:

- (L) Thomas Cronin: "Direct Democracy," p. 393.
- (B) Gamble, Barbara. 1997. "Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote," *American Journal of Political Science*, v41, pp. 245-269.
- Frantzich: Introduction, Ch. 12.

****Paper 2 due in class today****

Fri., April 20: Discussion of direct democracy

No additional reading

- Remember to post questions on Blackboard

Week 14:

Sun, April 22: 7pm: Film screening: *In Our Own Backyard*, Barnum 008

Note: You are expected to watch this video BEFORE class on Monday, April 23. If you cannot attend the arranged screening, you may check out the video from the Media Center in Tisch and watch it in the media lab (call # VC374).

Mon, April 23: Citizen groups and interest groups

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 13: pp. 505-512, 520-532.
- Frantzich: Chs. 8, 9, 19.
- (L) Alexis de Tocqueville: "Democracy in America," p. 411.
- (L) Jeffrey Birnbaum: "The Lobbyists," p. 424.

Wed., April 25: Protest

Reading:

- Frantzich: Ch. 3.
- (L) William Greider: "Who Will Tell the People," p. 432.

Fri., April 27: Discussion of interest groups and alternative forms of participation

Reading:

- Frantzich: Chs. 1, 15, 18, Conclusion.

Week 15:

Mon., April 30: Big picture

Reading:

- Logic: Ch. 15, entire
- (B) Sarah Vowell: “The Partly Cloudy Patriot,” from *The Partly Cloudy Patriot*, 2002.

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 11: 8:30 am

Note: It is your responsibility to make sure that your end-of-semester travel plans do not conflict with the final exam. Alternate exams WILL NOT be administered due to travel.