
POS 100

Introduction to American Politics

Taylor University

Instructor: Jakob A. Miller

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Hours: 10-1pm/R

Time(Sec 1): 8:00–8:50am/MWF

Time(Sec 2): 9:00–9:50am/MWF

Place: Reade 241

“I must study politics, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics or philosophy.”

— *John Adams*

Course Description: Welcome to American Politics!

For a nation founded on the idea of rule by the people, most of the American people know very little about the government they live under. The goal of this course is provide an introduction to the American political system. At the end of this course, you will understand the basic moving parts of American politics: where the Constitution came from, how a bill becomes a law, the powers of the president, and so on.

This course is not merely going to cover the basics, however. That isn't even our main focus. Political science is neither law nor history nor opinion. We won't be reciting vast lists of rules and regulations, or memorizing names and dates. Instead, we're going to take a scientific look at how the machine built in that sweltering hall in Philadelphia functions today. Why do we all hate Congress? How come we'll only ever have two main political parties? What made Hitler raise your hospital bill?

Politics can often seem frustrating or confusing - but when we're done, you'll know how America works.

Required Materials:

All readings will be posted on BlackBoard, with a folder for each class day. Optional readings will be marked as such. There is no required textbook for this course. If you want a reference book for your own use, I recommend *The Logic of American Politics* by Kernell et al.

This is a reading-intensive course: it is imperative that you come to each class meeting having carefully read all the assigned texts. Students will be expected to be familiar with the material assigned, and will be frequently called upon to summarize and discuss what they have read. Students should also be familiar with current events, as these will sometimes be brought up during the course. Skimming any major news outlet is sufficient.

This is not a binding document. All material within subject to change at any time. *Meets foundational core civic engagement or general social science requirements.*

Course Goals:

When our time together is over, you should have: 1) Developed a holistic understanding of the US political system. 2) Become familiar with academic arguments, able to argue and discourse as scholars. 3) Grown as Christian citizens, able to better serve.

Assignments:

Participation	10%
Quizzes	15%
Papers	25%
Exams	50%

Participation: Class participation is both expected and required. I'll give a breakdown of why I have participation as a part of your grade, as well as how participation will be scored in our first meeting.

Quizzes: Reading quizzes account for 15% of your final grade. These quizzes are short, pop, closed-book quizzes, given at the beginning of class. In order to account for circumstance, the four lowest quiz grades will be dropped for each student.

Papers: There are three short papers for this course, each roughly 500-800 words in length. Together, these papers are worth 25% of your final grade. Writing prompts for these papers will be distributed in class, and each paper must be turned in by midnight on the date listed. Late work will be penalized one full grade, and work overdue by a week or more will not be accepted for any reason.

Exams: There are two exams for this course: a midterm on Oct. 27th during normal class hours, and a final on Dec. 14th at 3:00 pm. Each is worth 25% of your final grade. The exams are cumulative and cover both readings and lecture, and will be mixed multiple choice and short answer.

Plagiarism: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a person presents or turns in work that includes someone else's ideas, language, or other (not common-knowledge) material without giving appropriate credit to the source. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in failing this course, and may also result in further consequences as stipulated in the Taylor catalogue. **Academic Dishonesty** constitutes a serious violation of academic integrity and scholarship standards at Taylor that can result in substantial penalties, at the sole discretion of the University, including but not limited to, denial of credit in a course as well as dismissal from the University. . . . In short, a student violates academic integrity when he or she claims credit for any work not his or her own (words, ideas, answers, data, program codes, music, etc.) or when a student misrepresents any academic performance.

Course Outline:

Reading assignments and lecture coverage might change — it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments.

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
Aug 28th Classes Start	30th Introduction and Class Overview Noel. Skim Booth et al.	Sep 1st Foundations Olson, Hardin.
4th No Class Labor Day	6th Foundations Putnam, Pierson.	8th The American Tradition Excerpt from <i>American Social and Political Thought</i> .
11th The American Tradition Tocqueville, Wood	13th The Constitution Dahl C.1, The Constitution.	15th The Constitution <i>Federalist No. 10</i> .

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
18th The Constitution <i>Federalist No. 51.</i>	20th The Constitution Dahl C.2.	22nd Congress Mayhew.
25th Congress Aldrich.	27th Congress Krehbiel.	29th The Presidency Cohen.
Oct 2nd The Presidency Moe.	4th No Class	6th The Bureaucracy Moe.
9th The Bureaucracy Lewis.	11th The Judiciary Martin.	13th No Class Fall Break
16th No Class Fall Break	18th The Judiciary Graber.	20th The Judiciary Wheeler.
23rd Federalism Buchanan.	25th Federalism Kettl.	27th MIDTERM EXAM
30th Citizen Knowledge Schudson.	Nov 1st Public Opinion Berinsky.	3rd Parties Aldrich.
6th Parties Bawn.	8th Parties Druckman et al.	10th Choice Quattrone and Tversky.
13th Voting Behavior Jacoby.	15th Campaigns Sides and Haselwerdt.	17th Political Participation Citrin et al.
20th Policy Campbell.	22nd No Class Thanksgiving!	24th No Class Thanksgiving!
27th Policy Wlezien.	29th Political Geography Brookings Report.	Dec 1st Polarization Fiorina.
4th Money in Politics Lindblom.	6th Inequality Bartels.	8th Review Course Conclusion and Final Exam Review.