

POLI 10D: Spring 2016
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN (U.S.) POLITICS
Lectures MW 12-12:50 Pepper Canyon Hall 109

Note: 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. Changes will also be posted on TED (TritonEd).

Peter Galderisi

Office Hours: SSB 449 Tuesday, 12-2 (Th 2-4 for non-class hours)

Email: For *class related* questions—use the message (not email) facility in TED for this course

For *other, non-course related questions*: pgalderisi@ucsd.edu

--please feel free to message me with questions/concerns at any time. I will check them at least every *early evening* (and usually throughout the day), except Saturdays (my one day with my wife).

TAs: Hours and Office to be listed during Week 1.

Derek Bonett
John Kuk
Skyler Roth

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 and quasi-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). We will also try to explain what seems to be a government that is dysfunctional, unable to produce public outcomes efficiently.

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, adversarial and polarized state. We will also come to understand that much of what is in evidence today is a continuation of our past. Battles between nationalists and states' rights advocates, a lack of trust in government, questions about electoral outcomes, 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 anecdotes are not fully elaborated evidence
5. To learn that ‘opinion’ should be factually and theoretically backed argument, not impressions.
6. To learn that politics, just like life generally, is complex with few easy answers or solutions (for those, you can turn to the cable news channel or presidential candidate of your choice)

CLASS FORMAT

Most of the class time will be taken up by my lectures (a necessary function of the class size and the fact that, this quarter, we lose one lecture day). 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, however, 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, election, local issue, court decision, corporate behavior, etc. Please contact me during office hours or through the TED message facility if you have questions that could not be answered during class.

REQUIREMENTS

- One text, available at the campus bookstore, is required for this course: *The Logic of American Politics* (7th ed.) by Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser and Vavrick, available at the campus bookstore and elsewhere.
- In addition, several other essays, court cases, commentaries, etc. of various lengths will be required and will be available online directly or through the UCSD library server (access on campus or at home through a proxy server or VPN—these will be marked with an *). The TAs will explain this process during sections the first week. These are not all listed yet. In order to save you money, I have very recently chosen not to require the reader that I produced for this class in the past—the copyright fees increased too much. Instead, I am searching out new, free to use, essays.
- I will also post weekly 'thought' pages to help with organizing the readings or focus on a handful of topics. Because of the lack of a reader, these “thoughts” will be rather extensive. My hope is that these will get you to think beyond the course material. You will discuss these “thoughts,” along with the extra readings, in your weekly sections.
- All readings (including my “thoughts”) serve as background to the lectures and discussions. Readings should therefore be completed in advance of the corresponding class lectures and section discussions.
- I will also post reading guides each week to highlight what you should concentrate on when reading the text/essays each week.

- 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. 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 or phones 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.

- 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. This “living” syllabus will post the question(s) you will address in section, as well as the readings and “thought” that accompany them. Be prepared. The TAs can give pop quizzes at their discretion.

EXAMS, SHORT PAPER, DISCUSSION:

- Midterm: in class, Wednesday, April 27 (25% of total)—short essays (format and study guide to be provided one week prior)
- A short, 3-5-page take-home essay due by the **beginning** of class, Wednesday, May 11, through the TurnItIn facility on TED (25% of total). The topic for that assignment will be posted by Wednesday, May 4. 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 (10% of the assignment grade after the beginning of class, 10% the next day, 10% each additional day).
- Final: Wednesday, June 8, 11:30-2:29 in our classroom (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.
- Section attendance and participation (10% of total)

FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

A few A+ grades will also be given to the top students in class and sections.

A	>=94	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73 lowest passing grade for major requirement
B	84-86	D	60-69
B-	80-83	F	below 60

POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

The death penalty--no exceptions! The current 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 or your TA 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 final essay or paper 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://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/define-cheating/index.html>

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 my NCAA March Madness brackets got wiped out in the first round 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, INCOMPLETES, and MISSING DISCUSSION SECTION

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. Neither I nor the TAs have any discretion on this.

You will not be docked for missing a scheduled discussion session if you have a valid, certified reason as listed above.

CLASS WEB PAGE

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

SCHEDULE:

I never give *exact* dates for each reading (more on that in class). I will let you know where you need to be at the end of each class and on TED. The following is meant as a general, *weekly* guideline. More detailed descriptions of what will be discussed in section will be posted on the class TED page as the class progresses. An * denotes that you can only access the essay on campus or at home through a proxy server or VPN connection. Entries without an * can be *directly* accessed online.

Week 1 Introduction: Democracy, Representation and Power

Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser and Vavrick (KJKV), Chapter 1, Chapter 15 (review briefly; all concepts will be covered as the class progresses)

- Week 1 Reading Guide

Discussion section: Class logistics, the Law of Cyclical Majorities and/or the Prisoner's Dilemma

- "Thoughts" on Democracy
- The Law of Cyclical Majorities
- "U.S. Politics – An Approximation of the Prisoner's Dilemma"

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/info2040/2011/09/12/u-s-politics-an-approximation-of-the-prisoners-dilemma/>

Week 2 The Constitutional Rules of the Game

KJKV, Chapter 2

the U.S. Constitution (Appendix in KJKV) Federalist #51 (Appendix)

- Week 2 Reading Guide

Discussion section: Do Constitutional rules favor risk aversion at the expense of problem solving?"

- "Thoughts" on the Constitution
- Narrated PowerPoint on "the Constitution as a Democratic Instrument" *
- Eric Black, "If you're sick of gridlock, blame the Constitution"

<https://www.minnpost.com/eric-black-ink/2012/10/if-you-re-sick-gridlock-blame-constitution>

*There will be no regular class, Wednesday, April 6, as I have to attend a memorial service. The narrated PowerPoint will serve as the lecture.

Week 3 The Changing Constitutional Regime and the Nationalization of Power

A: KJKV, Chapter 9, Chapter 4, section on *Brown v. Bd. only*
Brown v. Bd. of Education (1954)

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0347_0483_ZO.html

- Week 3 Reading Guide

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

KJKV, 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)

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/22/1>

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

- *Extra reading(s) to be assigned*

Week 4 The Right to Participate - Civil Liberties and Rights

KJKV, Chapter 4, Chapter 5

- Week 4 Reading Guide

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

District of Columbia v. Heller (2008)

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/07-290>

***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. Dissenting opinions often serve as the intellectual basis for future majority decisions.

Discussion section: exam review

**MIDTERM—Wednesday, April 27, covering Weeks 1-4
(please bring blue exam books)**

Week 5 Introduction to Participation, Public Opinion and the Electoral Process

KJKV, Chapter 10, Chapter 11 (491-501)

- Week 5 Reading Guide

Discussion section: Low turnout and U.S. elections--who votes and why

- *Several Extra reading(s) to be assigned and will serve as the foundation for your paper*

Weeks 6-7 Parties and the Electoral Process

KJKV, Chapter 12, Chapter 14 (skim), Chapter 11 (remainder)

- Weeks 6-7 Reading Guide

Discussion sections: understanding parties and the electoral process—changers in the presidential nominating process

- *James Fallows (2008), “Rhetorical questions” (Atlantic Monthly Online)*
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/fallows-debates>
- *Extra reading(s) to be assigned*

Week 8 Interest Group Politics

KJKV, Chapter 13

- Week 8 Reading Guide

Discussion section: interest groups, democracy, and representation

- *Extra reading(s) to be assigned*

Week 9 Congress: The People's Branch or Dysfunctional Mess?

KJKV, Chapter 6

- Week 9 Reading Guide

Discussion section: Does Congress represent? If so, whom? If not, why?

- Anthony King (1997), "Running Scared" (Atlantic Monthly Online)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jan/scared/scared.html>
- Extra reading(s) to be assigned

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

KJKV, Chapter 7

- Week 10 Reading Guide

Discussion section: Expectations and the Modern Presidency

- Extra reading(s) to be assigned

A final review will be scheduled for the entire class