

Introduction to American Politics Fall 2017

Instructor Roberto F. Carlos, (Ph.D. Candidate)

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Location: Moody Learning Center

Class Times: Monday and Wednesdays either 12:15-1:30pm or 1:40-2:55pm

Office Hours: Coming soon, also by appointment

Course Overview:

This course examines the political system in the United States. The course will focus on larger issues and controversies that surround the study of American politics. As a class, we will analyze the political culture of the United States and examine how the basic structure of American government is set up to take input from individual citizens and interest groups and turn it into policy outcomes.

Requirements and Grading:

You are expected to come to class prepared. This means coming to class present and alert having read all of the assigned material. Your overall grade will be based on your performance on two short essays, two exams, and class participation. To earn a passing grade, all assignments must be completed, and your work must be your own. Electronic copies of each essay are due before the start of class on the date determined in the syllabus. The essay prompts will be given out a week in advance. Both the final and midterm will be taken in class, and are closed book.

Short Essay # 1 accounts for 15% of your grade

Midterm Exam accounts for 25% of your grade

Short Essay #2 accounts for 15% of your grade

Final Exam accounts for 35% of your grade

Class Participation accounts for 10% of your grade

Policy on Late Assignments:

A penalty of 5 percentage points will be assessed each day that an essay (or any other assignment) is late. Exceptions may be made at my discretion in the event of extenuating

circumstances (e.g., illness or family/personal emergencies). You must, however, contact me before the due date to make arrangements.

Policy on Exam Conflicts:

With the exception of students that are granted special accommodations by Student Disability Services, students must take the midterm and final exams at times and places assigned by me and/or the registrar. If you require special accommodations, these must be made through Student Disability Services. Do not schedule winter break travel until after the final exam for travel conflicts will not be accepted as an excuse for rescheduling your exam.

Policy on Section Absences:

To do well in this course, you have to be present. Attendance has a substantive impact on your ability to do well in class. Students who fail to show up on the first day of class and do not contact me will be dropped from the course. It is up to the student to make sure the drop is complete. Students who are absent more than five times will be dropped. Please note that tardiness and early departures from class can be considered absenteeism.

Readings:

Unless otherwise noted, each week's readings will be posted on Canvas/Blackboard one week in advance. I reserve the right to add or remove a reading from time to time.

ELECTRONICS ETIQUETTE POLICY:

The use of a laptop, tablet, cell phone or other electronic device is strictly prohibited (unless you have made special accommodations with Student Disability Services). Students observed using an electronic device will receive a 3 percent deduction from their final grade after the first warning.

Introduction to Class and Politics (8/28)

The Constitution (8/30)

- *American Government* Chapter 1

No Class, Labor Day (9/4)

The Constitution September (9/6)

- *American Government* Chapter 2

- *Federalist 10*

Federalism (9/11)

- *American Government* Chapter 6
- *Federalist 51*

Public Opinion and Socialization (9/13)

- *American Government* Chapter 8

Public Opinion and Socialization (9/18)

- *American Government* Chapter 9
- Philip Converse “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited by David Apter. 1964

Political Participation (9/20)

- *American Government* Chapter 10

Political Participation (9/25)

*Essay Number One Due before class

- Michael Lewis-Beck, Helmet North, William G. Jacoby and Herbert F. Weinberg. *The American Voter Revisited* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), Chapter 5.

Campaigns and Elections (9/27)

- Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), Chapter 3.
- Emily Thorson, “5 Political Science Myths Trump is Exploding,” *Politico*, March 28, 2016.

Media (10/2)

- *American Government* Chapter 7

Media (10/4)

- Markus Prior, “Media and Political Polarization,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 16 (2013): 101-127.

Political Parties (10/9)

- *American Government* Chapter 11

Political Parties (10/11)

- Kathleen Bawn et al. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and

Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives in Politics* 10:3 (2012): 571-597.

Race and American Politics (10/16)

- Michael Dawson. *Not in Our Lifetimes: The Future of Black Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1
- Desmond S. King and Rogers M. Smith, "Racial Orders in American Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 99:1 (2005): 75-92.

Gender and American Politics (10/18)

- Sarah F. Anzia and Christopher Berry. "The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?" *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 55, No. 3, July 2011. Pp. 478-493.

Midterm (10/23)

Interest Groups (10/25)

- *American Government* Chapter 11

Congress (10/30)

- *American Government* Chapter 3

Congress (11/1)

- David Mayhew. *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (Updated Edition). New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2004 (1974). "Updated Preface." "Chapter 1: The Electoral Connection."

Congress (11/6)

- Barbara Sinclair. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2012. "Chapter 6: How and Why the Legislative Process Changed."

Judiciary (11/8)

- *American Government* Chapter 5

Judiciary (11/13)

*Essay Number Two Due before class

- Gerald Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Chapter 1

Presidency (11/15)

- *American Government* Chapter 4

Presidency (11/20)

- Richard Neustadt, "The Power to Persuade," in *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: Free Press, 1991), Chapter 3.

Presidency (11/27)

- William Howell and David Milton Brent, *Thinking About the Presidency* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), Chapter 1.

No Class, Thanksgiving Break (11/22)

Bureaucracy (11/29)

- James Q. Wilson. *Bureaucracy*. New York, New York: Basic Books, 1989. Pp. 1-27.

Civil Rights (12/4)

- *American Government* Chapter 18

Review (12/4)

Review (12/6)

Final Exam Week (12/11 – 12/16)