

POLS 190

The Scope of Political Science

Spring 2014

Instructor: John French

Location: Burnham 309

Office: BSB 1126A

Time: MWF 10:00-10:50

Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:30

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Politics is the process by which a group of people make decisions that are binding on everyone in the group. That definition sounds straightforward, but in practice it becomes very complicated very quickly. The *process* itself can take any number of forms, with complex institutional structures. The question of who belongs in the group, and what is expected from members or those who wish to *become* members, is also complex. Moreover, few of us would like to commit ourselves to following *any* decision that might emerge from a particular process— that is, we believe that sometimes moral or ethical demands outweigh the results of the political process, or that we belong to other groups, like families, that matter more than the political community. In other words, even if we have a relatively clear idea of what politics is, what we want and expect from it is much less clear, and changes over time.

The goal of this course is to give you a sense of the entire range of questions and problems that arise in the study of politics. We will break those innumerable questions into three broad categories: Law and Institutions; Markets and Power; and Culture and Identity. Each of these categories touches on very concrete problems that the political process must somehow address. We will also pay close attention to how our particular political system deals with these problems— or fails to do so.

Reading Assignments

All readings for this course will be available on the course Blackboard site. Please let me know immediately if you are unable to see the site or have difficulty accessing any of the readings.

Assignments and Grading

The majority of your grade in this course will come from three papers of 5-7 pages each. These papers will respond to prompts that will be distributed in class; each one will address important questions from one of the three course sections. Papers will be handed in, in hard copy, in class. The due dates for the three papers are February 14, March 21, and May 2; these dates are also in bold in the schedule below. Each paper is worth 30% of your final grade. Late papers will be penalized by one half of a letter grade for each day late.

The remainder of your grade will be based on your attendance and participation. Attendance in class will be taken every day. You are allowed **two** unexcused absences; after that, each unexcused absence will reduce your participation grade by 10%. You are also expected to have the assigned readings done for each day, and be prepared to join in a discussion of those readings.

Grade breakdown:

Paper #1: 30%
Paper #2: 30%
Paper #3: 30%
Participation: 10%

Grade Scale:

90-100: A
80-89: B
70-79: C
60-69: D
0-59: F

Plagiarism:

The submission of work that is not entirely your own— be it from another student or from published sources, in print or online— without proper attribution is plagiarism. The smallest possible consequence for plagiarism is that you will receive a zero on the assignment in question. It is also possible for you to receive a failing grade in the course, or to be subjected to further disciplinary action at the University level. Do not do it. If you have any questions about how to properly cite your sources, *ask*. As a rule of thumb, it is better to cite too much rather than not enough, so when in doubt, include a citation.

Classroom Behavior:

Behavior that is distracting or disruptive is unacceptable. That includes the use of cell phones or other mobile devices (talking, texting, ringing, etc.). It also includes the inappropriate use of a computer (i.e. looking at Facebook instead of paying attention). Most fundamentally, it includes creating noise or other disturbances that undermine the ability of your fellow students to participate fully in the class.

Disability Services Notification

Concerning disabled students, the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation in UIC Programs must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact DRC at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413- 0123 (TDD).

Course Schedule and Readings:

Jan 13: Course Introduction

Part I: Law and Institutions

Jan 15: Pierson, *The Modern State*, Ch1, pp. 4-27

Jan 17: Scott Gordon, *Controlling the State*, Ch.8, "American Constitutionalism," pp. 284-326

Jan 20: **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., day; no class**

Jan 22: Bingham: *Rule of Law* chapters 1-2, pp. 3-33
Fuller: "The Problem of the Grudge Informer"

Jan 24: Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Book 11, chapters 3-6
James Madison, Federalist Papers 10, 47, 48, 49, 51

Jan 27: Alexander Hamilton: Federalist Paper #78
Robert Yates: Letters from Brutus #11, 12, 15

Jan 29: Jill Lepore: "Benched"
Jeffrey Toobin: "Bench Press"

Topics for Paper #1 Distributed in Class

Feb 3: Francis Fukuyama, "The Decline of American Political Institutions"

- Feb 5: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book III, Chapter XV, “On Deputies or Representatives”, pp.101-104
 Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, pp.1-9;
 Joseph Schumpeter, “Another Theory of Democracy”, pp. 269-73; 282-83
- Feb 7: Sasha Issenberg: *The Victory Lab*, Ch. 9, “Models and the Matrix,” pp. 243-271
 Scherer: “Inside the Secret World of the Data Crunchers Who Helped Obama Win”
- Feb 10: Matt Viser, “Obama’s Vision of Unity Led Only to a Wider Gap”
- Feb 12: Economist: “Have Ph.D., Will Govern”
 Kristin Ross: “Democracy for Sale”
 David A. Bell, “The Case against Referendums”
- Feb 14: Cass R. Sunstein, “It’s for Your Own Good!”
 T.M. Wilkinson, “Nudging and Manipulation”
Paper #1 Due in Class

Part II: Markets and Power

- Feb. 17 Adam Smith: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, pp.25-30
 Karl Polanyi: *The Great Transformation*, Ch. 4-6
- Feb 19 Michael Lewis: “Jonathan Lebed’s Extracurricular Activities”
- Feb 21 Friedrich A. Hayek, “Equality, Value, and Merit”, pp. 80-94
 Christopher Hayes: *Twilight of the Elites*, Ch. 2, pp. 31-64
- Feb 24 Malcolm Gladwell: “Million Dollar Murray”
 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 60-65, 75-80; 100-108
- Feb 26 Nicholas Wapshott, *Keynes/Hayek*, Ch 11 & 13, pp. 154-170, 188-206
- Feb 28 Rose and Milton Friedman, “The Power of the Market”, pp. 9-24; 27-37
 Michael Sandel: *What Money Can’t Buy*, pp. 3-15, 107-114
Topics for Paper #2 Distributed in Class
- Mar 3 K. Sabeel Rahman, “Conceptualizing the Economic Role of the State: Laissez-Faire, Technocracy, and the Democratic Alternative”

- Mar 5 Gianfranco Poggi: *Forms of Power*, ch. 7, "Economic Power," pp. 123-140
- Mar 7 Phillip Pettit, "Freedom as Antipower"
- Mar 10 Stephen Lukes: *Power: a Radical View*
 Mar 12 Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, pp. 35-88
- Mar 14 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-228
Paper #2 Due in Class
- Mar 17 Film in Class: *1984*
 Mar 19 Film in Class: *1984*
 Mar 21 Film in Class: *1984*

Mar. 24 - 28: SPRING BREAK

Part III: Culture and Identity: Gender, Race, and Class

- Mar 31 Lisa Belkin, "The Opt-Out Revolution"
- Apr 2 Kantor and Greenberg, "Wall Street Mothers, Stay at Home Fathers"
 Greenhouse, "Recession Drives Women Back to the Work Force"
- Apr 4 Hanna Rosin: *The End of Men*, Ch. 3, "The New American Matriarchy," pp. 79-112
- Apr 7 Harold Meyerson, "The Forty Year Slump"
 BBC News, "Obama Calls for Action on 'Profoundly Unequal' Economy"
- Apr 9 Wilkins, "Thinking Clearly About Economic Inequality"
- Apr 11 Alison Wolf, *The XX Factor*, Ch. 3, pp. 43-63
- Apr 14 Larry Bennet and Adolf Reed, Jr.: "The New Face of Urban Renewal"
 Steve Bogira, "A Dream Unrealized"
- Apr 16 Steve Bogira: "Trying to Make Separate Equal"

Apr 18 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, Ch. 1., pp. 20-58

Topics for Paper #3 Distributed in Class

Apr 21 Gayle Rubin: "The Traffic in Women"

Apr 23 Allan and Florence Berube, "Sunset Trailer Park," pp.15-40

Apr 25 W.E.B. DuBois: "Of Our Spiritual Strivings", pp. 37-44, in *The Souls of Black Folk*

Apr 28 Touré, *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?*

Apr 30 Samuel Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge"

May 2 Patricia Hill-Collins, "All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation"

Paper #3 Due in Class