

Syllabus: Political Science 101-Summer 2014-University of Illinois at Chicago

Introduction to American Politics

Instructor -- Professor Evan McKenzie- mckenzie@uic.edu , (312) 413-3782

Office hours: M/T/Th/F 830-900 in BSB 1126

Meetings and room assignments

9:00-11:55am M,T,R,F in Behavioral Sciences Building 1115

Course objectives

This course is intended to accomplish three objectives. One is to provide you with information. You will become familiar with the structures, functions, and processes of American government. We will explore the philosophical and historical roots of American politics, the three branches of government, and various political institutions like the media and political parties. A second goal is to help you develop your critical and analytical thinking abilities. The third is to help you develop your own view of American politics and government.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- § Explain how government impacts your daily life;
- § Recognize and evaluate the basic debates and issues in government and political history in the United States;
- § Explain and critically assess the formal and informal political institutions, and their respective roles, in American politics;
- § Identify and describe the key functions of the three branches of government; and
- § Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation, and outline the ways in which individuals and groups can affect political outcomes in the United States.

Required Text

- § Karen O'Connor, Larry J. Sabato, and Alixandra B. Yanus. *Essentials of American Government: Roots and Reform*, 2012 Election Edition. (New York: Pearson).

Optional:

- § MyPoliSciLab (www.mypoliscilab.com), which includes practice tests, multimedia activities, and more to reinforce your understanding of the textbook.

Requirements:

Please be advised that I will not accept late papers or other assignments, and we will not administer makeup exams, except in cases of documented emergencies.

"Documented" means *written proof from a third party*, such as a letter from a physician in the case of medical emergencies. "Emergencies" means *last-minute occurrences that make attendance impossible*. If you know before an exam that you can't make it on the scheduled date, see me, and you may be allowed to take the exam early, but *you will not be allowed to take the exam after the scheduled date for any reason that you knew about before the exam*. The same rules apply for turning in written assignments.

Here is a summary of how your grade will be calculated:

Midterm and Final Examinations--30% each (60% total); Political film paper-15%;
Group project-15%; Participation-10%. Due dates are in the Course Schedule.

1. Mid-term examination : 300 points (30%). The exams will be half multiple choice and half essay. Your multiple choice exam questions will be drawn from the textbook, and the essay questions will be on things that were covered well in the lectures.
2. Final examination : 300 points (30%). Same format as midterm. This is not a comprehensive exam. It covers only material from the midterm on.
3. Political films paper. 150 points (15%): This assignment requires you to watch a film that deal with politics, which you will choose from a list I will give you, and then writing a two-page (or 500 word) paper that will deal with certain specific questions. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
4. Group project : 150 points (15%) You will be working on a set of issues and specific questions about those issues. Everybody will turn in a short (no more than two pages) paper individually, and also contribute to a group project in the form of a ten-minute Powerpoint presentation or video that will inform the entire class about the issue and question. Suggested issues are as follows (but feel free to propose another one!):
 - A. Income and wealth polarization
 - B. The 2008 crash of the economy
 - C. Money in politics
5. Attendance and Participation (and Civility) : 10%. Your participation grade will be determined by your attendance and participation, mainly based on the quality and quantity of your contribution to the quality of discussions. However, your participation grade is SUBJECT TO DEDUCTIONS OF UP TO 100% for lack of civility in lecture or discussion (see below).

A. Attendance : I will be taking roll. If you arrive after roll is taken, you are late, and that equals ½ an absence. Anybody who accumulates more than five absences is subject to receiving a zero for their participation grade. It does not matter why you are absent or late for a class session. If you aren't present, you do not receive credit for being present.

B. Participation : You must participate in class discussions and other activities, which means being prepared and speaking coherently, intelligently, and civilly, recognizing that we need to be free to disagree with each other respectfully so that we can learn from each other.

C. Civility-PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY!: You must be a good classroom citizen at all times. This means not doing things like letting your cell phone or pager make noise or even looking at it during class; eating in class (a violation of campus rules); talking to the people sitting next to you; watching YouTube videos or web surfing and thereby distracting your classmates; arriving late; leaving early; showing a lack of respect for other people or their statements; and other breaches of good manners. Students who create these situations will receive one warning, after which there will be consequences, and students who cannot remain quiet in class will be asked to leave.

Course Schedule:

WEEK ONE

Monday, May 19: BEGIN UNIT ONE--FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Chapter One. Foundations of American Government

§ 1.1 Trace the origins of American government.

- § 1.2 Evaluate the different types of governments countries may employ.
- § 1.3 Explain the functions of American government.
- § 1.4 Describe American political culture, and identify the basic tenets of American democracy.
- § 1.5 Analyze the changing characteristics of the American public.
- § 1.6 Assess the role of political ideology in shaping American politics.
- § 1.7 Characterize changes in Americans' attitudes toward and expectations of government.

Tuesday, May 20: Chapter 2. The Constitution

- § 2.1 Trace the historical developments that led to the colonists' break with Great Britain and the emergence of the new American nation.
- § 2.2 Identify the key components of the Articles of Confederation and the reasons why it failed.
- § 2.3 Outline the issues and compromises that were central to the writing of the U.S. Constitution.
- § 2.4 Analyze the underlying principles of the U.S. Constitution.
- § 2.5 Explain the conflicts that characterized the drive for ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
- § 2.6 Distinguish between the methods for proposing and ratifying amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Thursday, May 22. Chapter Three: Federalism

- § 3.1 Trace the roots of the federal system and the Constitution's allocation of powers between the national and state governments.
- § 3.3 Describe the emergence and decline of dual federalism.
- § 3.4 Explain how cooperative federalism led to the growth of the national government at the expense of the states.
- § 3.5 Describe how the federal budget is used to further influence state and local governments' policies.
- § 3.6 Explore the role of the judiciary as arbiter of federal-state conflicts.
- § 3.7 Assess the challenges in balancing national and state powers and the consequences for policy making.

Friday, May 23: Chapter 4. Civil Liberties

- § 4.1 Trace the constitutional roots of civil liberties.
- § 4.3 Outline the First Amendment guarantees of and limitations on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition.
- § 4.7 Evaluate how reforms to combat terrorism have affected civil liberties.

WEEK TWO (Monday, May 26, is a holiday)

Tuesday, May 27: Chapter 5. Civil Rights

- § 5.2 Outline developments in African Americans' and women's push for equality from 1890 to 1954.
- § 5.3 Analyze the civil rights movement and the effects of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- § 5.5 Describe how other groups have mobilized in pursuit of their own civil rights.
- § 5.6 Evaluate the ongoing debate concerning civil rights and affirmative action.

Thursday, May 29: BEGIN UNIT TWO--INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT.

Chapter 6. Congress

- § 6.1 Trace the roots of the legislative branch outlined by the U.S. Constitution.
- § 6.2 Characterize the demographic attributes of members of Congress, and identify factors that affect their chances for reelection.
- § 6.3 Assess the role of the committee system, political parties, and congressional leadership in organizing Congress.
- § 6.4 Identify three of the most significant powers of Congress.
- § 6.5 Analyze the factors that influence how members of Congress make decisions.
- § 6.6 Evaluate the strategic interactions between Congress, the president, the courts, and the people.

Friday, May 30: Chapter 7. The Presidency

- § 7.1 Trace the development of the presidency and the provisions for choosing and replacing presidents.
- § 7.2 Identify and describe the constitutional powers of the president.
- § 7.3 Evaluate the development and expansion of presidential power.
- § 7.4 Outline the structure of the presidential establishment and the functions of each of its components.
- § 7.5 Explain the concept of presidential leadership and analyze the importance of public opinion.
- § 7.6 Assess the president's role as policy maker.

WEEK THREE

Monday, June 2: **Midterm examination**,

Note: I will not be here on June 2 or June 3 because I will be speaking at a conference. I will have a proctor administer the exam, after which you are free to leave.

Tuesday, June 3

Note: We will not meet on June 3.

Thursday, June 5: Note that we are covering two chapters.

Read Chapter 8. The Executive Branch

- § 8.1 Trace the growth and development of the federal bureaucracy.
- § 8.2 Describe modern bureaucrats, and outline the structure of the modern bureaucracy.
- § 8.3 Determine how the bureaucracy makes policy.
- § 8.4 Evaluate controls designed to make agencies more accountable.

Read Chapter 9. The Judiciary

- § 9.1 Trace the development of the federal judiciary and the origins of judicial review.
- § 9.2 Explain the organization of the federal court system.
- § 9.3 Outline the criteria and process used to select federal court judges.
- § 9.4 Evaluate the Supreme Court's process for accepting, hearing, and deciding cases.
- § 9.5 Analyze the factors that influence judicial decision making.
- § 9.6 Assess the role of the Supreme Court in the policy-making process.

Friday, June 6: (note that we are covering two chapters)

BEGIN UNIT THREE—POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Chapter 10. Public Opinion and the News Media

- § 10.1 Trace the development of modern public opinion research.

- § 10.2 Describe the methods for conducting and analyzing different types of public opinion polls.
- § 10.3 Analyze the process by which people form political opinions.
- § 10.4 Trace the historical development of the news media in the United States.
- § 10.5 Summarize the ethical standards and federal regulations that govern the news media.
- § 10.6 Assess how the news media cover politics.
- § 10.7 Evaluate the influence of the news media on public opinion and the impact of media bias.

Chapter 11. Political Parties and Interest Groups

- § 11.1 Trace the evolution of the two-party system in the United States.
- § 11.2 Outline the structure of American political parties at the national, state, and local levels.
- § 11.3 Identify the functions performed by American political parties.
- § 11.4 Analyze how political socialization and group affiliations shape party identification.
- § 11.5 Trace the roots of the American interest group system.
- § 11.6 Identify several strategies and tactics used by organized interests.
- § 11.7 Explain reform efforts geared toward regulating interest groups and lobbyists.

WEEK FOUR

Monday, June 12: Chapter 12. Campaigns, Elections, and Voting

- § 12.1 Trace the evolution of political campaigns in the United States.
- § 12.2 Assess the role of candidates and their staff in the campaign process.
- § 12.3 Evaluate the ways campaigns raise money.
- § 12.4 Identify the ways campaigns use the media to reach potential voters.
- § 12.5 Outline the electoral procedures for presidential and general elections.
- § 12.6 Explain the incumbency advantage in congressional elections.
- § 12.7 Assess the effects of several factors that affect voter choice and turnout.

Tuesday, June 10: Chapter 13. Social and Economic Policy

- § 13.1 Trace the stages of the policy-making process.
- § 13.2 Describe health policy in the United States.
- § 13.3 Describe the evolution of income security policy in the United States.
- § 13.6 Evaluate the role of public policy in the economic recession and recovery.

NOTE: Political film paper due at start of class

Thursday, June 12: Chapter 14. Foreign and Defense Policy

- § 14.1 Trace the evolution of U.S. foreign and defense policy.
- § 14.3 Outline the factors that shape foreign and defense policy decision making.
- § 14.4 Identify contemporary foreign and defense policy challenges confronting the United States.

NOTE: Group presentations will be done today—and your individual papers on the group topics are due at the start of class

Friday, June 13: **Final Examination**

COURSE POLICIES

The 7 Essentials: Come to class. Be on time. Be prepared. Be respectful. Participate. Ask for help. Don't cheat.

Technology

This course has a Blackboard site, and you have been subscribed to it. Blackboard is a course management system. There are materials and links on the site that we will be using. If the classroom is equipped with Lecture Capture technology, the lectures will be automatically recorded using Lecture Capture and they will be available on the Blackboard site in the "Echo Capture" section. Use of a computer and internet access are required to access the Blackboard site. You are also welcome to record lectures using your own recorder.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all class sessions on time, is mandatory, and I will be taking roll every day. Most of us, including me, may be late or absent on occasion, but generally it is the same people who are late or absent habitually. If you miss more than five class sessions, you may receive a zero for your attendance and participation grade, at my discretion. It does not matter why you are absent or late. If you aren't present and on time, you do not receive credit for being present and on time. Arriving more than five minutes late is equal to one-half of an absence. Habitual lateness will also have significant negative impact on your overall A&P grade because it is disruptive, uncivil behavior.

Policy for Missed or Late Work

I will not accept late papers or other assignments, including extra credit assignments, and I will not administer makeup exams, except in cases of documented emergencies. "Documented" means *written proof from a third party*, such as a letter from a physician in the case of medical emergencies. "Emergencies" means *last-minute occurrences that make attendance impossible*. If you know before an exam that you can't make it on the scheduled date, see me, and you may be allowed to take the exam early, but you will not be allowed to take the exam after the scheduled date for any reason that you knew about before the exam. The same rules apply for turning in written assignments.

Policy on Collaboration

Studying with your fellow students in pairs or groups is fine. However, you must do your own written work without collaboration on the content, unless it is explicitly a group project.

Electronic Communication and Electronic Devices

You are welcome to contact me by email at mckenzie@uic.edu. You may be instructed to submit assignments using Blackboard assignment boxes instead of hard copies. However, you are not allowed to turn in any written assignments by email unless you have advance permission to do so, which is something I rarely grant. If you send me an assignment by email without advance permission, you have not turned in that assignment. You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet computer to access the book or take notes in class, except during exams. However, you may not engage in web surfing, watching videos, playing games, using email or social media, or any other non-class related activity. All cell phones must be turned off and put away during class. They are not to be heard from, seen, talked on, texted with, looked at, or otherwise brought into play at any time when class is in session.

Student Courtesy Policy

You must participate in class discussions and other activities, which means being prepared and speaking coherently, intelligently, and civilly, recognizing that we need to be free to disagree with each other respectfully so that we can learn from each other.

Lack of civility is disruptive to the learning process. You must be a good classroom citizen at all times. This means not doing certain things, including letting your cell phone or pager make noise or looking at it during class; eating in class (a violation of campus rules); conversing with the people sitting near you; watching YouTube videos or web surfing; arriving late; leaving early; sleeping in class; showing a lack of respect for other people or the things they say; and other breaches of good manners. Students who create these situations will receive one warning, after which there will be consequences, and students who cannot remain quiet and civil in class will be asked to leave. I reserve the right to assign a zero points grade for your entire A&P grade for habitual, or severe, breaches of classroom civility.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty has become a major problem here and at other universities. Sadly, here at UIC many pre-law students are some of the worst offenders, even though they are risking charges that could preclude them from ever becoming attorneys. I consider it my professional duty to make sure that dishonest people do not become attorneys. In this course there is a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. Specifically, the minimum consequence for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be a grade of F for the course, which is within my authority pursuant to the UIC Grading Manual. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, I may file a formal complaint with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, which could result in more serious consequences, potentially including expulsion from the university.

DO NOT write your assignments by copying, cutting, and/or pasting from other people's work! Read the material yourself and write your own paper, using your own words, starting with a blank page. If I catch you plagiarizing from online or other sources, I WILL GIVE YOU AN F.

For those who are unfamiliar with the definition of plagiarism, here it is, from the UIC Academic Integrity Policy (emphasis added):

"A student who submits work, at any stage of the writing process, which in whole or part has been written by someone else or which contains passages quoted or paraphrased from another's work without acknowledgment (quotation marks, citation, etc.) has plagiarized.

Each student should maintain his or her integrity when completing assignments and be overzealous to give credit where it is due. If a student is ever unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, he or she should ask the instructor. *Students who are found to have plagiarized work may be subject to various disciplinary actions, including a failing grade on a particular assignment, failure of the entire course, and possible expulsion from the university."*

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe their religious holidays must notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, you must notify me at least five days in

advance of the date when you will be absent. I will make every reasonable effort to honor the request. This is especially important for examination dates, when you must observe the notice requirements if you want an accommodation.

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oae/docs/ReligiousHolidaysFY20122014.pdf>

Disability Accommodation

The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 312-413-0123 (TTY) and consult the following:

http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/d/disability_resources/faq/accommodations.html.