

**Political Science 101: Introduction to American Government Syllabus**  
**University of Illinois at Chicago**  
**Summer 2016**

Instructor: Dianne Selden dselde2@uic.edu, 937-545-6364	CRN/Course Number: 19786/18785
Office location: BSB 1109 Office hours: 3:55-4:25p.m. on Tu, Th (Note: Dianne gets tea/coffee before/after class. Please feel free to join her!)	Lecture & discussion meet 1-3:55p.m. on M, Tu, Th, F BSB 1115

**Course Description, Goals, and Objectives**

Consider this “hands-on Political Science 101” - it revolves around your participation. Using in-class exercises, engagement with actual politics, and media/reading/discussion material, this class helps you to understand how the American political system - particularly, the federal, state, and local levels of government - impacts you.

Get ready to discover contexts, concepts, analytical tools, and ongoing disputes. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Recognize how various levels of government interact in federalism
- Identify and describe the key functions of the three branches of government, as well as formal and informal political institutions
- Recognize and evaluate the basic debates and issues in governance
- Explain how government and politics impact your daily life
- 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, through electoral and nonelectoral politics
- Recognize and unpackage normative information; communicate effectively with empirical information

Armed with knowledge about power dynamics, you will be better equipped to navigate your future with an informed understanding of the possibilities and stakes at hand.

The 7 Essentials:

Be respectful. Come to class. Participate. Think critically. Ask for help. Be prepared. Don't cheat.

**A Note on Class Etiquette**

You are expected to be “on top of” course requirements and take responsibility for your actions. Participation is mandatory in lecture and discussion. “Participation” means being prepared and willing to speak coherently, intelligently, and civilly; following class etiquette; and recognizing that we need to be free to disagree with each other respectfully so that we can learn from each other. *Refusing to participate will result in failing the course.*

- All ideas, philosophies, perspectives, and opinions are welcome, with one exception: disrespect will not be tolerated. In order to foster an academically inclusive environment where all ideas are encouraged to be brought forth and respectfully discussed, any student exhibiting intolerance through the use of normative,

judgmental language or behavior directed at another student will be reprimanded and/or asked to leave. Repeat offenders risk failing the course.

- Technology: Laptops and tablets are approved *for note-taking purposes only*. Paying any kind of attention to your phone/tablet/computer that is not for note taking is both disruptive and disrespectful to the instructor and the class; if the instructor or your classmates notice you browsing, you may be asked to leave. Multiple disruptions may result in failing the course. Please check Blackboard frequently. Feel free to audio-record lectures (Lecture Capture should be doing it, too, on Blackboard). Video recordings require instructor's prior consent.
- Courtesy: Don't let your phone ring. Don't talk to or disrupt classmates. Don't pack up early. Don't create disruptive situations. Do pay attention to and engage with the class.

### **Course Readings are Available on Blackboard**

Books Used for Course Readings:

Robertson's *Federalism and the Making of America* (Routledge 2012)

Schubert, Dye, and Zeigler's *Irony of Democracy* (Wadsworth Cengage 16<sup>th</sup> edition, 2014)

O'Connor, Sabato, and Yanus' *American Government: Roots and Reform*. (Pearson 2012 Election Edition, published in 2014)

Edelman's *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (The University of Chicago Press 1988)

Along with a smattering of articles available Online.

### **Additional Information on Assignments**

- *Clarity on limits of collaboration*: Studying with your fellow students in pairs or groups is encouraged. However, exams and all written work must be exclusively your own unless the assignment is overtly group based.
- Assignments (except for most in-class participation exercises) must be typed using 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman or Garamond), double-spaced, with numbered pages (preferably in the top right corner). Consistency in tense (past, present, or future) is greatly appreciated. Spell check is necessary. *Hard copies only* will be accepted (no electronic submissions).
- Citations and references required. However you choose to cite, just *be consistent*.
- Academic dishonesty including plagiarism **will not be tolerated**. Any semblance of unoriginal work will be punished by an **F** for the entire course and the offender will be referred to the university for further disciplinary proceedings.

"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." –UIC's Academic Integrity Policy

## Schedule, Subject to Minor Change (updated 5/22)

### **WEEK 1: Introduction and History**

#### Monday, 16 May – Class 1

INTRODUCTION: Politics, Problems/Solutions, Empirical-Denotations/Normative-Connotations, Levels and Branches, Course Map (Governed, Government, and Governance)

HW (due the next class):

Course Contract;

read <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/15-things-political-science-majors>;

start David Brian Robertson's *Federalism and the Making of America*, Chapters 1-2 (on BB)

#### Tuesday, 17 May – Class 2

Types of governments, theories about power (elite vs. pluralism)

History: *Declaration of Independence*, Building a Country & Federalism- The State vs. Federal Powers:

HW: finish David Brian Robertson's *Federalism and the Making of America*, Chapters 1-2 (on BB);

[*American Government's* Civil Rights/Civil Liberties section]

#### Thursday, 19 May – Class 3

*The Constitution*, Rights and Liberties, Fast-forwarding through political history to the present

Federalism: The State vs. Federal Powers Question

HW: *Irony* (16<sup>th</sup> edition, 2014), Chapter 3, pages 55-60; Chapter 12's "Power Flows to the National Elite", pages 293-295

#### Friday, 20 May – Class 4

Parties/Machine Politics, Electoral & Campaign Politics

Your Choice: In-Class Campaign Movie & Worksheet

Group – go over worksheet, nominate 2 people from each group to run for class president

Character Draw

HW: *Irony* 164 (about Liberal/Conservative); *American Government: Roots and Reform* 329-341 (about Parties);

Read this Pew party affiliation article <http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/> ;

Write 1-2 page first-person account about your character, highlighting who your character is (what's your background?) and what your character's interests are (most important issues of the present? goals for future?), keeping in mind how your party affiliation impacts your beliefs.

### **WEEK 2: The Governed**

#### Monday, 23 May – Class 5

Liberal/Conservative

Parties & Machine Politics

Group: In class, write 5 questions you have for the future president, turn in to me.

HW: Political Participation *Irony* 43 (Constitutional Limits on Participation);

<http://www.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/lesson-plans/456-how-can-citizens-participate> ;

<https://www.boundless.com/political-science/textbooks/boundless-political-science-textbook/political-participation-and-voting-9/voting-as-political-participation-67/other-forms-of-political-participation-374-4271/>

Tuesday, 24 May – Class 6

Political Participation: Nonelectoral

In-class political participation activity

HW: *American Government* 360-368 (Elections)

*The Atlantic* Article, “Why Non-voters Matter”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/why-non-voters-matter/405250/>

type up political participation activity

Thursday, 26 May – Class 7

Political Participation: Electoral

Group project: go over movie worksheet, nominate 2 people from group to run for president, 1 D and 1 R, and help your party’s nominee write an initial introductory speech (who you are, what’s wrong with the world, what you hope to do)

Discuss/create your ideal way to run a campaign.

HW: *American Government* 396-410 (Campaigns) & “Campaign Roles and Responsibilities”

[http://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Campaign-Roles-and-Responsibilities\\_0.pdf](http://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Campaign-Roles-and-Responsibilities_0.pdf)

Friday, 27 May – Class 8

Political Participation: Electoral

Campaigns and Elections, the Basics

Campaign Strategies

Discuss Game Change

Group Research Project: Problem/Solution worksheet

In-class party-based initial speeches + presidential primaries

When we have the official party reps, we will form 3 group: 2 candidate groups must create campaign staff, third group will be media and donors (who the other two groups need to be on their side)

HW: Murray Edelman’s Chapter 2 “The Construction and Uses of Social Problems” p. 12-36;

if your group nominated you to run for class president, finish writing your speech

Scanlan’s “The Way We Ask;”

Same Story, Manipulating Information Document; *American Government* 68 (National-State) and 79-87

finish problem/solution worksheet;

finish presidential campaign ads and final prep for presidential debate

**WEEK 3: Government**

Monday, 30 May– Class 9

NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY

Tuesday, 31 May– Class 10

Issue Framing and Politics

Federal

State

Local

Presidential Media/Ads?

In-class presidential debate

HW: Read president and bureaucracy from *Irony* 209-228, 284-286; skim Security 347-354 (through “Drone Warfare”); and skim *American Government* “Toward Reform: Civil Liberties and Combating Terrorism” 120-122 & 244-260

Thursday, 2 June – Class 11

Advertisements? News

The Executive Branch: President & Bureaucracy

Final presidential debate

Election

Issue Framing, Politics: Spotlight on security - Activity

Group: Pick 1 of your problem/solutions and develop it into a Bill - Each small group must write one research paper presented as a bill you would like to see become a law (local, state, or federal level – specify!) 3-5 pages, 1-2 sentence thesis in bold, attached after paper. See

<http://www.princetonmodelcongress.com/delegates-write-bill/> for inspiration.

HW: Valerie Plame readings, Bureaucracy/Iron Triangle readings from *American Government* 244-261

Friday, 3 June– Class 12

In-Class Valerie Plame Movie & Worksheet

Group work on movie worksheet; continue working on your bill

HW: Robertson’s *Federalism* (49-53); *Irony* 160-173

**WEEK 4: Governance**

Monday, 6 June – Class 13

External Interests: Interest Groups and Lobbyists

Federal legislative process

HW: How a Bill Becomes A Law *Irony* 192; *American Government* 179-199 (Congress)

Tuesday, 7 June– Class 14

Congress

How a Bill Becomes a Law: Legislative Process Activity

HW: Robertson’s *Federalism* Conclusion 169-178; *American Government* 78; review worksheet

Thursday, 9 June – Class 15: Wrap Up

Jeopardy

Multiple choice portion of exam

HW: Essay portion of exam, due via email to [dselde2@uic.edu](mailto:dselde2@uic.edu) by 3:55pm. I am a tough grader, especially when it comes to clarity, active/passive wording, grammar, and spelling.

Friday, 10 June– Class 16: Final Exam Essay due via email to [dselde2@uic.edu](mailto:dselde2@uic.edu) by 3:55pm.

## Follow Along with Your Grades

Attendance (15%; missing 3 or more classes results in failing the course. Each absence up to 2.5 costs 5%, tardiness and disruption will cost varied amounts of points, and 3+ absences = failing the course. Must complete Course Contract, as well. Perfect attendance, without any tardiness, results in a 2.5% bonus toward extra credit.)

3 Weekly Quizzes, Fridays (5% each, 15% total: mostly matching and multiple choice; based on readings, lectures, media, PowerPoints – optional guiding worksheets will be provided on Blackboard)

1 Final Exam, Cumulative (20%: essay, matching, multiple choice; includes material from first 3 quizzes plus new material)

### Classroom Activities & Homework (50%)

1. Character paper (due 23 May) 5%
2. Political Participation Activity (24 May) ... 2.5%
3. Group, Your Choice of Campaign Film & In-Class Worksheet (27 May) ... 2.5%
4. Group, determine 2 candidates for president (27 May) ... 2.5%
5. Initial Candidate Speeches/Primary Elections (30 May) ... 2.5%
6. Group Problem/Solution Worksheet (30 May)... 2.5%
7. Presidential Campaign/Debate (31 May)... 5%
8. Diluted Information Activity (2 June)...2.5%
9. Final Presidential Debate/Election (2 June)...5%
10. Group, In-class Film and Worksheet (3 June) ... 2.5%
11. Group, Turn your Problem/Solution into a Bill (and Iron Triangle Revisions) (6 June)...2.5%
12. Group How a Bill Becomes a Law Activity (7 June) .... 5% (+2.5% bonus toward extra credit to any group whose bill becomes a law)
13. Group Jeopardy Review/Individual Review Worksheet (10 June) ... 5% (+2% bonus points toward extra credit to the winning group, +1% bonus points to the runner up)
14. Additional, TBD ... 5%

### Extra Credit (2.5% each, up to 5% total)

1. perfect attendance
2. group's bill becomes a law
3. group wins review Jeopardy
4. attend civic engagement events or watch Chicago City Council meeting Online + 1-2 page reflection paper
5. current event reflection, using course material/terms, 1-2 pages, must include citation I can access (weblink preferable).
6. original, thoughtful creative interpretation (poem, painting, personal essay) of course material, 1-2 pages
7. Full 5%: film or documentary paper: 2-4 pages, summarize film/documentary through political lens, focusing on political concepts discussed in course. Summarize who, what, when, where, why, and how. Describe the protagonist (good guy) and antagonist (bad guy), the big problem/controversy, whose perspective is included/excluded, proposed solutions, lessons learned, and the thesis.

Letter Grades

A= 90% and up

B= 80% -89.9%

C= 70%- 79.9%

D= 60%-69.9%

F= below 60%

<b>Attendance and participation</b>	<b>3 Quizzes</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Classroom Activities and Homework</b>	<b>Extra Credit</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>[up to 5%]</b>	<b>100</b>
<p>Each absence costs 5%, tardiness and disruption will cost varied amounts of points, and 3+ absences = failing the course</p> <p>My tardies/absences:</p>	<p>10 points each; your score's total percent (out of 30 possible points) will be multiplied by .15</p> <p>1. /10 2. /10 3. /10</p> <p>X .15=</p>	<p>Out of 50 points; that percent will be multiplied by .2</p> <p>/50</p> <p>X .2=</p>	<p>1. /5% 2. /2.5% 3.. /2.5% 4.. /2.5% 5.. /2.5% 6.. /2.5% 7. /5% 8.. /2.5% 9. /5% 10.. /2.5% 11.. /2.5% 12. /5% 13. /5% 14. /5%</p>	<p>2.5% each, unless otherwise indicated</p>	



