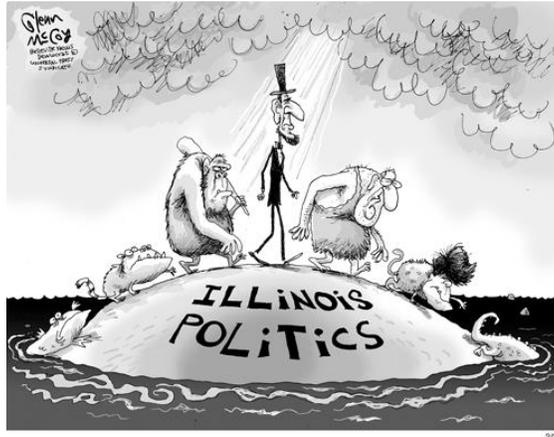


**Illinois Politics: What the Heck Is Going On?  
POLs 202  
Fall 2018**

**SYLLABUS**



Instructor: Chris Mooney  
Class time: MW 9:30-10:45am  
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**Course Description**

Illinois politics and government have been in a 20-year spiral—downward. Budget deficits as far as the eye can see, archaic tax structure, regional disputes, Madigan vs. Rauner, four of our last nine governors served (and in one case, is still serving) time in Federal prison, state debt at almost junk bond status, prisons overflowing, veterans dying in the Quincy home, political campaigns awash with money and negativity, etc. And as a result, some argue, people and businesses are fleeing the state for greener pastures. It's just a ball of confusion.

**So what the heck is going on in Illinois politics and government?**

That is the question that we will explore this semester. Some of our problems are common among the states, and some are unique to Illinois. Some are due to large cultural and economic factors, and some are due to the idiosyncrasies of the people involved in the process. Some we will be able to understand pretty clearly, and some are just a mess.

This semester, we will address this question by undertaking a critical analysis of the various institutions and players in Illinois politics and government. To provide an opportunity for a sophisticated understanding of this complex problem, we will pursue three lines of attack:

- What does political science have to say about this? We will examine political science theory and research on each topic to help us understand the broader meaning.
- What do other states do? Is Illinois alone in its current malaise? If not, how does it differ? Taking a comparative approach on many of these topics suggests where Illinois could make some improvements, and perhaps how.
- What are the historical trends? Are things getting worse or better? Can this give us clues about the causes of our problems or how to fix them? This historical approach, like the comparative and political science approaches, allows us to put our current situation into a context that allows for better understanding.

## **Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Describe various political and policy problems that Illinois politics and government are currently facing.
- Explain some of the reasons for the existence of these problems.
- Discuss and assess critically the quality of advocates' various suggestions about how to "fix" Illinois.
- Analyze a political argument regarding institutional change in Illinois government, assessing its strengths and weaknesses, developing an alternative point(s) of view, and support your conclusion regarding that argument.
- Evaluate news media content in a critical and sophisticated manner.
- Understand Illinois government and politics well enough to remain current through the media going forward.
- Analyze and explain the behavior of an Illinois state legislator.

## **Class Format**

Class sessions will consist of a mix of me lecturing, class discussion, and guest lecturers. In order to get the most out of each class and the course as a whole, you should:

1. Read and view (in the case of videos) the assigned materials before class,
2. Attend class ready to engage the material,
3. Participate in classroom discussions, and
4. Read the assigned materials again after class.

## **Course Readings and Resources**

You need to read the assigned material BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. This will help you immensely in the course. The main textbooks for this course are:

Nowlan, James D., Samuel K. Gove, and Richard J. Winkel, Jr. 2010. *Illinois Politics: A Citizen's Guide*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

Nowlan, James D., and J. Thomas Johnson. 2014. *Fixing Illinois: Politics and Policy in the Prairie State*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

In addition, you may find it helpful to read the appropriate chapters in the following book as the semester progresses:

Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2014. *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Cengage).  
(earlier editions are fine)

Each of these three books can be purchased used for a very reasonable price, either on Amazon or at the UIC bookstore. I priced out the three of them on Amazon on August 3, and the total cost was \$11.40 (before shipping and buying the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Donovan et al.)

We will read approximately 1-2 chapters per week from the two Nowlan books, along with various news articles, etc., as assigned, which will be posted on the class' Blackboard site.

Also, there will be a few videos that you need to view BEFORE CLASS. The syllabus has the links to these during the weeks they are assigned.

In addition to reading these text books, you should get into the habit of reading the news on Illinois state government daily. Here are some good sources:

- Two newspapers that do a pretty good job of tracking state government news are:
  - State Journal-Register (<http://www.sj-r.com/>): Springfield's SJ-R has the best overall newspaper coverage of state government in the state—Springfield is a company town.
  - Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/>): The Tribune does a good job, but it will have fewer Illinois state government stories overall.
- Illinois Public Radio ([www.nprillinois.org](http://www.nprillinois.org)): IPR is based out of WUIS-FM in Springfield, where it is the local NPR station. They have two full-time statehouse reporters and feed state government stories to all NPR stations around the state. In particular, listen to "State Week in Review" (Fridays 6:30-7:00pm, Saturdays 6:30-7:00am, and via podcast) for in-depth commentary and analysis by statehouse reporters.
- Capitol Fax (<http://thecapitolfaxblog.com/>) is a long-standing blog and top-notch portal for other Illinois state government and politics news and commentary. Very up-to-date and detailed; mostly focused on the governor, the General Assembly, and elections.

### Guest lecturers:

Throughout the semester, we will have several guest lecturers speak about their areas of expertise on Illinois politics. Three important points to remember on these speakers:

- First, these speakers' information will be incorporated closely into the course and the evaluation materials. For example, pop quizzes will focus on these speakers, as well as the text and the news. Thus, make sure that you attend these talks.
- Second, these speakers are expending considerable time and effort to help you out, so a) definitely attend these events, b) be respectful of these speakers at all times, even if you disagree with and/or challenge them (which is fine to do, but respectfully), and c) engage with the speaker—in particular, you should ask questions in class of them.

- Finally, these speakers are very busy, often with hectic and changing schedules. This means that a) I won't be able to schedule them more than a couple of weeks in advance in most cases (so they are not on the syllabus), b) they may not be able to come to class on the day that is perfect for our topic schedule, and c) they may occasionally cancel. All this is to say that we need to be patient with these folks who are volunteering their time.

## **Graded Assignments**

You will complete a variety of graded work for this course. I evaluate students in various ways both to facilitate learning and to provide a fair and valid assessment of each student's performance in the course. Here are the activities on which you will be graded, along with the proportion of the final course grade that each assignment accounts for:

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| • Attendance and participation                               | 10%         |
| • Unannounced pop quizzes (approximately 10, randomly given) | 10%         |
| • Research paper   |             |
| ○ Short assignments (8, weekly Sept. 12- Nov. 7)             | 10%         |
| ○ Final paper (due November 28)                              | 25%         |
| • Mid-term exam (October 17)                                 | 20%         |
| • Final exam (TBA)   | 25%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

**Attendance and informed participation (10% of the final course grade):** To get the most out of this course, you must attend class every Monday and Wednesday and participate in our discussions. Your participation should be informed by your reading/viewing of the assigned course material, including the news media.

**Unannounced pop quizzes (10% of the final course grade):** Approximately 10 times during the semester, we will start class with an unannounced, very short (3-5 questions) quiz. These quizzes will focus on three aspects of the course: the assigned readings, our guest speakers, and current Illinois political news. These multiple choice quizzes will be relatively easy IF YOU READ THE ASSIGNED MATERIAL BEFORE CLASS, KEEP UP-TO-DATE ON ILLINOIS POLITICS NEWS, AND HAVE ATTENDED THE RELEVANT GUEST LECTURES. No make-up quizzes will be allowed if you miss class, but I will throw out your two lowest scores on these when calculating your overall quiz score, in case you miss class unavoidably.

**Weekly Short Assignments (10% of the final course grade):** From September 12 to November 7, you will turn in a short assignment each week (see handout). These assignments are focused on gathering information for your final research paper.

**Research Paper (25% of the final course grade):** This paper will be a unique analysis of the activities and district of a current member of the Illinois General Assembly (see handout). Maximum of 10 pages of text, double-spaced, 12-point font.

**Mid-term (20% of the final course grade) and final (25% of the final course grade) exams:** These in-class exams will cover both the readings and the material presented in class. They will consist of short answer and essay questions.

## **General Course Policies**

Here are my general policies regarding the running of this class.

### **Returning Papers**

My general practice is to hand back your papers and exams one week after they are turned in to me.

### **Social Justice Statement**

UIC is committed to social justice. I heartily share this commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. In particular, we will be engaging in some controversial material from time to time, so we all need to be professional—critique ideas, not people. Any suggestions as to how to enhance such an environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

### **Accommodating People with Disabilities**

UIC and I are committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) who will provide instructions for me. Please do this as early in the semester as possible for maximum accommodation. Contact DRC at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413- 0123 (TDD) for further information.

### **Academic Integrity**

UIC and I are dedicated to learning and research, and hence we are committed to truth and accuracy. Integrity and intellectual honesty in scholarship and scientific investigation are, therefore, of paramount importance. These standards require intellectual honesty in conducting research, writing of research results, and relations with colleagues. UIC has specific definitions of misconduct (such as plagiarism, falsification of data, etc.), procedures used for investigation of charges, and the consequences of that conduct. Students are governed by the Student Disciplinary Policy ([https://dos.uic.edu/docs/Student%20Disciplinary%20Policy%2017-18%20\(FINAL\).pdf](https://dos.uic.edu/docs/Student%20Disciplinary%20Policy%2017-18%20(FINAL).pdf)). **I strongly encourage you to read pp.12-13 of that Policy for more specific information about academic integrity.**

## **Course Schedule**

**NOTE:** “NGW” refers to the main text: Nowlan, Gove, and Winkel, *Illinois Politics*. “NJ” refers to Nowlan and Johnson, *Fixing Illinois* (both are described above). Other assigned readings and videos can be retrieved from the class’s Blackboard site.

**NOTE ALSO:** I may add a few more short readings and websites throughout the semester. If so, they will be posted on the class’ Blackboard site, and I’ll mention them in class.

**NOTE AGAIN:** I will be scheduling some speakers who will have tight schedules, so there will likely be some juggling of the schedule throughout the semester. I will keep you fully abreast of any such changes in class and via email.

### **Week 1 (August 27-29): Illinois Politics and Government—WTF?**

Readings:

- Daniel C. Vock, “Who Ruined Illinois?” *Governing* (May 2018).

**NO CLASS: AUGUST 29 (APSA conference); SEPTEMBER 3 (Labor Day)**

### **Week 2 (September 5): Background: Culture, History, and Economics**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 1
- NJ, chapter 1

**\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: SEPTEMBER 12**

### **Week 3 (September 10-12): Political Participation and Parties**

Readings:

- NGW, pp. 24-31
- McClelland, Edward. 2018. “How Donald Trump and Chuy Garcia Broke the Chicago Machine,” *Politico* (June 17).
- Reyes, Cecilia, and Geoff Hing. 2016. “Election Analysis: On the Edge of Illinois’ Urban-Rural Divide,” *Chicago Tribune* (November 17).

Video:

- <https://www.cityclub-chicago.org/video/1298/the-future-of-the-republican-party-in-illinois>

**\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: SEPTEMBER 19**

### **Week 4 (September 17-19): Interest Groups and Lobbying**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 32-36

- Illinois Secretary of State, Index Department, “State Lobbyist List” (just skim and peruse—don’t read the whole thing)

Recommended:

- Mooney, Christopher Z., and Barbara Van Dyke-Brown. 2003. *Lobbying Illinois*. (Springfield, IL: IPA).

### **\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: SEPTEMBER 26**

#### **Week 5 (September 24-26): Elections**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 3
- Steiger, Kay. 2018. “4 Winners and 2 Losers in the Illinois Primary Election.” *Vox* (<https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/17141190/illinois-primary-election-2018-winners-losers>)

### **\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE: OCTOBER 3**

#### **Week 6 (October 1-3): The Illinois General Assembly**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 5
- NJ, pp.132-134
- McKinney, Dave. 2017. “The Man Behind the Fiscal Fiasco in Illinois.” *Reuter* (February 8).

Video: [http://iga.in.gov/information/archives/2017/video/committee\\_education\\_0400/](http://iga.in.gov/information/archives/2017/video/committee_education_0400/) (SELECT THE HEARING FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 8:30AM) from the drop down menu entitled “Search for a meeting...” I know that this is an Indiana legislative hearing, but the ILGA doesn’t video tape its committee hearings.

Recommended:

- Pensoneau, Taylor. 2006. *Powerhouse: Arrington from Illinois*. (Baltimore, MD: Heritage Special Edition), pp. 161-346.

### **\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE: OCTOBER 10**

#### **Week 7 (October 8-10): Being a State Legislator**

Readings:

- NGW, pp. 90-92; 105-107.
- Miller, Rich. 2017. “Toxic Atmosphere, Political Exhaustion Are Causing Many House Retirements.” *Chicago Tribune* (October 8).
- Lester, Kerry. 2018. *No, My Place*.

#### **Week 8 (October 15-17): Midterm and Review**

- October 15—Catch up and review

- October 17-- **MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS**

**\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE: OCTOBER 24**

**Week 9 (October 22-24): The Governor**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 6
- Mooney, Christopher Z. 2018. "Superrich Rookie Candidates: Are the Superrich Really Different from You and Me?" *Crain's Chicago Business* (August)

**\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE: OCTOBER 31**

**Week 10 (October 29-31):**

- **October 29: Governor Jim Edgar—guest lecturer**

Readings:

- Howard, Robert P. 2007. "Jim Edgar." In *The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent Men*. Springfield, IL: Center for State Policy and Leadership.

- **October 31: Statewide Constitutional Officers**

Readings:

- Read about Illinois' statewide constitutional officers on this website (follow the links for the individual officers' websites):  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/government/executive-branch>

**\*\*\*SHORT ASSIGNMENT #8 DUE: NOVEMBER 7**

**Week 11 (November 5-7): The Bureaucracy**

Readings:

- NGW, pp.122-125, 134-138
- NJ, pp.117-124
- Geiger, Kim. 2018. "U.S. Supreme Court Gives Rauner Major Victory over Labor, in Ruling That Could Undercut Public Worker Unions Nationwide." *Chicago Tribune* (June 27)
- Semuels, Alana. 2018. "Is This the End of Public-Sector Unions in America?" *The Atlantic* (June 27).

**Week 12 (November 12-14):**

- **November 12: Election Post-Mortem**

Readings:

- Read the election coverage from last week in:
  - *Chicago Tribune*

- Chicago *Sun-Times*
- Make sure that you are familiar with what happened to YOUR ADOPTED state legislator in the election, and be prepared to talk about why this happened.
- **November 14: TBA**  
Readings:
  - TBA

### **Week 13 (November 19-21): The Courts**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 7
- Merrion, Paul. 2014. “Pension Reform Dealt Blow by Illinois Supreme Court.” *Crain’s Chicago Business* (July 2).

Video:

- Kanerva v. Weems 2013 ILSC oral arguments:  
[http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Media/On\\_Demand\\_2013.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Media/On_Demand_2013.asp) (search for “Kanerva” on this page, and then click on the video icon)

**\*\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE: NOVEMBER 28**

### **Week 14 (November 26-28): Taxes and Spending**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 10
- NJ, chapter 2
- Moser, Whet. 2018. “Illinois Voters: Confused about How to Fix the State, As Usual.” *Chicago Magazine*. (March 9)
- Kass, Amanda. 2017. “Why Illinois’s Non-Budget Is Actually the Worst Budget Ever.” *Chicago Magazine*. (May 30)

### **Week 15 (December 3-5):**

- **December 3: Political Corruption in Illinois—DICK SIMPSON guest lecturer**

Readings:

- NJ, chapter 8
- Simpson, Dick, Thomas J. Gradel, Marco Rosaire Rossi, and Katherine Taylor. 2018. “Continuing Corruption in Illinois.” Anti-Corruption Report Number 10. Political Science Department, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Recommended:

- Gradel, Thomas J., and Dick Simpson. 2015. *Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

- **December 5: So, Why Is Illinois Government So Messed Up?**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 1