

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

Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Prof. Evan McKenzie	CRN/Course Number: lecture -- 13190
Office location: BSB 1126-C	Times and days class meets: Lecture T/Th 11:00-11:50am; Discussion sections on Friday
Office phone: 312-413-3782	Classroom location: Lecture--BSB 145
Email: mckenzie@uic.edu	Office hours: T/Th 945-1045
TA Scott Braam sbraam2@uic.edu	Office hours: Tuesday 12-1:00 BSB 1177
TA Doug Cantor dcanto2@uic.edu	Office hours: Tuesday 12-1:00 BSB 1177
TA Eduardo Salinas esalin5@uic.edu	Office hours: Wednesday 230-330 BSB 1147
TA Dianne Selden dselde2@uic.edu	Office hours: Tuesday 12-1:00 BSB 1109

Discussion sections

CRN	TA	TIME	ROOM
30380	Doug Cantor	9	BSB 1171
30381	Scott Braam	9	SH 103
30382	Dianne Selden	9	BSB 1171
13180	Dianne Selden	10	BSB 1115
13184	Doug Cantor	10	BSB 1171
13185	Eduardo Salinas	10	LCA 2
13178	Scott Braam	11	BSB 1171
13186	Eduardo Salinas	11	BSB 1115
13179	Dianne Selden	12	BSB 1115
30383	Doug Cantor	12	BSB 1171

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 we 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:

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 maximum two-page (or 500 word) paper that will deal with certain specific questions.
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.
 - A. Income and wealth inequality – Eduardo Salinas' sections
 - B. Money in politics – Doug Cantor's sections
 - C. Race/ethnicity and the criminal justice system – Scott Braam's sections
 - D. Environmental politics -- Dianne Selden's sections
5. Attendance, Participation, and Civility : 100 points (10%). Your participation grade will be determined by your teaching assistant/discussion leader. It will be based primarily on attendance and participation, including the quality and quantity of your contribution to the quality of discussions. However, your TA may have assignment for you to do in your discussion section.
 - A. Attendance : Roll will be taken in discussion sections. Anybody who accumulates more than five absences is subject to receiving a zero for their participation grade.
 - B. Participation : You must participate in 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 phone 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; disobeying instructions from instructors; and other breaches of good manners. Students who create these situations will receive one warning, after which points will be deducted up to 100 points (your entire A&P grade), and ultimately students who cannot remain quiet and non-disruptive in class will be required to leave.

Academic Integrity Policy

In this course there is a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism.

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/oe/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/oe/disability_resources/faq/accommodations.html.

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. 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.

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.

Policy regarding format for written assignments

No handwritten papers will be accepted. All papers must be submitted using 11 or 12 point fonts and double-spaced. For work containing citations, you must use the American Political Science Association citation format. You can read about how to do that at <http://library.tamu.edu/help/help-yourself/citing-sources/files/Using%20APSA%20Format.pdf>, or find that document on your Blackboard site under “Course Documents,” “APSA Format.”

Final Examinations

The dates and times of the exams are scheduled by the Office of Classroom Scheduling and are arranged so that a student, ideally, will have no more than two exams in a day. Any student having more than two final examinations scheduled in one day is entitled to rescheduling. For a schedule of exams and exam policies see:

http://www.uic.edu/depts/oar/current_students/calendars/final_exam_schedule.html

Seeking help

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don’t hesitate to ask for help! Come to me, or if it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus. You can get a referral to the right place, or help on the spot, from concerned advisor in the Undergraduate Success Center (USC) at usc@uic.edu.

Course Schedule:

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Assignments/activities</i>
1. August 25	<i>Begin unit one: Foundations of government</i>	Ch. 1: what are the origins of the American system of government?	
2. September 1	<i>The Constitution</i>	Ch.2: How does the constitution structure our politics and government?	
3. September 8	<i>Federalism</i>	Ch. 3: How do the states and the national government share governance of the nation?	
4. September 15	<i>Civil liberties</i>	Ch. 4: How does the Bill of Rights protect us against governmental intrusion in our lives?	September 17: Constitution Day activities - extra credit (SCE 302, 12a-1:30p)
5. September 22	<i>Civil rights</i>	Ch. 5: How have under-represented groups struggled	10 points extra credit: produce proof of

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Assignments/activities</i>
		for equal treatment?	voter registration by Friday, September 26 (if ineligible to vote, see TA about substitute essay)
6. September 29	<u>Begin unit two:</u> institutions of government – <i>Congress</i>	Ch. 6: How do the Senate and House of Representatives operate, and how representative are they?	
7. October 6	<i>The presidency</i>	Ch. 7: How has the power of the presidency increased and evolved over time?	
8. October 13	<i>The executive branch</i>	Ch. 8: How does the federal bureaucracy operate? This is for Tuesday, October 14	Midterm examination Thursday, October 16
9. October 20	<i>The judiciary</i>	Ch. 9: How is the federal judiciary organized and what are its political functions?	
10. October 27	<u>Begin unit three:</u> Political behavior – <i>Public opinion and the news media</i>	Ch. 10: How is American public opinion studied, what do we know about it, and what are the functions of the news media?	Friday, 10/31: National Student Issues Convention activities - TBA
11. November 3	<i>Political parties and interest groups</i>	Ch. 11: How do organized groups influence our politics?	Tuesday, 11/4, is Election Day
12. November 10	<i>Campaigns, elections and voting</i>	Ch. 12: How do we select our representatives, and how meaningful are these processes?	
13. November 17	<i>Social and economic policy</i>	Ch. 13: How does the American political economy operate, and what is the social safety net?	
14. November 24	<i>Foreign and defense policy</i>	Ch. 14: What is the US role in the world today and how has it evolved over time?	No class Thursday, 11/27--Thanksgiving
15. December 1	Presentation of group projects	No reading	Group projects to be presented in lecture sessions
Finals week December 8-12			