

Political Science 329 Fall 2016 CRN 30645
Seminar on American Politics
Neoliberalism and American politics: past, present, and future

Instructor: Prof. Evan McKenzie

Contact Information: office—BSB 1126-C. Office hours—Monday 1:30-2:45
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Catalog description: *Advanced seminar on special topics in American politics. Content varies. Course Information: May be repeated to a maximum of 6 hours. Prerequisite(s): [POLS 101](#) and [POLS 200](#).*

Class meetings: 3:00pm-5:30pm Monday, Taft Hall 204

Course objectives: This is a senior seminar that has two objectives. The first is to help you develop an understanding of neoliberalism, an ideology of political economy that has become a pervasive force in US politics and government, and in many other nations as well, from the late 1970s to the present. In learning about neoliberalism we will also explore four related concepts: globalization, privatization, financialization, and inequality. Because this is a “writing in the discipline” course, we will go beyond subject matter competence and seek to develop your research, writing, and speaking abilities, so that as you move onward into careers or graduate school you will have the skills you need to express your ideas.

You will do a good deal of writing in this course. In fact, you will all be doing a lot of the teaching! We will operate in seminar format, so that I will not be lecturing much and you will be active learners.

I will evaluate your written assignments not only for their content, but for correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and other attributes of good writing. I will be looking for organization and for well-constructed argument, with premises, logic, and conclusions. Please use the American Political Science Association of citation. You will find the APSA Style Manual in the “Resources” section of the course Blackboard site. If I consider an assignment unacceptable I will reject it and return it to you and you have 24 hours to resubmit it in acceptable form, with a five-point deduction.

Required texts:

These three books have been ordered by the UIC Bookstore and they are readily available from other sources. They are all required for this course.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2002. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

Michael Lewis. 2010. *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

There are other readings on the course Blackboard site. You will also have access to a wiki (<http://mckenziepols.wikispaces.com>) where you will be sharing resources for your papers.

Requirements:

Please be advised that I will not accept late papers or other assignments, 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 assignment is due that you can't make it on the scheduled date, see me, and you may be allowed to submit it early, but you will not be allowed to submit it after the scheduled date for any reason that you knew about before the exam. This rule applies to all assignments.

Please be aware that under no circumstances should you email any assignment to me. I will delete the email without reading the assignment. The sole exception to this rule is when I have specifically authorized you to do it, something that will be done only if you have an emergency situation.

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

A. Attendance : 10% (100 points). The class only meets 14 times. Any student who accumulates more than **three absences** will receive a zero for their attendance grade. Arriving late, after I have collected the roll sheet, equals half an absence.

B. Participation : 10% (150 points). This is based on the quality and quantity of your contribution to discussions, except when you are assigned to present. 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.

Civility : You must be a good classroom citizen at all times. Here are some examples of uncivil behavior: letting your phone make noise or looking at it during class; eating in class (a violation of campus rules); talking to the people sitting next to you; misusing electronic devices watching YouTube videos or web surfing and thereby distracting your classmates (if this occurs I will prohibit use of any electronic devices in the classroom); 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 150 points (your entire participation grade), and ultimately students who cannot remain quiet and non-disruptive in class will be required to leave.

C. Short papers: 6 papers, total of 250 points. These are for the first half of the course.

D. Special report: Every student will present at least one special oral report to the class on readings that are on the Blackboard site or on the list below. You can do two short ones, or one book report. I expect you to explain the basic argument(s); critique them; and respond to questions. The length should be about 20 minutes. This assignment is worth 100 points. We will sign up for these on August 29, changes are possible as time goes by, and you have considerable choice.

E. Research paper and group presentation: 40% (400 points). During the second half of the course you will develop and write a research paper. It will be your individual paper, but you will be part of a group that will help each other and present their individual papers at the same time, as a group. You will turn in a topic; a rough outline with sources; a rough draft; and a final paper. No late assignments—failure to turn in the topic, outline, or rough draft on time will mean a 40 point deduction for each missing assignment.

F. Examinations: There are no examinations scheduled. However, if I think that we have an issue with people coming to class unprepared, we will have pop quizzes. These quizzes will be worth ten points and will be assigned as part of your participation grade.

Summary

Attendance =	100
Participation =	150
Short papers =	250
Special report =	100
<u>Research paper =</u>	<u>400</u>
TOTAL POINTS =	1000

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/oea/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/oea/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.”

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.

So what is this course about?

The American public's trust in government is at or near an all-time low, and disillusionment with the political process is high. It was not always this way. Public trust in government was high until the mid-1960s, when it began to fall fast, and except for a few ups and downs since then it has remained low ever since. In the current election cycle, candidates who identified themselves with dramatic change—Trump and Sanders—were unexpectedly popular in both major parties. And both of them emphasized issues of political economy and the ways in which policy decisions have been adversely affecting blue-collar and middle class Americans. Many young people are so disaffected that they don't even bother to vote and claim that they can see no difference between the two major parties. In other countries, such as the United Kingdom, similar sentiments are being expressed. The recent Brexit vote in the UK is one of the most dramatic examples, with the UK voting to leave the European Union, a divorce so traumatic that it will take years to even figure out what it means.

Yet, despite all the media coverage of these symptoms, there has been very little attention paid to causes, or to the processes that brought about many of the conditions about which people are complaining. In this course, we will engage in that conversation.

From the 1930s to the late 1970s, American politics reflected a consensus about certain basic values and policies, and these policies were supported by a powerful political formation called "the New Deal coalition." Wall street bankers, many industries, farmers, unionized blue collar workers, racial and religious minorities, white Southerners, academics and other professionals, seniors, and other groups formed a solid electoral basis for a Democratic Party that controlled both houses Congress for decades and the presidency much of the time as well. State governments tended to be in Democratic hands as well. There was a consensus that government could and should play an important role in stabilizing the economy, maintaining a strong middle class, guaranteeing quality public education, providing social welfare programs for the aged and others who needed help, and redistributing income from the wealthy to the poor.

But that coalition, centered in the Democratic Party, began to crumble during the 1960s. Bitter conflict emerged over civil rights, the war in Vietnam, the rise of international competition in the auto and electronics industries, and other social and economic issues and by the late 1970s it was coming apart. For example, "the solid South" once meant solidly Democratic, but by 1980 it was becoming a

Republican stronghold as white southerners fled the Democratic Party over its advocacy of civil rights legislation. At the same time, African-American voters began to shift heavily toward a Democratic Party that they had avoided since the Civil War.

As American politics began to change, our policy debates began to change as well. We now live in a time where government, especially the national government, is viewed suspect, and where the virtues of the so-called “private sector” are exalted. Even previously-sacrosanct programs such as Social Security and Medicare are being called into question; even the US Postal Service is under attack by those who want to “privatize it”; government funding for public education is being slashed in favor of private and charter schools; progressive taxation itself is challenged as a threat to “job creators.”

You have heard the rhetoric. Indeed, you have lived it. And now, let us unpack it and find out for ourselves what it really means. This transformation of American politics is sometimes called the “neoliberal” movement, revolution, or era. It is our task here to learn what neoliberalism is, where it came from, how it impacts our politics and our lives, and where it is taking us. In order to do that, we need to understand four other concepts: globalization, privatization, financialization, and inequality. These five concepts are related to each other in complex ways.

1. **Neoliberalism:** “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.” (Harvey 2005:2)
2. **Globalization:** “Fundamentally, it is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people across borders. Globalization has been accompanied by the creation of new institutions that have joined with existing ones to work across borders.” (Stiglitz 2003:9)
3. **Privatization:** “In other countries, privatization has been mostly a matter of selling off parts of an abundant stock of public assets...severing the government connection with segments of the commercial economy [but] in the United States had a quite different meaning...it meant (and continues to mean) enlisting private energies to improve the performance of tasks that would remain in some sense public.” (Donahue 1989: 6-7)
“Privatization is the act of reducing the role of government, or increasing the role of the private sector, in an activity or in the ownership of assets.” (Savas 1987:3)
4. **Financialization:** “...the increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operation of the domestic and international economies.” (Epstein 2005:3)

5. **Inequality:** Unequal status and access to resources in the economic, political, social, and cultural realms of life.
 - a. North vs. south
 - b. Rich vs. poor
 - c. Racial and ethnic inequality
 - d. Segregation by race, income, and wealth
 - e. Different institutions for rich and poor
 - f. The growing global middle class: Or is the world moving toward greater equality through the creation of strong middle classes in nations such as India and China, with lower standard of living for the American middle class?

These are the ideas we will be exploring. By the end of the semester, you should have a much better understanding of the political and economic forces and ideologies that have been shaping the lives of Americans and other people around the world.

Week/date	Topic (please allow some flexibility on this because this is a new course)	Readings and assignments (subject to some changes)	Reports (most are to be chosen by you)
1. Aug. 22	Introduction to course	None	None
2. Aug. 29	Neoliberalism	Harvey, Introduction and chapters 1-3; 1-2 page paper: <i>"What is neoliberalism, and what does it mean for people's lives?"</i>	Powell memorandum and related documents
<i>Sept. 5</i>	<i>Holiday—Labor Day</i>	<i>No class</i>	<i>None</i>
3. Sept. 12	Neoliberalism	Harvey, chapters 4-5. 1-2 page paper: <i>"Can neoliberalism be made to work? If so, how? If not, why not?"</i>	Monbiot article and Peters article;
4. Sept. 19	Neoliberalism	Harvey, chapters 6-7: 1-2 page paper: <i>"Is neoliberalism over? If so, what comes next?"</i>	
5. Sept. 26	Globalization	Stiglitz, Preface and Chapters 1-3; In class: <i>"Roger and Me"</i> ; 1-2 page paper: <i>"What is globalization, and what does it mean for people's lives?"</i>	
6. Oct. 3	Globalization	Stiglitz, chapters 4-6; 1-2 page paper: <i>"The pros and cons of globalization"</i>	
7. Oct. 10	Globalization	Stiglitz, chapters 7-9 and afterword. 1-2 page paper: <i>"Can globalization be made to work for most, or all, of the world? If so, how? If not, why not?"</i>	
8. Oct. 17	Privatization	In class: <i>"Flow"</i>	Benn and Gaus; <i>One paragraph paper topic due</i>
9. Oct. 24	Privatization		
10. Oct. 31	Financialization	In class: <i>"Inside Job"</i> ; Lewis, Ch. 1-3	<i>List of at least ten sources and rough</i>

			<i>outline of argument due—one page</i>
11. Nov. 7	Financialization	Lewis, chapters 4-7	
12. Nov. 14	Financialization	Lewis, chapters 8-10, Epilogue, and Afterword.	First draft of research paper due
13. Nov. 21	Inequality	in class: <i>"Inequality for All"</i> ;	Research papers
14. Nov. 28	Inequality	Final draft of research paper due;	Research papers
15. Dec. 5	Finals week	No final exam	

List of additional reading for book and article reports—others are on Blackboard:

Neoliberalism:

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*

Charles Peters and Phillip Keisling (eds), *A New Road for America: The Neoliberal Movement*

Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, *The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics*

Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele, *America: What Went Wrong*

Globalization:

Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*

Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty*

Privatization:

E. S. Savas, *Privatization: The Key to Better Government*

John D. Donahue, *The Privatization Decision*

Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando*

Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*

Financialization:

Stephen Pizzo, Mary Fricker, and Paul Muolo, *Inside Job: The Looting of America's Savings and Loans*.

Bethany McClean and Peter Elkind, *The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron*

Inequality:

Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded Americans is Tearing Us Apart*.

