

Prerequisites

This course has no prerequisites. Knowledge of basic facts about the American political system is assumed. In addition, knowledge of high school algebra is assumed; we will make frequent use of mathematics.

Course requirements and grading

Five separate components of this course contribute to your grade:

- Two “midterm” examinations (each worth 20 percent of your grade). These are in-class written exams with short answer and short essay questions. The first (held September 26) will cover material presented in Part I. The second (held October 29) will focus on material in Part II.
- A short exercise (15 percent). In this exercise, you will answer an assigned question regarding politics using analytical techniques discussed in class. Data will be provided to you. This assignment must be completed in order for you to pass the course. It will be due November 14.
- A final examination (30 percent). This two-hour written exam will cover material from the entire semester, with a focus on material presented after Midterm #2. According to the Registrar’s office, this exam is currently scheduled to be held on Tuesday, December 17 at 10 a.m.
- Recitation participation (10 percent). Recitations are your chance to better understand the concepts discussed in lecture. In some cases, separate readings will be assigned that you are expected to complete before your recitation meeting. The schedule of recitation readings may be found at the end of this syllabus. Attendance at recitation is mandatory.

One way that you can improve your participation grade is by submitting stories for In the News, a section of our NYU Classes site on which I will post stories drawn from current events that reflect concepts being discussed in class. Accepted submissions will help to boost your recitation participation grade.

- Pop quizzes (5 percent) will be administered from time to time at the beginning of the lecture period. You must be present to take the quiz and receive credit. Makeups are not permitted.

The fine print

Here are a few policies that I sincerely hope won't be necessary or relevant to our work together this semester:

Missing exams. Students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. If a true emergency situation arises, contact your teaching assistant before the scheduled test time. If the excuse is justified (such as in cases of illness or family/personal emergencies), we will schedule a make-up. Travel plans (e.g., a plane ticket purchased for departure before the day of the exam) are not an acceptable excuse. The Registrar currently indicates that our final exam will be held in our classroom on **Tuesday, December 17 at 10 a.m.**

Late assignments. Assignments must be turned in on time by the beginning of class on the day they are due. You will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g. from an A- to a B+) per day late.

Academic dishonesty. The work you do in this course must be your own work. Academic dishonesty is not only against the rules; it is also slothful, cowardly, unfair to your classmates, and a waste of the tuition money you and your family have worked hard to earn. I simply won't tolerate it. The University's penalties for academic dishonesty are severe. They can include receipt of a failing grade in the course for which plagiarized work was submitted, as well as probation, suspension, or expulsion. Even minor cases can result in the entry of a letter describing the incident in the student's file kept permanently by the Office of the Dean. For more details, see: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>.

Readings (with syllabus abbreviations)

Books for purchase at the NYU Main Bookstore:

- (LAP) Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. *The Logic of American Politics*. 6th edition. CQ Press.
***Make sure you read this (6th) edition*, which is updated with the latest polling and election results.
- (PPA) Kernell, Samuel and Steven S. Smith, eds. *Principles and Practice of American Politics*. CQ Press. 5th edition.
**Most, but not all, of the readings found in the 5th edition are also in previous editions, which may be available used at a lower price. Note that the chapter and section numbers in the two editions are not always the same.
- (TAA) Smith, Raymond A. *The American Anomaly: U.S. Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Routledge. 3rd edition.
**The *second* edition of this book is also acceptable for our purposes.

Additional readings will be made available on NYU Classes—they are marked with a (C) on this syllabus—or in a reader (R) that may be purchased at New University Copy, 11 Waverly Place beginning on September 9.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

How to think about the readings: Be sure to read the readings *before* class on the day they are assigned. The readings for this class average about 70-100 pages per class session. Depending on how fast a reader you are, consider budgeting between two to four hours per class session to keep on top of the readings. In general, it will make sense to read these works in the order specified on this syllabus.

PART I. American Political Institutions and American Political Culture

Tues. Sept. 3 Introduction to class; what is a “science of politics?”

Thurs. Sept. 5 Analytical tools for the study of politics.

- LAP, Chapter 1.
- PPA, Section 1-2 (Hardin).

Tues. Sept. 10 The Constitution: Setting the stage; institutional design.

- Leon F. Litwack and Winthrop D. Jordan, *The United States* (7th edition). Chapter 7 (C)
- LAP, Chapter 2.
- The Constitution. (Appendix, LAP)

Thurs. Sept. 12 The Constitution: Arguments and interests.

- Federalist*, #10 and #51. (PPA, Sections 2-3 and 2-4)
- PPA, Section 2-1 (Roche)

Tues. Sept. 17 Federalism: The Grand Experiment.

- LAP, Chapter 3.
- PPA, Section 3-2 (Kettl).
- Paul E. Peterson, *The Price of Federalism*, Chapters 2 & 3 (R).

Thurs. Sept. 19 American Political Culture: Origins and Consequences.

- Leon F. Litwack and Winthrop D. Jordan, *The United States* (7th edition). Chapter 3 (C)
- LAP Chapter 10, pp. 460-472.

Tues. Sept. 24 American Political Culture: Today and the Future.

- Pew Research Center. "Trends in American Values: 1987-2012." Read Overview and Section 1, skim full report if interested. (C)
- Pew Global Attitudes Project. "Views of a Changing World." Read pp. 103-120 (Social and Economic Values and Methodology); skim full report if interested. (C)
- TAA, Chapter 11.
 - This chapter refers to Ronald Inglehart, "The Inglehart Values Map." It may be found on NYU Classes.

Thurs. Sept. 26 **MIDTERM #1**

PART II. Elections and Representative Democracy

Tues. Oct. 1 Campaigns and Elections: Overview. The Spatial Model.

- LAP, Chapter 11.

Thurs. Oct. 3 Political parties as institutions.

- LAP, Ch. 12.
- John Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996*. Chapter 1. (R)

Tues. Oct. 8 Political parties as voters.

- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler. *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. pp. 75-82. (C)
- Karen Kauffmann, John R. Petrocik, and Daron R. Shaw, *Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths about American Voters*. Chapter 2. (R)

Thurs. Oct. 10 CLASS CANCELED TODAY

Tues. Oct. 15 UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

Thurs. Oct. 17 Interest groups.

- LAP, Ch. 13.
- PPA, Section 1-1 (Olson).
- PPA, Section 13-2 (Wright).

Tues. Oct. 22 The Result: A “Pretty Good” Democracy with Flaws.

- ❑ PPA, Section 10-2 (Stimson et al)
- ❑ Patrick J. Egan. *Partisan Priorities: How Issue Ownership Drives and Distorts American Politics*. pp. 1-18, 49-56, 62-72, 93-119 (C)
- ❑ Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content and Impact*. Chapter 10, pp.309-315 (C).

Thurs. Oct. 24 Catch up; review for Midterm #2

DISTRIBUTION OF SHORT EXERCISE TODAY

Tues. Oct. 29 **MIDTERM #2**

PART III. The Institutions of American Governance

Thurs. Oct. 31 Congress and the Electoral Connection.

- ❑ LAP, Chapter 6.

Tues. Nov. 5 Congress: Legislative Spatial Politics.

- ❑ Kenneth A. Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior and Institutions*. Chapter 5, pp. 115-136. (R)

Also: Election Preview; stay tuned for late-breaking readings.

Thurs. Nov. 7 The Presidency: Change Over Time.

- ❑ LAP, Chapter 7.
- ❑ Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*. Chapter 3. (R)

Also: Election Recap.

Tues. Nov. 12 The Presidency: Pivotal Politics.

- ❑ Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*. pp 20-39. (C)

Thurs. Nov. 14 The Judiciary: How much power?

- LAP, Chapter 9.
- TAA, Chapter 7.

SHORT EXERCISE DUE IN CLASS TODAY.

Tues. Nov. 19 The Judiciary: activist judges, the “least dangerous branch,” or something else?

- PPA, Section 5-4 (Rosenberg).
 - Patrick J. Egan, Nathaniel Persily and Kevin Wallsten. “Gay Rights.” in *Public Opinion and Constitutional Controversy*. (C)
 - Keith Whittington. “Interpose Your Friendly Hand: Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court.” *American Political Science Review*. (C)
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PART IV. American Public Policy

Thurs. Nov. 21 Be Not Afraid: A Layperson’s Guide to Interpreting Regression.

- Phillip H. Pollock III, *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 3rd Edition. Selections. (C)

Tues. Nov. 26 Domestic Policy and Social Welfare.

- Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote. *Why Doesn’t the United States Have a European-Style Welfare State?* (C) [skim the more technical parts; they will be explained in class]

Thurs. Nov. 28 THANKSGIVING

Tues. Dec. 3 Foreign Policy.

- Morris P. Fiorina, Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson, William G. Mayer. “Foreign and Defense Policy.” *The New American Democracy*. Chapter 20. (R)
- Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page. “Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?” *American Political Science Review*. (C) [skim the more technical parts; they will be explained in class]

Thurs. Dec. 5 Solving the tough problems: success and failure.

- R. Douglas Arnold. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. Chapter 8. (R)
- R. Douglas Arnold. "The Politics of Reforming Social Security." *Political Science Quarterly*. (C)

Tues. Dec. 10 Catch up; review for final exam.

Thurs. Dec. 12 Finale. Reform: Do We Need It? Can We Do It?

- LAP, Chapter 15.
- James Fallows, "How America Can Rise Again," *The Atlantic* (January/February 2010). (C)
Also at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/01/how-america-can-rise-again/307839/>

Tues. Dec 17

FINAL EXAMINATION, 10 a.m.

Recitation Schedule and Assigned Readings
(with some variation to accommodate the academic calendar)

Dates	Topics and Readings
Sept. 3 – Sept. 5	<i>No recitation meetings this week.</i>
Sept. 9 – Sept. 12	<i>Models of cooperation and defection.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Martin Osbourne, <i>An Introduction to Game Theory</i> , pp. 1-19, 21-29 (C)
Sept. 16 – Sept. 19	<i>Comparing regimes.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> TAA, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4. Also look at Charts 1 and 2.
Sept. 23 – Sept. 26	Review for Midterm #1.
Sept. 30 – Oct. 3	<i>Analyzing survey data: a closer look.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> PPA, Section 10-1 (Asher).
Oct. 7 – Oct. 10	<i>The Spatial Model: Extensions.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Handout on the spatial model (C)
Oct. 14 – Oct. 17	<i>Change We Can Believe In? How Different is Generation Y?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Karen Kauffmann, John R. Petrocik, and Daron R. Shaw, <i>Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths about American Voters</i> . Chapter 6. (R) <input type="checkbox"/> Pew Research Center, <i>The Generation Gap and the 2012 Election</i> . pp. 1-24; 43-54; 83-100. Skim rest if interested. (C)
Oct. 21 – Oct. 24	Review for Midterm #2.
Oct. 28 – Oct. 31	Hands-on help with the short exercise. Attendance is optional.
Nov. 4 – Nov. 7	<i>Congress: Polarization and centralization.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> PPA, Section 6-1 (Smith). <input type="checkbox"/> PPA, Section 6-2 (Binder).
Nov. 11 – Nov. 14	<i>Pivotal Politics revisited.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Keith Krehbiel, <i>Pivotal Politics</i> . pp 20-39 [Re-read.] (C)

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Recitation Schedule and Assigned Readings (continued)

Dates	Topics and Readings
Nov. 18 – Nov. 21	<p><i>What Should Judges Do?</i></p> <p>Read the <i>Congressional Quarterly</i> synopses of the following three cases. If interested, read or skim the opinions from the cases themselves (they are easily Google-able):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>District of Columbia v. Heller</i> http://library.cqpress.com/scc/document.php?id=scyb07-995-44100-2036524&type=hitlist&num=0&<li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission</i> http://library.cqpress.com/scc/document.php?id=scyb09-1175-56144-2215667&type=hitlist&num=0&<li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> http://library.cqpress.com/scc/document.php?id=scyb02-155-18955-1012152&type=hitlist&num=0&<li><input type="checkbox"/> PPA, Section 9-1 (Scalia)<li><input type="checkbox"/> PPA, Section 9-2 (Breyer)
Nov. 25 – Nov. 28	Thanksgiving: no recitation sections this week.
Dec. 2– Dec. 5	<p><i>Revisiting multivariate regression.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Phillip H. Pollock III, <i>The Essentials of Political Analysis</i>. 3rd Edition. Selections. (C) [Re-read.]<li><input type="checkbox"/> Fair, Ray C. (2002) <i>Predicting Presidential Elections and Other Things</i>. Ch. 3 (R)
Dec. 9 – Dec. 12	Review for final exam.