

Power and Politics in America
Politics V53.0300
Fall 2004
Professor Sanford Clark Gordon

I. Introduction

This course has two aims. First, it is a survey of political institutions and behavior in the United States focusing primarily at the national level, which aims to demonstrate the connection between the guiding principles of the American Constitution and the role of politics and government in contemporary American life. Second, it introduces students to a variety of analytical concepts and approaches to the study of domestic politics.

II. Contact and Meeting Information

Professor

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Assistants in Instruction

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Class Meetings

Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00am-12:15pm, Silver Center 703

III. Required Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the University bookstore:

- Samuel Kernell and Gary C. Jacobson, *The Logic of American Politics*
- Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, eds., *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*
- James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*

A COURSE PACKET with other required material will be available for purchase at New University Copy and Graphics (11 Waverly Place).

IV. Student Responsibilities and Course Grading

Formal Course Requirements

Recitation participation: 15%

Recitations will cover topics discussed in class and in the readings the preceding week. Because of the peculiarities of university scheduling, the weekly rotation of topics will begin on Wednesday afternoon following lecture and conclude the following Tuesday. Typically, discussion will focus on an important topic covered in the Kernell and Smith reader or the packet. You are expected to have completed *all* of the assigned readings for the week prior to your recitation, and to attend *all* recitations.

First examination 20%

The first examination will be held in class on Wednesday, October 13, and will cover the first five weeks of class.

Second examination 20%

The second examination will be held in class on Wednesday, November 17, and will cover weeks 6-10.

Brief research paper: 15%

A brief (4-5) page research paper is due December 1. Topics will be distributed in class.

Final examination 30%

The final examination will be held on Monday, December 20, from 10-11:50am. Roughly two-thirds of the exam will cover material not covered by the first two exams. The remaining third will review those earlier topics.

Policy on missed exams and late papers

Exams: Exceptions in emergency situations are inevitable, but in general, students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. If you must miss an exam, please contact your teaching assistant before the scheduled test time, and if the excuse is justified (such as in cases of illness or family/personal emergencies), we will schedule a make-up.

Paper: In general, students will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) per day late. If you know your paper will be late, it is in your best interest to contact your teaching assistant prior to the deadline, since the penalty may be relaxed in extenuating circumstances.

V. Academic Integrity

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. *Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism* (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution) *will be tolerated*. All ideas not your own must be properly cited. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. For more information on university policy, see <http://cas.nyu.edu/object/bulletin.ug.academicpolicies.html> (note the spelling error in the URL when typing).

VI. Weekly Schedule

Part A. Foundations for the Analysis of American Politics

Week 1. Introduction

Wednesday, September 8

Introduction and Orientation: Power and Politics in America

Recitations, 9/8-9/14

There will be no recitations in the first rotation

Week 2. Political Analysis and Constitutionalism

Monday, September 13

Foundations for an Analytical Study of American Politics

- Logic of American Politics, Ch. 1

Wednesday, September 15

Origins of American Constitutionalism: The Principal Debates

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 2
- The Declaration of Independence, the original U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the Constitution), in the Appendix of *Logic*
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 2-1 John P. Roche, "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action"
 - 2-4 James MacGregor Burns, "Showdown: The Election of 1800"

Recitations, 9/15-9/21*

From Where Do Threats to Liberty Come?

- Brutus (Robert Yates?), "To the Citizens of the State of New-York," in packet
- *The Federalist*, Nos. 10 (read twice!), 15, and 23
- Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of Pennsylvania to their Constituents, in packet

Week 3. Federalism and the Separation of Powers

Monday, September 20

Federalism: Rationales for a Compound Republic

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 3
- *The Federalist*, Nos. 16, 17, and 39
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (excerpts), in packet

Wednesday, September 22

The Separation of Powers: Or, Separate Institutions Sharing Power

- *The Federalist*, Nos. 47, 48, 49, and 51

Recitations, 9/22-9/28

Why have a federal system? What are its Consequences?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 3-1 James Buchanan, "Federalism as an Ideal Political Order and an Objective for Constitutional Reform"
 - 3-2 Donald F. Kettl, "Federalism: Battles on the Front Lines of Public Policy"
 - 3-3 Matthew L. Wald, "Clean Air Battlefield"

* Students who cannot make recitation because of the Jewish holiday will not be penalized for their absence; they are *strongly* encouraged, however, to attend another recitation between September 15 and 21 -- ideally, one led by the same person.

Part B. Political Behavior

Week 4. The Mischief of Faction: Political Parties

Monday, September 27

The Spatial Model of Party Competition

- *Logic of American Politics*, ch. 12

Wednesday, September 29

The Evolution of Party Competition in American Politics

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 12-1 John H. Aldrich, from *Why Parties?*
 - 12-3 L. Sandy Maisel, "American Political Parties: Still Central to Functioning Democracy?"

Recitations, 9/29-10/5

Should Parties be Strong? What does that mean?

- Committee on Political Parties, American Political Science Association, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" (1950), selections, in packet
- George Washington Plunkitt, *Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (1905), selections, in packet
- Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Remarks Concerning the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2001, Senate floor, March 29, 2001, in packet

Week 5. The Mischief of Faction: Interest Groups and Association in Political Life

Monday, October 4

Interest Groups: The Ecology of Associational Life

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 13
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 1-1 Mancur Olson, Jr., from *The Logic of Collective Action*
 - 13-2 John R. Wright, "The Evolution of Interest Groups"

Wednesday, October 6

Political and Civic Culture

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, selections, in packet
- Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, selections, in packet

Recitations, 10/6-10/12

How and in what manner do interest groups influence politics?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 13-1 E. E. Schattschneider, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System"
 - 13-3 R. Kenneth Godwin and Barry J. Seldon, "What Corporations Really Want from Government"

Week 6. Public Opinion

Monday, October 11

Public Opinion in American Politics

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 10
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 10-1 Herbert Asher, “Analyzing and Interpreting Polls”

Wednesday, October 13

First examination, in class

Recitations, 10/13-10/19**

What does “the public” want?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 10-2 James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson, “Dynamic Representation”
 - 10-3 John R. Hibbing, “The People’s Craving for Unselfish Government”

Week 7. The Mass Media; Campaigns and Elections I

Monday, October 18

The Media in American Politics

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 14
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 14-1 Michael Schudson, “Is Journalism Hopelessly Cynical?”

Wednesday, October 20

The Logic of Elections and Electoral Competition

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 11
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 11-2 L. Sandy Maisel, “Promises and Persuasion”

Recitations, 10/20-10/26

How does the Media Shape Political Discourse?

- Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, “News that Matters,” ch. 12, in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 14-2 Thomas B. Edsall, “The People and the Press: Whose Views Shape the News?”

Week 8. Campaigns and Elections II

Monday, October 25

Movie (Part I; to be announced)

Wednesday, October 27

Movie (Part II); Campaigns and Elections Concluded

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 11-1 Samuel L. Popkin, from *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*

** Understandably, those of you with Wednesday recitations are not going to prioritize discussion readings the day of an exam. Please do your best at least to skim them.

Recitations, 10/27-11/2

How Polarized is the American Electorate?

- Morris Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, ch. 2, in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 12-2 Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996"
 - 11-3 Gary C. Jacobson, "Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection"

Part C. The Institutions of Governance

Week 9. Congress and Representation

Monday, November 1

Theories of Representation

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, pp. 186-204, 224-235
- *The Federalist*, nos. 62 and 63

Wednesday, November 3

Congress and its Members

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 6-2 David R. Mayhew, from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*
 - 6-3 Steven S. Smith, "Congressional Trends"

Recitations, 11/3-11/9

Is Congress Designed to Make Bad Law?

- Morris Fiorina, from *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*, in packet

Week 10. Congress and the Presidency

Monday, November 8

The Internal Organization of Congress

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, 204-224
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 6-1 Richard F. Fenno, "The Senate in Bicameral Perspective"

Wednesday, November 10

Growth of the Modern Presidency

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 7

Recitations, 11/10-11/16

Spatial Models of Legislative Behavior

Week 11. The Presidency Concluded

Monday, November 15

The Sources of Presidential Power

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 7-1 Richard E. Neustadt, from *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*
 - 7-2 Samuel Kernell, from *Going Public*

Wednesday, November 17

Second examination, in class

Recitations, 11/17-11/23**

Bush in Iraq

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 7-3 Elisabeth Bumiller, David E. Sanger, and Richard W. Stevenson, “How 3 Weeks of War in Iraq Looked from the Oval Office”

Week 12. The Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Politics

Monday, November 22

The Bureaucratic State

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 8
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 8-1 James Q. Wilson, from *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*
 - 8-2 Terry M. Moe, “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure”

Wednesday, November 24

Movie (to be announced)

Recitations, 11/24-12/3

Our rotation system will shift slightly. There will be no recitation Wednesday 11/24 through Friday 11/26 (Thanksgiving). The following week, 11/29-12/3, we will discuss the following:
Why do Both Liberals and Conservatives Think the Courts Subvert Democracy?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 9-2 Simon Lazarus, “The Most Dangerous Branch?”
 - 9-4 Deborah Sontag, “The Power of the Fourth”
- Edwin Meese III and Rhett DeHart, “The Imperial Judiciary ... and What Congress Can Do About It,” in packet

Week 13. The Judiciary and Civil Liberties

Monday, November 29

The Least Dangerous Branch? The Role of the Courts in American Politics

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 9
- *The Federalist*, no. 78
- *Marbury v. Madison*, in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 9-1 Lee Epstein and Jack Knight, from “The Choices Justices Make”
- Howard Gillman, “Judicial Independence through the Lens of *Bush v. Gore*: Four Lessons from Political Science” 64 *Ohio State Law Journal* 249, in packet

** Understandably, those of you with Wednesday recitations are not going to prioritize discussion readings the day of an exam. Please do your best at least to skim them.

Wednesday, December 1

Short papers due

Civil Liberties

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 5
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 5-3 *Miranda v. Arizona*
 - 5-4 *Roe v. Wade*

Recitations, 12/6-12/10

For the second and final week, the recitation rotation begins Monday and ends Friday. We will discuss the following:

What Limits Does the War on Terror Place on Civil Liberties?

- *The Logic of American Politics in Wartime* (textbook supplement), pp. 29-37
- American Civil Liberties Union, "Patriot Propaganda," in packet
- Attorney General John Ashcroft, "On the Patriot Act," in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 5-2 Michael Scardaville and Robert A. Levy, "Competing Views of Civil Liberties and the War Against Terrorism"

The final recitation of the semester will be held on December 10.

Week 14. Civil Rights and Policy Implementation

Monday, December 6

Civil Rights

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 4
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963," in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 4-1 Zoltan Hajnal and Elizabeth R. Gerber, "Minority Rights in Direct Democracy"
 - 4-3 Martha Craig Daughtrey, "Women and the Constitution: Where We Are at the End of the Century"

Wednesday, December 8

Policy Implementation

Week 15. Wrapping Up

Monday, December 13

Conclusion: Institutional Change and the Future of American Democracy

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 15

Final Exam

Monday, December 20, 10:00-11:50am