

Power and Politics in America
Politics V53.0300
Fall 2006
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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Class Meetings

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:15pm, Cantor 200

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*, 3rd edition
- Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, eds., *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 3rd edition
- James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
- Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 2nd edition

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. 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 up to and including those assigned for a particular recitation, and to attend *all* recitations.

First examination 20%

The first examination will be held in class on Thursday, October 5, and will cover the first four weeks of class.

Second examination 20%

The second examination will be held in class on Thursday, November 9, and will cover weeks 5-9.

Brief research paper: 15%

A brief (4-5) page research paper is due in class on Tuesday, November 28. The topic will be distributed in class.

Final examination 30%

Unless otherwise noted in class, the final examination will be held on Tuesday, December 19, 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. Please be sure to note the date of the final exam when making your travel arrangements for the holiday break.

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://www.nyu.edu/cas/Academic/bulletin0608.pdf>, pp. 370-371.

VI. Weekly Schedule

Part A. Foundations for the Analysis of American Politics

Week 1. Introduction

Tuesday, September 5

Introduction and Orientation: Power and Politics in America

Thursday, September 7

Foundations for an Analytical Study of American Politics

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 1
- Kenneth A. Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, ch. 10, in packet

Recitations, 9/7-9/13

Models in Political Science

Week 2. Constitutionalism and Federalism

Tuesday, September 12

Origins of American Constitutionalism: The Principal Debates

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 2
- The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, 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”

Thursday, September 14

Federalism: Rationales for a Compound Republic

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 3
- *The Federalist*, Nos. 17 and 39
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (excerpts), in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 3-2 Donald F. Kettl, “Federalism: Battles on the Front Lines of Public Policy”

Recitations, 9/14-9/20

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. Constitutionalism Concluded; The Mischief of Faction I

Tuesday, September 19

The Separation of Powers: Separate Institutions Sharing Power?

- *The Federalist*, Nos. 47, 48, 49, and 51 (read #51 twice!)

Part B. Political Behavior

Thursday, September 21

The Spatial Model of Party Competition

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 12

Recitations, 9/21-9/27

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
- Principles and Practice
 - 12-3 Rick Valelly, "Who Needs Political Parties?"

Week 4. The Mischief of Faction II

Tuesday, September 26

The Evolution of Party Competition in American Politics

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 12-1 John H. Aldrich, from *Why Parties?*

Thursday, September 28

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"

Recitations, 9/28-10/4

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 Bara Vaida and Lisa Caruso, "Blunt's K Street Team"

Week 5. American Political Culture

Tuesday, October 3

Political and Civic Culture

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

Thursday, October 5

First examination, in class

Recitations, 10/5-10/11*

How Polarized is the American Citizenry?

- *Culture War*, Chs. 2-3

* Understandably, those of you with Thursday recitations are not going to prioritize a discussion reading the day of an exam. Please do your best at least to skim it.

Week 6. Public Opinion and the Mass Media

Tuesday, October 10

Public Opinion in American Politics

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

Thursday, October 12

The Media in American Politics

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 14
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 14-1 James T. Hamilton, “The Market and the Media”
- Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, “News that Matters,” ch. 12, in packet

Recitations, 10/12-10/18

What does “the public” want?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 10-2 James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson, “Dynamic Representation”
 - 10-3 Michael Schudson, “America’s Ignorant Voters”

Week 7. Campaigns and Elections I

Tuesday, October 17

The Logic of Elections and Electoral Competition

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 11-2 Gary C. Jacobson, “Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection”

Thursday, October 19

Campaigns and Elections from the Voter’s Perspective

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 11, pp. 420-435
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 11-1 Samuel L. Popkin, from *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*
 - 12-2 Larry M. Bartels, “Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996.”

Recitations, 10/19-10/25

Dynamics of U.S. Elections

- *Culture War*, Chs. 7-8.

Week 8. Campaigns and Elections II

Tuesday, October 24

Movie, Part I: Street Fight

Thursday, October 26

Movie, Part II: Campaigns and Elections from the Candidate's Perspective

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 11, pp. 435-455
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 11-3 Darrell M. West, from *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2004*.

Recitations, 10/26-11/1

Political Science versus Politics: Dissecting Street Fight

Part C. The Institutions of Governance

Week 9. Congress and Representation

Tuesday, October 31

Theories of Representation

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, pp. 204-224, 244-256
- *The Federalist*, nos. 62 and 63

Thursday, November 2

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, 11/2-11/8

Spatial Models of Legislative Behavior

Week 10. Congress Concluded

Tuesday, November 7

The Internal Organization of Congress

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, 224-243
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 6-1 Richard F. Fenno, "The Senate in Bicameral Perspective"

Thursday, November 9

Second examination, in class

Recitations, 11/9-11/15*

Is Congress Designed to Make Bad Law?

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

Week 11. The Presidency

Tuesday, November 14

Growth of the Modern Presidency

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 7

* Same deal for the Thursday recitations as with the first exam.

Thursday, November 16

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*

Recitations, 11/16-11/22

An Imperial Presidency?

- Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Imperial Presidency Redux,” in packet
- Noemie Emery, “Too Much History,” in packet
- John Isaacs, “Congress Goes AWOL,” in packet

Week 12. The Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Politics

Tuesday, November 21

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”
 - 8-3 Paul Singer, “By the Horns”

Thursday, November 23

Thanksgiving (no class)

Recitations, 11/23-11/29

No recitation

Week 13. Policy Implementation and the Judiciary

Tuesday, November 28

Short papers due

The Politics of Policy Implementation

Thursday, November 30

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*
 - 9-4 Sarah A. Binder and Forrest Maltzman, “Congress and the Politics of Judicial Appointments”
- Howard Gillman, “Judicial Independence through the Lens of *Bush v. Gore*: Four Lessons from Political Science” 64 *Ohio State Law Journal* 249, in packet

Recitations, 11/30-12/6

Do Courts Subvert Democracy?

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 9-1 Antonin Scalia, from *A Matter of Interpretation*
 - 9-2 Stephen Breyer, from *Active Liberty*
 - 9-5 Robert A. Carp, Kenneth L. Manning, and Ronald Stidham, “The Voting Behavior of George W. Bush’s Judges: How Sharp a Turn to the Right?”
- Edwin Meese III and Rhett DeHart, “The Imperial Judiciary ... and What Congress Can Do About It,” in packet

Week 14. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Tuesday, December 5

Civil Liberties

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

Thursday, December 7

Civil Rights

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 4
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963,” in packet
- *Principles and Practice*
 - 4-1 Taeku Lee, “Immigration and the Future of Identity Politics in the United States”
 - 4-2 Nathan Glazer, “American Diversity and the 2000 Census”
- Zoltan Hajnal and Elizabeth R. Gerber, “Minority Rights in Direct Democracy,” in packet

Recitations, 12/7-12/13

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

- *Principles and Practice*
 - 5-2 Lee Epstein et. al., “The Effect of War on the Supreme Court”
- American Civil Liberties Union et. al., “Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief,” pp. 1-16, in packet.
- United States Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, “The NSA Program to Detect and Prevent Terrorist Attacks: Myth v. Reality.” In packet

Week 15. Wrapping Up

Tuesday, December 12

Conclusion: Institutional Change and the Future of American Democracy

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 15

Final Exam

Tuesday, December 19, 10:00-11:50am