

V53.0300: Power and Politics in American

Silver Hall 703
Professor Jonathan Nagler
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M/W 11:00 - 12:15
Spring, 2006
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Teaching Assistants:

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This course will begin by analyzing the possible roles government can play in society. We will examine how voters, elected officials, un-elected officials, and other political actors behave in the political arena. The goal of the course is to help students learn the basic structure of American politics, to understand why political actors behave as they do, and to be able to evaluate the implications of alternative political institutions.

The course consists of lectures and recitations (sections). Attendance in recitation is mandatory. Attendance at lecture is not mandatory, but much material will be covered in lecture that is *not* covered in the reading.

While we will be following the syllabus, **the order and timing of readings and exams, IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE!** Also note that additional readings may be assigned, when they are they will generally be made available electronically.

Your grade will be based on the following

Participation in Recitations :	15%
First Midterm :	25%
Second Midterm :	25%
Final Exam :	35 %

Required Reading:

Fiorina, Morris, Peterson, Paul, Bertram Johnson and D. Stephen Voss. 2005. *The New American Democracy*, 4th Edition.

Kernell, Samuel and Steven S. Smith, eds. 2004. *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. 2nd Edition.

Week 1: Why We Have Government

- Public Goods
- Collective Action
- Marx, and other Dead People we still read.
- Factions

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 1 - "Democracy in the United States."

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 1-1. "Logic of Collective Action."

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 1-2. "Tragedy of the Commons."

Reading: *FPJV*, Appendix - "Federalist Papers 10 and 51."

Week 2: Federalism

- Government is Complicated

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 2 - "Establishing a Constitutional Democracy"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 3 - "Federalism"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 3-3. "Clean-Air Battlefield"

Week 3: Political Culture and Public Opinion

- Is the U.S. special?
- What do people know?

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 4 - "American Political Culture"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 5 - "Public Opinion"

Week 4: Mass Behavior

- Who Participates and Why?

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 6 - "Individual Participation"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 7 - "Interest-Group" Participation in American Democracy"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 13-1, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System"

Week 5: EXAM # 1

Week 6: Institutions Affecting Individual Behavior

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 8 - "Political Parties"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 12-1, "Why Parties?"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 9 - "The Media"

Week 7: Campaigns and Elections

- The spatial model
- Retrospective Voting
- Incumbency Advantage

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 10 - "Electing the President"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 12-2, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 11 - "Choosing the Congress"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 6-2 - "The Electoral Connection"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 11-3 - "Party Polarization in National Politics"

Week 8: Institutions

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 12 - "The Congress and It's Work"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 6-3, "Congressional Trends"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 13 - "The Presidency: Powers and Practice"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 7-3 - "War in Iraq from the Oval Office"

Week 9: EXAM # 2

Week 10: Non-Elected Institutions of Government

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 14 - "The Bureacracy"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 8-1 - "What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 15 - "The Courts"

Reading: *KS*, Chapter 8-2 - "The Politics of Bureacratic Structure"

Week 11: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 16 - "Civil Liberties"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 17 - "Civil Rights"

Week: 12: Public Policy

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 18 - "Domestic Policy"

Reading: *FPJV*, Chapter 19 - "Economic Policy"