

COURSE SYLLABUS

**Political Science 1
Fall Quarter, 2016
University of California, Davis**

Professor Walt Stone
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- Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 and by appointment
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Lectures: Giedt Hall 1101, Tuesday and Thursday 4:40-6:00 PM

Please consult the course website on smartsite@ucdavis.edu regularly. On the day of each lecture (by early afternoon) I will post an outline of the day's lecture, along with any materials I will display in class. All documents, including the course syllabus, overheads displayed in lecture, and lecture outlines will be posted under "resources" on the site.

I am sometimes approached by on- and off-campus groups for permission to address the class to advocate for a candidate, cause or organization. The time before class begins at 4:40 PM is a public space when such appeals are appropriate. By granting access to this public space, I do not endorse the appeal.

This course introduces you to the systematic and rigorous study of American politics. We develop an understanding of the forces that influence the behavior of individuals and institutions in and around national government. The question motivating the course is: How well does the American political system live up to the ideals of a representative democracy? To answer this question we need to know something about how it is supposed to work, where it fails to measure up and why. We develop a framework that will enable us to assess different conceptions of what the ideals of democracy should be and how to evaluate the American system. This will put us in a position to evaluate proposals for reforming the system, as well as defenses of the status quo.

Careful analysis of the political system in which we live is difficult. We must overcome partisan predispositions and other biases we may hold. The systematic study of politics can also be clouded by powerful myths that color our perceptions and assessments. This course gives students the tools they need to assess political behaviors, practices, institutions, and reform proposals based on theory and evidence.

Welcome to the class. I hope you enjoy the quarter.

Texts

Samuel Kernell et al., *The Logic of American Politics* (available in bookstore as *American National Government Custom Edition*) (7th edition, Sage 2015) (referred to as "Text.")

Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith (eds) *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (6th edition, Sage 2016) (referred to as "Reader").

Course Requirements

You are responsible for doing the scheduled reading prior to the lecture for which the readings are assigned. Readings and lectures will not always be on the same topics, nor will readings necessarily be covered in lecture. Some of the readings are difficult; some days have more reading than others. Keep up with the assigned reading and you won't have a problem. Complete the readings for the lecture immediately preceding your recitation meeting unless your TA requires otherwise.

- Attendance: lecture and recitation attendance is mandatory. Recitation is important as a place where you can explore the ideas in the course in depth. Your TA will announce the policy for the section grade.
- *Students may not use laptops, tablets, or smart phones during class.*

- Exams: Examinations will be approximately 75% short and long essay. Examinations from previous years will be posted on SmartSite. The final examination will be cumulative. If you miss the midterm, my makeup policy is that you must arrange a makeup at the end of the quarter through your TA. Makeup examinations will consist of a single essay written during a one-hour period. I don't recommend taking a makeup unless you cannot avoid it. All students are required to take the final exam at the scheduled time. If your plans do not permit you to be at the exam, please drop the course.
- Group quizzes and research participation: There will be six unannounced group quizzes in randomly selected lectures. Your responses to these quizzes will be graded pass/fail. The format for the quizzes will be a question posed on the screen in the front of the lecture hall; a few minutes to meet in small groups and discuss your answer; a minute to write down a brief answer; turn in the quiz with your name and your TA's name. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a political science research project. Details will be explained in class; your participation will be scheduled according to your preferences (out of class time) and will take no more than a half hour. Participation in the project will be given the equivalent of two group quizzes in extra credit.

The breakdown of the course grade is as follows:

Section grade: 15%
Midterm examination: 30%
Group quizzes 10%
Final exam: 45%

Exam dates:

Midterm examination: Thursday, October 27.

Final examination: Wednesday, December 7, 10:30AM – 12:30 PM.

Midterm exam held in regular lecture. Date subject to change with advance notice.

NOTE: Academic dishonesty is a serious breach of ethics in the university community, and it will not be tolerated in this class. You are required to be familiar with and conform to the University's Code of Academic Conduct (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html>). We report violators to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Schedule of Readings and Lectures

I. Theoretical and Constitutional Foundations: We use James Madison's "Republic" as the fundamental theory that justifies the American Constitution. This theory is based on *Federalist 10* and *51*. Throughout the course, we critically examine Madison's theory in light of how the American system actually works. Pay close attention to the argument Madison makes about human nature, about how people behave in political life, and what the consequences are for the well-constituted government. Do you accept these arguments? Is Madison's Republic a democratic system?

1. September 22. Course overview, administrative details, key concepts: Why is the common good so hard to achieve?
 - Text, Chapter 1.
2. September 27. Self Interest as the Problem.
 - Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" Reader 1-2.
 - Text, Chapter 2, pp. 33-60.
 - James Madison, *Federalist* #10, Text, pp. 653-56.
3. September 29. Self Interest as the Solution; Madison's Republic as Theory.
 - Re-read *Federalist 10*.
 - Text, Chapter 2, pp. 60-80.
 - *Federalist 51*, Text, pp. 657-659.
 - *Constitution of the United States*, Text, pp.641-652.

II. Citizen Politics: Who participates in politics, who doesn't, and so what? What difference does it make that many do not vote? How can it be in the citizen's self-interest not to be self-interested? What are the possible implications of that paradox for a political theory built on self-interest? Elections are supposed to promote representative government. Do they? Can they? How important is a well-informed, interested electorate in producing electoral democracy?

1. October 4. Citizen participation
 - Text, Chapter 11, pp. 442-454.
2. October 6. Citizen participation and public opinion
 - Text, Chapter 10.
 - Herbert Asher, "Analyzing and Interpreting Polls" Reader 10-1.
 - John Zaller and Stanley Feldman "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response" Reader 10-2.
3. October 11. Voting choice with limited information.
 - Michael Schudson, "America's Ignorant Voters" Reader 11-3.
 - Samuel L. Popkin, "The Reasoning Voter" Reader 11-1.
 - Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996" Reader 12-2
4. October 13. Electoral context and voting choice.
 - Text, Chapter 11, pp. 454-480.

III. Factions Revisited: Faction, special interests, pressure groups, and lobbying are all dirty words in American politics, but they form the core of yet another version of representative democracy. How does the pluralist theory differ from Madison's Republic and from party theory? Where do the theories agree with one another?

1. October 18. Interest groups and pluralist theory.
 - Re-re-read *Federalist 10*.
 - Text, Chapter 13.
2. October 20. Critique of pluralist theory.
 - Mancur Olson Jr., "The Logic of Collective Action" Reader 1-1.
 - E.E. Schattschneider, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System" Reader 13-1.
 - Richard L. Hall and Richard Anderson "Issue Advertising and Legislative Advocacy in Health Politics" Reader 13-2
3. October 25. Catchup, review.

***** Midterm Examination Thursday, October 27*****

IV. Political Parties and Party Theory: Political parties, despite their tarnished popular image, form the basis of some people's conception of representative democracy and how to make it work better. Watch for the places where party theory most severely challenges Madison's Republic. What's right and wrong with party polarization?

1. November 1. The party theory alternative.
 - Text, Chapter 12.
2. November 3. Causes and implications of the two-party system.
 - John H. Aldrich, "Why Parties?" Reader 12-1.
 - Morris P. Fiorina, "Parties as Problem Solvers" Reader 12-3.
 - Morris P. Fiorina, "Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America" Reader 10-3
 - Alan I. Abramowitz, "The Polarized Electorate" Reader 10-4.

V. Congressional Representation: Congress is a pivotal institution in our analysis. It is supposed to provide representation. Does it? How? Watch not only for the twists and turns of self-interest in the institution, but also for how conflict is managed. The major themes of the Republic – self-interest, representation, and conflict – all come together, though not always in ways anticipated by the theory.

1. November 8 (Election Day!). A model of Congress and the policy process.
 - Re-read *Federalist 51*.
 - Jennifer Nicoll Victor, “Gridlock Lobbying” Reader 13-3.
2. November 10. Getting Reelected, Constituency Representation, and Polarization.
 - Text, Chapter 6, pp. 215-234.
 - Gary C. Jacobson, “No Compromise: The Electoral Origins of Legislative Gridlock” Reader 11-2.
3. November 15. Congressional organization and the problem of collective responsibility.
 - Text, pp. 234-273.
 - Steven S. Smith, “Congress, the Troubled Institution” Reader 6-1.
 - Sarah A. Binder, “The Politics of Legislative Stalemate” Reader 6-2.
 - John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde, “Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan Era” Reader 6-3.

VI. Presidential Leadership, Executive and Judicial Politics: We expect presidents to be “statesmen,” bureaucrats to be, well, bureaucrats, and judges to be above it all. Where do concepts like “self interest” and “representation” fit in to the executive and judicial institutions of national government?

1. November 17. The Office of the Presidency
 - Text, Chapter 7.
2. November 22. Presidential Leadership and Representation
 - Samuel Kernell, “Going Public” Reader 6.5.
3. November 24. Thanksgiving Day.
4. November 29. Politics in the Executive Branch and Judiciary.
 - Text, Chapters 8, 9.
 - Terry M. Moe, “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure” Reader 7-2.
 - David E. Lewis, “The Politics of Presidential Appointments” Reader 7-3.
 - Robert A. Carp and Kenneth L. Manning, “Selecting Justice” Reader 9-4.
5. December 1. Catch-up; review: How Democratic is the US?

*******Final Exam: Wednesday, December 7, 10:30 AM, Giedt 1101*******