

American Democracy in Changing Times
POLI 100
Weekdays 11:30 – 1:00
Murphey 314

Instructor	Colin Case
Email	crcase@live.unc.edu
Office	Murphey 222
Office Hours	Monday and Wednesday 1:30 – 3:00
Office Hours Sign-up	https://calendly.com/crcase/office-hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to American politics at the college level that is intended to serve both majors and non-majors. In this course we will discuss the origins of the current governmental system in America and how theories of American government apply to current events and problems the government and citizens face today. We will work toward understanding our complicated and contentious political environment by exploring the system from two perspectives: political institutions, or the structure of the United States' government, and political behavior, or the actions and motivations of political actors — both politicians and the general public.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Kollman, Ken. 2018. *American Political System: Core Third Edition, 2018 Election Update*. 3rd Edition. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Additional readings posted on Sakai.

EXPECTATIONS

Unlike most introductory courses at UNC, the summer session provides the unique opportunity to take part in a small classroom environment. To that end, classes will contain a mix of lecture, active learning, and discussion. Students are expected to take an active role in their learning by completing readings before class, coming to class ready to participate directly with classmates, and asking questions as they arise, either from readings or the lecture material. You will be held responsible for all material from the readings and lectures, even if you miss a class.

We will frequently engage in group discussions about course content and current events. American politics is full of “hot topics” that you and your classmates may have strong

opinions about. Our aim in this course and recitation section is not to discuss the merits of our beliefs. Rather, we will focus on discussing how theories and concepts apply to current events from an analytical perspective. I encourage you to engage with viewpoints that differ from your own. I require that you do so in a respectful and productive way. An open environment will allow us to approach the ideas presented in the course as analytical, critical thinkers so that we can form, challenge, and develop theories and evidence about the issues we discuss.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

This course will utilize daily quizzes on Sakai through your smart device or laptop. This means that you need to bring one of these devices to class. If you have any concerns on your ability to do this, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. When we are not taking quizzes, please close your laptop or keep your tablet or phone off (face down works well too). Other than utilizing technology for quizzes, this is a technology free classroom.

To come prepared for class, you may either bring a printed copy of the readings, notes on the readings, or both. Slides for class will also be posted on Sakai the evening before class if you would like to print out a physical copy of the lecture slides to take notes on. There may be occasional times that we will want to use available electronic devices to reference online resources during in-class activities, but I will let you know when it is appropriate to do so. If you need an exception to this rule, please see me. I am willing to make accommodations as needed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A 93.00-100, A- 90.00-92.99, B+ 87.00-89.99, B 84.00-86.99, B- 80.00-83.99, C+ 77.00-79.99, C 74.00-76.99, C- 70.00-73.99, D+ 67.00-69.99

The following components will make up your final grade:

Daily Quizzes (30%)

Starting with our second class, you will have daily short quizzes. Quizzes for each day will vary in length (generally 5-8 questions) and are intended to be a “low-stakes” assignment. Quizzes will cover the prior days’ lecture material and readings. Your score will be calculated by taking the total number of questions you answer correctly over the course of the semester divided by the total number of questions asked over the course of the semester. **You must be present in class to receive credit for the quiz. No credit will be given if you take a quiz remotely and no make-ups will be offered except under extenuating circumstances.** To account for the occasional absence, technology problems, or an “off day”, I will drop 5% of quiz questions from the denominator of the total questions asked over the course semester. For example, if there are 200 quiz questions, your score would be

the number of correct responses divided by 190 instead of 200. You cannot receive higher than 100% on this portion of your grade.

Paper (20%)

You will have one short paper in the first part of the semester. The paper will be five to six pages in length. Papers must be turned in on Sakai under the assignments tab at the beginning of class on July 1st, otherwise it will be considered late. A 10% reduction will be taken off the final paper grade for every day late. Information regarding the writing assignments will be distributed in class and on Sakai more than a week before the due date.

Final Presentation (20%)

Instead of a traditional final exam, you will have a final presentation. Depending on the number of students who are enrolled in the course, this presentation will either be an individual presentation or with a partner. Information regarding the final presentation will be distributed in class and on Sakai well in advance. Presentations will take place during the University's scheduled final exam time (July 25th, 11:30-2:30) in our regular classroom.

Attendance (10%)

You are expected to arrive on time to class. You will be given a five-minute grace period for lateness. Otherwise, you will be considered absent. If you must miss class for an excused reason (an official university activity, a religious holiday, a verifiable illness, etc.), please contact me in advance of your absence.

We have 19 scheduled in-person meetings this semester, and your attendance grade is based on the assumption that you have attended 18 of 19 meetings. I will allow you to miss one class without question (hence your grade being based on attending 18 out of 19 recitations). If you miss more than two classes without an a documented excuse, however, each recorded unexcused absence will lead to about an 5% decrease in your attendance grade (1/18).

Participation (20%)

Beyond showing up, active participation in class is vital for success – both for the class as a whole and for your development as a student. Class participation can take many different forms such as speaking and listening to others during small and large group discussions, or raising questions for classmates to consider. I expect both quality and quantity with respect to class participation – your participation should illustrate that you are thinking critically about topics we cover and the assigned readings.

If you are uncomfortable speaking up in class, please consider this section, especially given the size, an opportunity to grow and push yourself to contribute to the discussion — and come chat with me in office hours if you are having trouble participating.

COMMUNICATION

I am very happy to meet with students outside of class time. Whether it be to discuss concerns about the course, questions about the material, or simply to engage further with the

topic, please feel free to come to office hours. I will be holding office hours jointly in-person and over Zoom so that you can attend whichever way you prefer. I am asking that you sign up for a 15 minute time slot here: <https://calendly.com/crcase/office-hours>. You are always more than welcome to show up to my office hours in person without a meeting, although students with an appointment (either Zoom or in person) will take priority. If you would like to attend office hours using Zoom, you must sign up for an appointment – I cannot guarantee I will see your email during my office hours.

If you are unable to meet during my office hours, which are listed at the top of this syllabus, please email me to set up a time to talk. Office hours are an important resource that should be utilized to improve understanding of material or ask more personalized questions. Office hours before an exam will be held at regular times and, unless noted by me, no additional office hours will be held – so plan accordingly. Prior to writing assignment due dates, I will be available during office hours to read over paper outlines or talk through ideas and provide feedback. Please do not bring completed papers and, be advised, office hours before paper deadlines may be busy.

Outside of office hours, e-mail is the easiest way to contact me. Please include “Poli 100” in the subject line of the e-mail. I will typically respond to email within 24 hours. If you have extensive questions that require a longer conversation, please come to my office hours or stay after class. I will frequently send emails relating to the course material, upcoming assignments or activities, and general reminders. I expect that you are checking your UNC email regularly to stay on top of these updates.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

UNC facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. If you have an accommodation related to testing procedures, please let me know ASAP so I can provide you with the accommodation at the outset of class. For more information visit <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Visit their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

TITLE IX RESOURCES

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty — including cheating, plagiarism, or any instance of taking credit for work that is not your own — will not be tolerated in this course. Any cases of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowable under UNC guidelines, which can be found here: honor.unc.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS

June 20	Introduction and Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kollman Ch. 1
June 21	Constitution I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kollman Ch. 2• <i>Constitution of the United States</i>• Daily quizzes start
June 22	Constitution II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Federalist 10</i>• <i>Federalist 51</i>
June 23	Federalism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kollman Ch. 3• Phillips, Amber. “What are red-flag laws?”• Paper prompt distributed
June 24	Congress I: Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kollman Ch. 5 (pg 147 – 175)• Barton, Richard. “Congress is polarized. Fear of being ‘primaried’ is one reason.”• Rakich, Nathaniel and Elena Mejia. “The House Map’s Republican Bias Will Plummet In 2022 – Because Of Gerrymandering”

June 27	Congress II: The Institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 5 (pg 176 – 196) • Binder, Sarah. “Biden says bring back the ‘talking filibuster.’ Would that really let Senate Democrats pass bills?” • Rackey, John D., Lauren C. Bell and Kevin R. Kosar. “House Committees are Hearing from Fewer Witnesses. That Hurts Public Policy.”
June 28	Presidency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 6 • Halperin, Mort and Soren Dayton. “Can Congress Reclaim Authority it has Handed Over to the President? It’s Trying.”
June 29	Judiciary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 8 • Barnes, Robert, Carol D. Leonnig and Ann E. Marimow. “How the future of Roe is testing Roberts on the Supreme Court.”
June 30	Catch-up and Paper Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA
July 1	Institutional Polarization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curry, James M. and Frances Lee. “Congress is far more bipartisan than headlines suggest.” • Theriault, Sean. “Polarization we can live with. Partisan warfare is the problem.” • Paper due before class on Sakai
July 5	Bureaucracy (<i>Asynchronous</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 7 • Rudalevige, Andrew. “The Cabinet was the Easy Part. Staffing (and Steering) the Bureaucracy Takes Much More Work.”
July 6	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 4 (pg 107 – 125) • Gelman, Andrew. “A New Controversy Erupts Over Whether Voter Identification Laws Suppress Minority Turnout.”
July 7	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 4 (126 – 144)
July 8	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 10 • Lee, Drutman. “The High Turnout in 2020 wasn’t Good for American Democracy.”

July 11	Public Opinion I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 9 (pg. 327 – 357) • Shapiro, Robert Y. “Despite the 2020 Election Results, You can Still Trust Polling. Mostly.”
July 12	Public Opinion II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 9 (pg. 358 – 371) • Agadjanian, Alexander. “It’s Not just Trump. Voters Happily Adopt their Leaders’ Views.”
July 13	Elections I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 13 (491 – 522) • Carey, John M., Gretchen Helmke, Brendan Nyhan, Mitch Sanders, Susan C. Stokes and Shun Yamaya. “How Will Americans Respond when there’s another Split between the Electoral College and the Popular Vote?”
July 14	Elections II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 13 (523 – 531)
July 15	Political Parties I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 12 (447 – 463) • Hilton, Adam. “Despite Manchin and Sinema, Democrats are More United than they’ve been for Decades.”
July 18	Political Parties II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 12 (464 – 482) • Klar, Samara and Yanna Krupnikov. “Independents Didn’t Decide the Midterm Election: Many of these “Independents” were Republicans Anyway.”
July 19	Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Ch. 14 • Levendusky, Matt. “Are Fox and MSNBC polarizing America?”
July 20	Mass Polarization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsall, Thomas B. ”We Can’t Even Agree on what is Tearing Us Apart: Guest Essay.”
July 21	Presentation Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA
July 25	Final Presentation (11:30 – 2:30)