

## **POLS 200: Intermediate National Politics of the US**

**Oxford College of Emory University  
Spring 2016**

**TU/TH 10-11:40AM**

***Prerequisite: Political Science 100  
Pre or Co-Requisite: Political Science 101Q***

**Instructor: Dr. Katie Vigilante  
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This is the second course in American Government. The course moves analysis of American politics from the examination of individual institutions and mass political behavior to the analysis of how the public, elected officials, and political institutions interact to govern and make public policy. We do this to understand how our system actually works and evaluate how our democratic system is performing.

The first half of the course is focused on specific institutions, specifically the bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, and the media. In the second half of the course we examine the interaction between institutions and the mass public. Last, we turn to the evaluation of governance and policy-making. After taking this course, you will be well- prepared for more advanced courses in American politics.

### **Assignments and Grading**

**Midterm Exam:** On March 1, there will be an in-class midterm exam. This exam will constitute 30% of your final grade.

**Research Paper:** Students will write a research paper on an approved topic by the professor. Portions of the paper are due over the course of the paper. In total, the paper is worth 30% of your grade. This includes the final paper but note points will be deducted from the final paper grade if portions of the paper are not turned in when due. Last, you will present your paper to the class at our final class meeting. The quality of your presentation will be included in your grade. A specific overview of the research paper and an approved list of topics will be distributed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of class.

**Final Exam:** On May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 2-5pm, there will be a final exam. This exam will constitute 40% of your final grade.

## **Readings**

The readings for this class include articles on e-reserve as well as books I have ordered for purchase. Through the syllabus, readings marked [ER] are on electronic reserve through the library. I have also placed on reserve at the library copies of the books ordered for purchase:

John Aldrich, *Why Parties? (a Second Look)*  
Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*  
Andrew Karch, *Democratic Laboratories*  
James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*

## **Class attendance policy**

While I do not have a class attendance policy, my course lectures are designed to build upon, not repeat, the reading assignments, and consistently missing class will deprive you of lectures and discussion that are critical to both your understanding of the course and to success on examinations.

## **Cell Phones, Laptops, and Other Electronic Devices**

Are prohibited unless special permission is granted. See me for questions.

## **Academic Integrity**

Cheating of any form or degree will not be tolerated. Please familiarize yourself with Oxford College's Honor Code, which can be found in the Student Handbook. To quote an old legal maxim, "*ignorance of the law is no excuse.*"

## **Class Schedule and Readings**

January 12: Overview and Expectations

### **Part I: Institutions**

#### **A. Bureaucracy**

January 14 & 19 (1) Review of functions and organization  
Readings: Wilson. Bureaucracy. Chapters 1-2.

January 21 & 26 (2) Delegation: Rule-making and implementation, normative and practical considerations, bureaucratic power  
Readings: Wilson. Bureaucracy. Chapters 5-6.

January 28 (3) Context: National Differences.  
Readings: Wilson. Bureaucracy. Chapters 16.

February 2 (4) Change: Problems, Rules, Markets and Public Interest.  
Readings: Wilson. Bureaucracy. Chapters 17-20.

#### **B. Political Parties**

February 4 (1) *Review of origins, organization, campaign functions*

Readings: Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 2

February 9 (2) Distributive functions: Role of political parties in navigating distributive politics

Readings: [ER] Steven Levitt and James Snyder. "Political Parties and the Distribution of Federal Outlays." *AJPS*. 39(4): 958-980.

February 11

(3) Coattails and elections: Tools for managing parties in elections

Readings: Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 6

February 16:

(4) Legislative functions, discipline and coherence: Tools for managing parties, leadership, and legislation

Readings: Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 7

### **C. Interest Groups**

February 18

(1) The collective action problem: Overview of problem, role of interest groups in society

Readings: [ER] Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Chapter 1.

February 23

(2) *Campaign Contributions and Lobbying*

Readings:

[ER] Ansolabehere, Steven, John de Figuerido, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 17(1): 105-130.

[ER] Langbein, Laura I.. 1993. "Pacs, Lobbies and Political Conflict: The Case of Gun Control". *Public Choice* 77 (3). Springer: 551-72.

February 25

(3) *Interest groups and economic regulation*

Readings:

[ER] Gordon, Sanford and Catherine Hafer. 2005. "Flexing Muscle: Corporate Political Expenditures as Signals to the Bureaucracy" *American Political Science Review*.

[ER] Anzia, Sarah F., and Terry M. Moe. 2015. "Public Sector Unions and the Costs of Government". *The Journal of Politics* 77 (1). [University of Chicago Press, Southern Political Science Association]: 114–27.

March 1

**MIDTERM EXAM**

March 3

**NO CLASS- Research Question Annotated Bibliography Due**

March 7-11

**NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS**

## **D. Media**

March 15

(1) *Media Bias*: Measuring the political slant of media outlets and understanding the causes of slant

Readings:

[ER] Groseclose, Tim and Jeffrey Milyo. 2005. "A Measure of Media Bias." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 120(4): 1191-1237.

[ER] Gentzkow, Matthew and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2010. "What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from Daily U.S. Newspapers." *Econometrica*. 78(1): 35-71.

March 17

(2) Media Choice and Political Polarization and Government Accountability

Readings:

[ER] Gentzkow, Matthew and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2011. "Ideological Segregation Online and Offline." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 126 (4): 1799-1839.

[ER] Snyder, James M., and David Strömberg. 2010. "Press Coverage and Political Accountability." *Journal of Political Economy* 118 (2): 355-408.

[ER] Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson, and Chad Murphy. 2012. "Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure." *Journal of Politics*. 74(1): 174-86.

## **Part II: Interactions: Institutions and the Mass Public**

### **A. Separation of Powers**

March 22

(1) Normative issues in SOP and executive appointments

Readings:

[ER] *Federalist Papers* #27, 40, 51, 69.

[ER] David Lewis. 2012. "The Contemporary Presidency: The Personnel Process in the Modern Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 42(3): 577-596.

March 24

(2) Gridlock v. cooperation: Veto bargaining, cooperation

Readings:

[ER] Sarah Binder. 1999. "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96." *APSR*. 93(3): 519-533.

[ER] Keith Krehbiel. 1996.. "Institutional and Partisan Sources of Gridlock: A Theory of Divided and Unified Government." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. 8(1): 7-40.

## **B. Federalism**

March 29

(1) Review of division of powers between states and federal government and states as laboratories of democracy

Readings:

[ER] *Federalist Paper #17*

Karch. *Democratic Laboratories: Policy Diffusion Among the American States*. Chapters 1-3.

March 31

(2) Interstate relations: Cooperation and conflict among states, race to the bottom, federal "tournaments"

Readings: Karch. *Democratic Laboratories: Policy Diffusion Among the American States*. Chapters 4-5.

April 5

(3) Federalism and Elections

Readings:

[ER] Brown, Adam R. 2010. "Are Governors Responsible for the State Economy? Partisanship, Blame, and Divided Federalism." *Journal of Politics*. 72(3): 605-615.

[ER] Erikson, Robert S., Olle Folke, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2015. "A Gubernatorial Helping Hand? How Governors Affect Presidential Elections."

*Journal of Politics*. 77(2): 491-504.

April 7

## **NO CLASS: Draft of Literature Review**

### **Part III: Evaluation of Governance and Policy Making**

#### **A. Representation**

April 12

(1) Districting and Descriptive v. Substantive Representation

Readings:

[ER] Cameron, Charles, David Epstein, and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1996. "Do Majority Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?" *American Political Science Review*. 794-812.

[ER] Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" *Journal of Politics*. 628-657.

April 14

(2) *Evaluation of representation II: Elections, shocks, media and information*

Readings: Larry Bartels. *Unequal Democracy*.

April 19

(3) *Evaluation of representation*

Readings:

Larry Bartels. *Unequal Democracy*. Chapter 5-7

[ER] Kuziemko, Ilyana, Michael I. Norton, Emmanuel Saez, and Stefanie Stantcheva. 2015. "How Elastic Are Preferences for Redistribution? Evidence from Randomized Survey



Experiments." *American Economic Review*. 1478-1508.

April 21

**Research Paper Due-Class Presentations**

May 3

**FINAL EXAM 2-5PM**