

**Oxford College of Emory University
Political Science 100: National Politics**

**Fall 2008
Seney 209
2:30-3:45 TU & TH
Prerequisite: POLS 101**

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Course Overview

When students take this course, they often think they will understand it easily and do well as a result. This is a very understandable assumption since many students who take this course like politics and think we will be talking a lot about voting and elections.

In fact, we do talk about voting and elections for several class periods. Most of the course, however, is dedicated to the theoretical basis of the American political system (her constitution, her cultural milieu, her short history, and the like) and the connection between that basis and the eventual political system into which she has evolved. Certainly elections are a part of that connection, but we'll be talking about much, much more.

We begin the course with a close examination of the American political system's foundation and the underlying values that created and help to maintain our system. We then examine the connections between that foundation and the processes which link it to the institutions that produce public policy. We then turn our attention to the complicated policymaking process and examine a few policies to assess how they originated, where they are headed, and why.

Since this is election season and we are a smaller group, I have decided to give an assignment in which students will be assigned a particular House or Senate race and asked to research the race and predict a winner based on a careful empirical assessment of the factors which should help predict the outcome and present their finding to the class.

A significant and last point I will make about this course and all of my courses: I STRICTLY ENFORCE THE OXFORD HONOR CODE. If you are in doubt about citations in your project, ASK; if you think you are witnessing violations of the honor code, report it. I certainly will report violations. The code can be accessed at:

http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/academics/academic_success/honor_code.dot

Readings

- * Wilson and Dilulio, Jr., *American Government*, 11th Edition
- * Additional Readings Given by the Professor
- * *New York Times* Dailey National Pages (on line acceptable)

Grades

- **3 Non-Cumulative Exams (25% of your grade each)**

Exam Dates

Exam 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Exam 2: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Exam 3: FRIDAY DECEMBER 12 (2-4 PM)

- **Research Project and Paper (25% of your Grade)**

Using approved sources, you will be assigned to cover and evaluate a competitive Congressional House or Senate race by me in class **SEPTEMBER 4TH**.

You will be presenting your evaluative research paper in class on either **OCTOBER 28 OR OCTOBER 30** (depending on a random assignment).

Executing the Project:

You must set up an appointment at the Oxford library to get help with the project so you can utilize the myriad research capacities availed to you through the Oxford College and Emory University Library that will be essential in completing this project. You will need to set an appointment to see me about the race as well.

Through the library and my guidance, you will be able to evaluate the race closely. You will 'write a 10-12 page research paper that assesses the candidates positions, the demography of their 'district' or 'state,' the kinds of advertising the candidates are and have used, the amount of money they have raised, the kinds of groups and volunteers who support their campaigns, and the overall 'ground game' they have in place (what's their turn out strategy? How are they reaching voters, both undecided and decided? etc). You will be gathering all the evidence you can examine and write up in support of a prediction you will make based on empirical assessment of the race.

You will present a summary of your findings and your predictions about the race to the class before election day (again either OCTOBER 28 OR 30).

Topics and Assigned Reading

I. The American System: Foundation, Culture, and Structure

August 28	Introduction Defining Politics, Power, and Legitimacy, and Democracy (CHAPTER 1 WILSON)
September 2	Democratic Theory and Political Change; Introduction to Political Culture. (CHAPTERS 1 & 4 WILSON)
September 4	American Political Culture (CHAPTER 4 WILSON)
September 9	Introduction to the US Constitution (CHAPTER 2 WILSON)
September 11	U.S. Constitution continued (CHAPTER 2 WILSON)
September 16	Federalism (CHAPTER 3 WILSON)
September 18	Federalism continued (CHAPTER 3 WILSON)
September 23	EXAM 1

II. Linking Processes: From Foundations to Institutions (How “we” communicate with our government)

September 25	Introduction to Public Opinion (CHAPTER 7 WILSON)
September 30	Public Opinion Continued (CHAPTER 7 WILSON)
October 2	Political Participation (CHAPTER 8 WILSON & HANDOUT)

October 7	Participation Continued (CHAPTER 8 WILSON & HANDOUT)
October 9	Political Parties (CHAPTER 9 WILSON & HANDOUT)
October 14	OFF MID-SEMESTER BREAK
October 16	Political Parties continued (CHAPTER 9 WILSON)
October 21	Elections and Campaigns (CHAPTER 10 WILSON & HANDOUT)
October 23	Elections and Campaigns continued (CHAPTER 10 WILSON & HANDOUT)
October 28	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
October 30	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
November 4	Election Day US Interest Groups (CHAPTER 11 WILSON)
November 6	Interest Groups continued (CHAPTER 11 WILSON)
November 11	EXAM 2

III. Institutions and Policy-Making

November 13	Congress (CHAPTER 13 WILSON)
November 18	Congress continued (CHAPTER 13 WILSON)
November 20	The Presidency (CHAPTER 14 WILSON)

November 25	Bureaucracy (CHAPTER 15 WILSON)
November 27	OFF TG BREAK
December 2	Bureaucracy and Policymaking (CHAPTERS 15 & 17 WILSON)
December 4	Bureaucracy and Policymaking (CHAPTERS 15 & 17 WILSON)
December 9	Policy Making : The Environment (CHAPTER 17 & 21)
December 12	EXAM 3 (2-4 PM)