

Oxford College of Emory University

POLS 100: National Politics

Fall 2007
Library Study Room #2
4:00-5:15 TU & TH
Prerequisite: POLS 101

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Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of politics in the American system and context. To begin, we focus on the *fundamental* principles underlying American politics and her culture. As such, we examine the derivation of the term *politics* as applied to our system to understand better why power is distributed the way it is. Part of that distribution is founded in her Constitutional framework explicitly and some is not. A deeper exploration of this framework leads us to the causes of political stability and instability through a closer examination of public opinion, political participation, and campaigns and elections. We spend the remainder of the course assessing political institutions and processes from a *policymaking perspective*; we view policy as a malleable process, a process having changed with our culture and institutional interactions. We spend some time examining why some policy remains stagnate and why some policy shifts. A case study of U.S. environmental policy concludes this course to thread together our understanding of American culture, opinion, participation, institutions and political change. .

Text

Wilson and Dilulio, Jr., *American Government* ,10th Edition

Grades

A student's grade is determined by his/her performance on 3 in-class NONCUMULATIVE exams. Each exam is worth 100 points. These exams are designed to assess both objective and subjective understanding of in-class lectures and reading assignments. **Students are responsible for all assigned readings whether or not those readings are covered in the lectures.** Reading assignments should be completed **before** class lectures. Changes in assigned reading will be announced by me if deviations from the course outline become necessary.

If you have questions, ask. I cannot address questions or concerns I am not aware of! I check my email several times daily. I am usually in my office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays except during lectures. I will gladly schedule individual meetings with students.

Course Outline

PART I: The American System

August 30

Introduction

Politics: What we mean by the term?
Why should we care?
Power, politics and legitimacy
Democracy: US Application (pp.1-12)

September 4

Democratic Theory

Defining Political Power, Distribution of Power,
and Political Change (pp. 1-16)

September 6

American Political Culture

Attitudinal Foundations of American Politics
Defining Political Culture in general and in the
American Context (pp. 75-97)

September 11

Introduction to the U.S. Constitution.

Creation, Debates, Compromises and
Intentions (pp. 16-30)

September 13

Constitutional Framework

Individual Liberty v. Democracy
Constitutional Guarantees and Equality
Constitutional Reform (pp. 30-45)

September 18

Federalism

Debate and Meaning
Nullification, Dual Federalism and
State Sovereignty
Federal-State Relations & State rivalry (pp. 48-
66)

September 20

Federalism Continued

Federal Aid = Federal Control?
Devolution: Block Grants...what is driving
devolution?
Congress and Federalism (pp. 66-75)

September 25

Exam I

PART II: Opinions, Interests and Organizations

September 27	Public Opinion Introduced Political Socialization (pp. 153- 162)
October 2	Public Opinion Continued Cleavages Political Ideology (measurement and meaning) Political Elites and Opinion Leaders (pp. 162-176)
October 4	Understanding Political Participation (pp. 177-197)
October 9	OFF MIDSEMESTER BREAK
October 11	The American Party System (pp. 197- 229)
October 16	Elections and Campaigns Presidential v. Congressional Primary v. General (pp. 230-244)
October 18	Money and Elections What decides the elections and what about policy? (pp. 244-263)
October 23	Interest Groups Proliferation, Growth, Categorization Social Movements (pp. 264-276)
October 25	Interest Groups Concluded (pp. 276-290)
October 30	Exam II

PART III: Political Institutions and Public Policy

November 1	Congress Introduced Members, Constituents, Representation, Relationships and Ideology (pp. 315-341)
November 6	Congress Continued: Organization, Committees Enacting Legislation and Gridlock Polarization and Leadership The Creation of law (pp. 341-366)
November 8	The American Presidency Evolution of the Office Electoral College (pp. 367-377)
November 13	Powers of the President Cabinet and Staff Character and Persuasion and Veto Powers Transitions (pp. 379-408)
November 15	Bureaucracy Introduced Bureaucratic Growth (pp. 409- 427)
November 20	Bureaucracies Continued: Bureaucratic Procedure Agency Alliance Oversight and Reform (pp. 427-436)
November 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK OFF
November 27	The Judiciary Structure of Federal Courts Jurisdiction Getting to Court The Supreme Court in Action The Power of Federal Courts Checks on Power (pp. 446-467)

November 29	Public Policymaking Process Introduced Agenda Setting and Decision-Making (pp. 468-478)
December 4	Policymaking Continued Theories of Policy Making Explored (pp. 468-490)
December 6	Environmental Policy (additional handouts/materials) (pp. 559-575)
December 11	Environmental Policy (pp. 559-575)
December 13	Exam III (9-12)