

**PSCI 111: Introduction to American Politics**  
**Fall 2019**

Location: 502 Holland Hall  
Time: Section A MWF 10:45am-11:40am  
Section B MWF 11:50am-12:45pm

Professor: Avram Muñoz  
munoz5@stolaf.edu

Office: 422 Holland Hall  
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 8am-10am; or by appointment

**Course Overview**

This course is designed to introduce students to the various aspects of American government and politics, including ideals—such as equality and liberty—that serve as the foundation for American politics and society. This course also introduces students to social scientific inquiry, pushing them to critically assess the extent to which American politics has, or has not, lived up to the ideals espoused by the nation’s founders. In this sense, the course is meant to help students understand what liberal education is, and prepare them to continue to grapple with core political issues such as inequality and power throughout the rest of their academic careers and their own lives.

We will explore topics including the founding of the nation and the political ideals held close by the founders, ultimately codified in the Constitution. We will also discuss the nature of core American political institutions, as well as aspects of mass politics and political behavior. Throughout all these discussions, particular attention will be given to the role of marginalized groups and their experiences within the American political system, all the while considering what these groups’ experiences say about the nature of American democracy.

By the end of the semester, students should have a basic understanding of the structure and function of American government and the nature of politics within institutions and the mass public. Students will also be able to critically reflect on how well American politics as a whole lives up to the ideals espoused in the Constitution and provides for all citizens regardless of racial, sexual, gender, or class differences.

**Assignments & Grading**

Your grade in the course comes from three response papers, two exams, and in-class participation. You cannot pass the course if you do not complete and submit all assigned work over the course of the semester. More detailed information on the papers will be provided in class.

- Paper #1 (Critical Response) – 5 points
- Paper #2 (Dialogue) – 10 points
- Paper #3 (Campaign Strategy) – 10 points
- Participation – 10 points
- Midterm Exam – 30 points
- Final Exam – 35 points

Participation will be based on class attendance, engaging in class activities, and addressing questions about the readings and course content.

### **Grading Scale**

100-93 A	76-73 C
92-90 A-	72-70 C-
89-87 B+	69-67 D+
86-83 B	66-63 D-
82-80 B-	62-60 D-
79-77 C+	Below 60 F

### **Expectations**

You are expected to attend every class, and have completed the readings for the day before class starts. You are expected to have a good working comprehension of every reading. If you don't understand something from the readings or from class, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible. I am more than happy to spend extra time answering questions and talking about American politics!

I reserve the right to take attendance, and class attendance should be considered mandatory. Missed class will only be "excused" in the case of health or family emergencies, or official university commitments. If you should miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes (or the like) from a classmate. While in class, you are expected to be an active participant. Cell phone use is strictly prohibited. Texting (and the like) in class is disruptive to the entire class and inhibits your ability to participate in the discussion. Any cell phone use will result in an automatic deduction in the class participation grade, no exceptions. Laptops are permitted for note-taking only.

Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. Late assignments will be penalized one (1) point for each day beyond the due date. The only exceptions to this policy are health and family-related emergencies.

### **Course Schedule**

\*All readings will be made available on Moodle, unless otherwise noted.

#### **Week 1: Politics & Political Science**

- September 6
  - o No assigned readings

#### **Week 2: Foundations I – Revolution, Confederation, and Democracy**

- September 9
  - o Declaration of Independence
  - o Articles of Confederation
  - o Federalist Paper 15
- September 11
  - o Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book 1 Chapter 6

- U.S. Constitution
- September 13
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Democratic Primary Debate (Thursday night)
  - Federalist Papers 10 and 51

### Week 3: Foundations II – Representative Government

- September 16
  - Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* - Volume 1: Part 1, Chapter 4; Part 2, Chapters 1 & 6
  - Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* – Book 3 Chapter 15
- September 18
  - Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* – Volume 1, Part 2, Chapter 10 (Pp. 370-376, 398-426)
  - Khalil Gibran Muhammad. 2018. “Were the Founders Against Slavery All Along?” *New York Times* book review - <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/books/review/sean-wilentz-no-property-in-man.html>
- September 20
  - Rogers M. Smith. 1993. “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America.” *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 549-566.

### Week 4: Foundations III – Problems in Representative Democracy

- September 23
  - Robert Dahl. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics* – pp. 108-115, 322-341
- September 25
  - Jane Mansbridge. 1999. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes’.” *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 628-657.
- September 27
  - **\*\*\*Paper #1 (Critical Response) DUE at beginning of class**
  - C. Wright Mills. 1956. *The Power Elite* – pp. 3-13 & 269-283.
  - Martin Gilens. 2012. *Affluence and Influence* – Chapter 8

### Week 5: Foundations IV - Federalism

- September 30
  - Federalist Paper 45
  - Andrew Karch. 2016. “Democratic Laboratories”, in *Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, eds. Ann G. Serow and Everett C. Ladd.
- October 2
  - Charles Bullock III, Charles Lamb, and Eric Wilk. 2018. “Cooperative Federalism and Fair Housing Enforcement.” *Social Science Quarterly* 99(2): 728-743.
  - Michael Dorf, “Should Federalism Play a Role in the Interpretation of Civil Rights Laws?” - <https://verdict.justia.com/2017/03/08/federalism-play-role-interpretation-civil-rights-laws>
- October 4
  - Vikram David Amar. 2019. “Why Challenges to California’s Tax-Return-Disclosure Law Should Fail (Putting Aside Whether They Will).” - <https://verdict.justia.com/2019/08/12/why-challenges-to-californias-tax-return-disclosure-law-should-fail-putting-aside-whether-they-will>

- Greg Goelzhauser & David M. Konisky. 2019. “The State of American Federalism 2018-2019: Litigation, Partisan Polarization, and the Administrative Presidency.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 49(3): 379-406.

### **Week 6: Institutions I – Congress**

- October 7
  - Constitution, Article I
  - David Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection* – pp. 13-17 & 49-77
- October 9
  - David Rohde. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* – Chapter 1
  - James Curry. 2015. *Legislating in the Dark* – Chapter 2
- October 11
  - \*Congress Simulation\*
  - Mary Hawkesworth, “Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions”, *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 529-550

### **Week 7: Institutions II – The Executive**

- October 14 – NO CLASS (Fall Break)
- October 16
  - Constitution, Article II
  - Richard Neustadt. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* – Chapters 1 & 3
- October 18
  - Julia Azari. 2014. *Delivering the People’s Message: The Changing Politics of the Presidential Mandate* – Introduction (ebook available through the library)
  - Julia Azari. “Every president claims to have a mandate. Does Trump actually have one?” *Vox*, <http://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2016/11/17/13658374/trump-mandate-history-presidential-politics>
  - Jack Goldsmith. “Will Donald Trump Destroy the Presidency?” *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/will-donald-trump-destroy-the-presidency/537921/>

### **Week 8: Institutions III – The Judiciary; Midterm Exam**

- October 21
  - Constitution, Article III
  - *Marbury v. Madison*
  - *Brown v. Board of Education*
- October 23 – **Midterm Review Session**
- October 25 – **Midterm Exam (in class)**

### **Week 9: Civil Rights**

- October 28
  - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”
  - Michelle Alexander. 2010. *The New Jim Crow* – Chapter 1
- October 30
  - Eric Schickler. 2016. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965*, Chapter 4.
  - Adam Liptak, “Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part of Voting Rights Act”, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/supreme-court-ruling.html>

- November 1
  - o *Ricci v. DeStefano*
  - o David Montejano. 2010. *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981*, Chapter 1

### **Week 10: Civil Liberties**

- November 4
  - o *Town of Greece v. Galloway*
  - o *Snyder v. Phelps*
- November 6
  - o *Morse v. Frederick*
  - o *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association*
- November 8
  - o Amy Lerman & Vesla Weaver. 2014. *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*, Chapter 1

### **Week 11: Behavior & Mass Politics I – Political Parties**

- November 11
  - o Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* – Chapter 2
  - o John H. Aldrich. 2011. *Why Parties? A Second Look* – Chapter 1
- November 13
  - o Eric Schickler. 2016. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965*, Chapter 10
- November 15
  - o **\*\*\*Paper #2 (Dialogue) DUE at beginning of class**
  - o Samara Klar. 2018. “When Common Identities Decrease Trust: An Experimental Study of Partisan Women.” *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 610-622.

### **Week 12: Behavior & Mass Politics II – Public Opinion**

- November 18
  - o V.O. Key. *Public Opinion and American Democracy* – Introduction.
  - o Donald Kinder & Cindy Kam. 2009. *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion* – Chapter 2
- November 20
  - o Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn. 2013. *The Politics of Belonging: Race, Public Opinion, and Immigration* – Chapters 1 & 5.
- November 22
  - o Amy Steinbugler, Julie Press, and Janice Johnson Dias. 2006. “Gender, Race, and Affirmative Action: Operationalizing Intersectionality in Survey Research.” *Gender & Society* 20(6): 805-825.

### **Week 13: Behavior & Mass Politics III – Participation, Voting, Campaigns & Elections**

- November 25
  - o Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, & Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. “Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation.” *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271-294.
- November 27 – NO CLASS
- November 29 – NO CLASS

## **Week 14: Behavior & Mass Politics III – Participation, Voting, Campaigns & Elections**

- December 2
  - o Tali Mendelberg. 2001. *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality* – Chapter 1
  - o Jennifer L. Lawless & Richard L. Fox. 2012. “Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics.” Women & Politics Institute, American University.
- December 4
  - o Tasha Philpot. 2018. “Race, Gender, and the 2016 Presidential Election.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 51(4): 755-761.
  - o John Sides, Michael Tesler, & Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Election and the Battle for the Meaning of America* – pp. 165-179
- December 6
  - o **\*\*\*Paper #3 (Campaign Strategy) DUE at beginning of class**
  - o Zoltan Hajnal, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson. 2017. “Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes.” *The Journal of Politics* 79(2): 363-379.

## **Week 15: Interest Groups and Social Movements**

- December 9
  - o Dara Z. Strolovitch. 2007. *Affirmative Advocacy* – Introduction; Chapter 3 (pp. 46-53, 66-75); Chapter 7 (pp. 206-210, 223-227, 238-239)
- December 11
  - o Chloe Thurston. “Black Lives Matter, American Political Development, and the Politics of Visibility.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6(1): 162-170.
  - o Marcela García-Castañón. 2018. “Building from Within: Family and the Political Membership of Immigrants.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 51(2): 288-292.
  - o David Montejano. 2010. *Quixote’s Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* – Chapter 11

**FINAL EXAM (Section A) – Friday December 13, 9am-11am**

**FINAL EXAM (Section B) – Tuesday December 17, 2pm-4pm**

### **Accommodations**

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students in my class. If you have already registered with Disability and Access (DAC) and have your letter of accommodations, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss, plan, and implement your accommodations in the course. If you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact Disability and Access staff at 507-786-3288 or by visiting [wp.stolaf.edu/academic-support/dac](http://wp.stolaf.edu/academic-support/dac).

### **Mental Health**

I greatly value your experience in this class, and it is my duty to facilitate a safe, caring, and productive learning environment. I recognize that you may experience a range of emotional, physical, and/or psychological issues, both in and out of the classroom, that may distract you from your learning. If you are experiencing such issues, please do not hesitate to come see me—I am here to listen. We can also discuss what further resources might be available to you.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, the unacknowledged appropriation of another person's words or ideas, is a serious academic offense. It is imperative that you hand in work that is your own, and that cites or gives credit to others whenever you draw from their work. Please see St. Olaf's statements on academic integrity and plagiarism at: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/thebook/academic/integrity/>. See also the description of St. Olaf's honor system at: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/honorcouncil/>.

**Preferred Gender Pronoun**

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Statement of Inclusivity**

In keeping with St. Olaf College's mission statement, this class strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all citizens in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

**St. Olaf Pride Statement**

As an Ole, I will practice: PASSION for learning and pursuit of vocation; RESPECT for the worth and dignity of all people; INTEGRITY at all times, in all circumstances; DEDICATION to a life of service; and ENGAGEMENT with my community and the world.