

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
POLS W1201 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS
Prof. Judith Russell
Spring 2012 MW 11:00-12:15

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Office hours: M/TU/WED 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm 729 IAB

TAs: David O'Connell (djo2115), Camille Redding (car2192), Natasha Hwangpo (nsh2113)

This course is a critical introduction to American political institutions and behavior. Structurally the American system finds form in the Madisonian Model, the method of government established by the Framers and based on separation of powers, checks and balances, and overlapping centers of political power. Our system seeks to balance elite and mass interests, participation, and control. Tension and contradiction have been threaded throughout the American system since its inception: the tension between liberty and equality, the contradiction between our political ideals and our institutions, and the ambiguity in the very concept of democracy itself. Over the semester we will test the continued viability of the Madisonian Model as we consider our institutional framework, the values it embodies, and its performance. In our class attention is given to: constitutional theory and principles, the constitutional system, political culture, political institutions (the presidency, congress, the judiciary, the bureaucracy), public policy (civil rights and civil liberties, social welfare policy, economic policy, employment policy) consent and political participation (public opinion, mass media, elections and voting, parties, groups and interests) and political corruption.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend class regularly and participate. Your professor is a fanatic about attendance. The record bears this out. You are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. Your attendance and participation will be considered in your final grade for the course. An attendance sheet circulates in this class; responsibility for signing it is yours. It is expected that you will complete assigned readings before class and section meetings so that your contributions will be informed and relevant.

Students must register for and attend a discussion section. You cannot take this course unless you are registered in a section.

2. Complete two examinations. A **midterm** examination will be given in class on March **7th**. There is no alternative date for the midterm. A **final examination** will be given during exam week. The official final exam date is available after Midterm; as of now the *tentative* date scheduled for this class's final exam is **May 7th**. Do not make travel arrangements that conflict with the final exam date; there are no alternative final exam options for this class.

3. Complete the research paper. An 8-10 page analytical research paper is required. You are to hand in a hard copy of your paper to your TA in class **April 25th**; do not email your papers, or proposals, to your TAs or to Professor Russell. Topics will be discussed in class and discussion sections and should reflect the content of the course as well as an interest of yours. I expect you to identify a paper topic and submit a preliminary thesis statement and bibliography by **March 19 in a two-page overview of your paper** containing a clear thesis statement and your argument in brief. You must consult at least once with me and/or your TA about your research interests and intentions, and you are encouraged to meet with us more frequently as your research and writing is in process. Your bibliography should be *drawn primarily from scholarly books, journals, articles and chapters, not journalistic or non academic online resources*. Late papers will receive a grade penalty of 5 points a day.

GRADING Your course grade is determined as follows: 30% for the midterm exam, 30% for the final exam, and 30 % for the paper. Your participation in discussion sessions and class will affect your grade; they account for 10% of it.

READINGS All readings are required and on reserve at the Butler Library Reserve Room and through E-Reserves.

The books below are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore:

Kernell, Jacobson & Kousser, *The Logic of American Politics* 5th edition (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2012)

Kernell and Smith, *Principles and Practice of American Politics* 4th edition (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2010)

Robert Goldwin and William Schambra, Eds., *How Democratic is the Constitution?* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1980)

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (any edition)

Samuel Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983)

Judith Russell, *Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)

Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America* (any edition)

The articles and chapters below are on reserve in Butler Library:

James Fallows “He was Slick, Thank God “in *The Atlantic Monthly* February, 2001

James Fallows “Why We Hate the Media,” in *Breaking the News/How the Media Undermine American Democracy*, by James Fallows

Brian J. Glenn, “Conservatives and American Political Development” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 125 no. 4 (2010-11)

Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics”

Charles Lindblom, “The Science of Muddling Through” *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959) 79-88

Richard M. Pious, *The American Presidency*: Ch. 1 “The Creation of the Presidency” and Ch. 2 “Prerogative Powers”

Robert Putnam, “Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec 1995), pp. 664-683

Topics and Readings

January 18 **Introduction to the course**

Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” (reserve)

I. Constitutional Theory and General Principles of American Government

January 23 **The Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and the Declaration of Independence**

Kernell, Jacobson & Kousser *The Logic of American Politics* Chs 1, 2 (KJK Logic)

Kernell and Smith *Principles and Practice of American Politics* (K&S Principles)

Ch. 1: Olson (1-1) Hardin (1-2) Putnam (1-3)

January 25 **The Federalist Papers**

Madison, Hamilton and Jay *The Federalist Papers* Nos.10, 51, 47, 49, 58

January 30 **How Democratic is the Constitution?**

Goldwin and Shambra *How Democratic is the Constitution* Chs. 1,3,4,6

February 1 **Federalism**

KJK Logic Ch. 3

K&S Principles Ch. 2: Roche (2-1) Brutus (2-2)

K&S Principles Ch. 3 Kettl (3-2) Rauch (3-3)

II. American Political Culture

February 6 **Political Culture in America**

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* Vols. I and II (Vintage Edition)
VOL I Author's Intro (pg. 3-16), Chs. III (pg. 46-54), IV (pg. 55-58), VIII (pg. 165 -179),
Chs XIV (pg. 237-253), XV (pg. 254-270), XVII (pg. 288-330); XVIII (pg. 331-434). VOL
II Second Book: Chs I-IX (pg. 94-127). Third Book: Chs III (pg. 171-174), V (pg. 177-185),
XIII (pg. 215-216), XIV (pg. 217-220), XVIII (pg. 230-242), XXI (pg. 251-263). Fourth
Book: Chs I-VIII (pg. 287-334).

Robert Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec 1995), pp. 664-683.

February 8 **Democratic Tensions in America: Liberty/Equality**

Samuel Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* Chs. 1,2,3,5,6,8

K&S Principles Fiorina (10-4)

February 13, 15 **Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

KJK Logic Ch. 4

K&S Principles Ch.4: Lee (4-1) Glazer (4-2)

KJK Logic Ch. 5

K&S *Principles* Ch.5: Sunstein (5-1) *Miranda v. Arizona* (5-2) *Roe v. Wade* (5-3)
Rosenberg (5-4) Wilcox (5-5)

III. Political Institutions

Feb 20, 22, 27 **Congress**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 6

K&S *Principles* Ch. 6: Smith (6-1) Pearson (6-2) Aldrich (6-3)

Feb. 29, March 5 **The Presidency**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 7

K& S *Principles* Ch. 7: Neustadt (7-1) Lizza (7-2) Kernell (7-3) Baum (7-4)

Richard M. Pious, *The American Presidency*, Chs. 1 & 2.

March 7 **INCLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

March 12—16 **SPRING BREAK: Have fun!**

March 19, 21 **The Judiciary**

Paper proposals due in class March 19

KJK *Logic* Ch.9

K&S *Principles* Ch. 9: Scalia (9-1) Breyer (9-2), Hamilton (9-3) Binder (9-4) Carp (9-5)

March 26 **The Bureaucracy**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 8

K&S *Principles* Ch. 8: Moe (8-1) Lewis (8-3)

IV. Politics and Political Influence

Mar. 28, Apr. 2 **Elections, Political Parties, Voting, Finance**

KJK *Logic* Chs 10, 11, 12

K&S *Principles* Ch. 10: Asher (10-1) Stimson (10-2)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 11: Popkin (11-1) Jacobson (11-2) West (11-3) Abramowitz (11-4)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 12: Aldrich (12-1) Bartels (12-2) Fiorina (12-3)

K&S *Principles* Ch 14: The New Washington Press Corps (14-2) Althaus (14-3)

“Why We Hate the Media,” in *Breaking the News/How the Media Undermine American Democracy*, by James Fallows

April 4, 9 **Groups, Interests and Influence**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 13

K&S *Principles* Ch. 13: Schattschneider (13-1) Hall (13-3)

Take another look at Federalist No 10

V. The National Agenda: Public Policy in the US

Please note: Your texts do not have sections on public policy. The substantial information in this segment on public policy will be drawn from class lectures and additional readings on topics which will be assigned where necessary as we approach this section. You will be responsible for this material, which will be included on your final examination.

April 11 **Public Policy and Process: Incrementalism and Agenda Setting**

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88

John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (handout TBA)

April 16 **The Welfare State and Social Policy**

Brian J. Glenn, "Conservatives and American Political Development" *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 125 no. 4 (2010-11).

April 18 **Employment Policy**

JRussell, *Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty*

April 23, 25 **Economic Policy**

Research papers due in class April 25. 5 points a day for late papers

James Fallows "He was Slick, Thank God" in *The Atlantic Monthly* February, 2001

April 30 **Last Class: The Crisis of American Democracy and the Madisonian Model**

Pols w 1201: introduction to american politics barnard college | department of political science. Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:10pm to 2:25pm Milbank 405. Professor Scott Minkoff sminkoff@barnard.edu Office: Lehman 420. Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:45pm to 4:15pm (and by appointment). COURSE OVERVIEW.Â Thoughtfully apply their acquired understanding of the American political system to contemporary questions about political issues in writing and in discussion. REQUIRED BOOK. The course has one required book.