

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
POLS W1201 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS
Prof. Judith Russell
Spring 2013 MW 11:40 am--12:55 pm

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Office hours: M/TU/WED 1 pm to 4:30 pm 728 IAB

TAs: Amy Semet (aes2180), Lauren Roth (lre2104), Hadas Aron (ha2284)

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, which are encouraged, 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 13th**. 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 **Friday May 10th from 9am to 12 noon**. 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 **May 1st**; 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 27 in a two-page overview of your paper** containing a clear thesis statement, your argument in brief, and a proposed bibliography. 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 are in process.

Please note the following: Your paper is to be a scholarly analytical research paper which contains a firm thesis or research question and employs systematic argument, evidence, and analysis in support of your thesis. You are not writing an opinion piece and you are not blogging. You are expected to use the Chicago/Turabian or MLA format for footnotes, or endnotes, and bibliography. Your bibliography

should be drawn primarily from scholarly books, journals, articles and chapters, not journalistic or non academic online resources. Students should read Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article* (Uni. of Chicago Press). 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* 5th edition (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2013)

Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article* (Chicago: Uni. of Chicago Press, 2007)

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)

Articles and chapters below are on reserve in Butler Library and some are on class files site:

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

A.O. Hirschman, "The Welfare State in Trouble: Systemic Crisis or Growing Pains?" in *The American Economic Review*, Vol 70, No 2, 1980

Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics"

John W. Kingdon, "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies" Ch. 4/15 in Shafritz, Layne, and Borick, Eds., *Classics of Public Policy* (New York: Pearson, 2005)

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 23 **Introduction to the course**

Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics"

I. Constitutional Theory and General Principles of American Government

January 28 **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)

January 30 **The Federalist Papers**

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

February 4 **How Democratic is the Constitution?**

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

February 6 **Federalism**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 3

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

K&S *Principles* Ch. 3 Madison (3-1) Kettl (3-2) Rauch (3-3) Sargent (3-4)

II. American Political Culture

February 11 **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 13 **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 (10-3)

February 18, 20 **Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 4

K&S *Principles* Ch.4:Ford (4-1) Prewitt (4-2)

KJK *Logic* Ch. 5

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

III. Political Institutions

Feb 25, 27, Mar 4 **Congress**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 6

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

March 6, 11 **The Presidency**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 7

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

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

March 13 ***IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION***

March 18—22 ***SPRING BREAK: Have fun!***

March 25, 27 **The Judiciary**

Paper proposals due in class March 27

KJK *Logic* Ch.9

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

April 1 **The Bureaucracy**

KJK *Logic* Ch. 8

K&S *Principles* Ch. 8: Moe (8-1) Singer (8-2) Lewis (8-3) Mc Cubbins et al (8-4)

IV. Politics and Political Influence

Apr. 3, 8 **Elections, Political Parties, Voting, Finance**

KJK *Logic* Chs 10, 11, 12

K&S *Principles* Ch. 10: Asher (10-1) Stimson (10-2) Putnam & Campbell (10-5)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 11: Popkin (11-1) Jacobson (11-2) West (11-3) Blumenthal (11-5)

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

K&S *Principles* Ch 14: Hamilton (14-1) Purcell et al (14-3)

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

April 10, 15 **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 these materials

April 17 **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* in Shafritz, et al, Eds. *Classics of Public Policy*, Ch. 4/15

April 22 **The Welfare State and Social Policy**

April 24 **Employment Policy**

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

April 29, May 1 **Economic Policy**

Research papers due in class May 1st. 5 points a day for late papers

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

May 6 **Last Class: The Crisis of American Democracy and the Madisonian Model**

A.O Hirschman, "The Welfare State in Trouble: Systemic Crisis or Growing Pains?" in *The American Economic Review*, Vol 70, No 2, 1980