

POLS 12 Introduction to American Politics

Winter 2022

MW 9:30-10:45

1104 Harold Frank Hall

Instructor: Prof. Clayton Nall, Department of Political Science, nall@ucsb.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4 pm, Wednesday 11-1 pm

Prof. Nall's Zoom Link (For Online Lectures and Office Hours): <https://bit.ly/3EvO9Bc>

Teaching Assistants:

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Important Forms (please use these in lieu of emails to Prof. Nall or the TAs)

Absence Reporting Form: <https://forms.gle/JLbW426SbX2TFdGA8>

Class Overview

This is an introductory course in American national politics focusing on how American citizens and institutions interact in the formation of public policy. We will consider how theory can be used to explain politics and political outcomes, and understand the fundamental dilemmas that make politics so challenging. We will address how Americans attempt to “solve” these collective problems by constantly challenging and changing institutions. As we will see, the best-laid plans of institutional designers—from the authors of the Constitution to modern bureaucrats—frequently fail to deliver desired outcomes. And institutions are frequently put to use by political activists for reasons that were completely unintended by the institutions’ founders. We will also learn about Americans’ political attitudes and behaviors and how these interact with political institutions.

Course work will include two components. The first is extensive reading and critical writing, with the goal of developing skills in social science analysis. Assigned response papers that will be graded on a hybrid mix of credit/non-credit and graded basis, so that you simultaneously get lots of low-stakes practice, but will be rewarded for the effort that you put into the low-stakes writing assignments (60% total). The remainder of class assessment will be through a midterm and final exam (25% total) and participation in assigned group projects and sections (15% total).

Learning Goals

- Master foundational knowledge on the origins, development, and current knowledge about American political institutions and political behavior.
- Learn to study institutions by considering the interests of the players involved, how those interests operate within the incentives provided by institutions, and the outcomes that result.
- Begin to develop formal, analytical writing skills for the social sciences.
- Develop awareness of how standard political science research tools, including simple formal models, public opinion survey research, ideal point estimation, and comparative case studies are used in the context of American politics.

Class Expectations

Mutual Respect: Class participants are asked to help create a constructive learning environment in the following ways:

- Please show respect for other students. This includes not interrupting or attacking them personally in class (and preferably not outside of class, either). Critically engage with their ideas and evidence and assume that they have benign intentions.
- Discussions should take place within a context of academic inquiry and the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences. Understand that not everyone shares the same rhetorical skills/habits when they talk about contentious issues.
- Please treat any personal information that your classmates share in confidence.

Academic Integrity: Students attending the University of California are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideals of academic integrity and to bear individual responsibility for their work. Any work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, will subject a person to University disciplinary action. Using or attempting to use materials, information, study aids, or commercial "research" services not authorized by the instructor of the course constitutes cheating. The Campus Regulations have the following to say about plagiarism: "Representing the words, ideas, or concepts of another person without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. Whenever another person's written work is utilized, whether it be a single phrase or longer, quotation marks must be used and sources cited. Paraphrasing another's work, i.e., borrowing the ideas or concepts and putting them into one's 'own' words, must also be acknowledged." In addition, submitting the same paper to two classes is also considered cheating because the work is not original for both classes. Any act of plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be rewarded with an automatic "F" and referral to the administration for further punishment (typically a two-quarter suspension for plagiarism). We will discuss these expectations in section and distribute materials presenting examples of plagiarism as well as examples of proper citation.

Use of Chat Rooms: I welcome students using online platforms such as Discord and other chat rooms to make connections outside of class and organize study sessions (especially in the COVID-19 era). However, please note that sharing of exam materials or unauthorized collaboration on individual class projects constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy.

Laptop and Tech Policy: Research shows that taking notes by hand (versus computer) results in better learning. Laptops permit "court reporter" transcription that doesn't force students to process and prioritize key information from the lecture. For this reason, the use of laptops in class generally will not be permitted. Please mute your smartphone and pocket it when you enter class.

Recording and Course Materials Policy:

Recording (audio or video) during classes and redistribution of course materials is not permitted without the instructor's permission.

Course Grading

- 3% Baseline survey and multiple-choice test (credit/no-credit)
- 35% Six Response Papers for Credit/Non-Credit
 - 500-750 words (Due each Saturday at 11:59 pm)
 - Respond to a specific question prompt posted on Gauchospace.
 - Complete 3 before the midterm, 3 after the midterm. You may submit/attempt up to 4 in each half of the class.
 - Graded on a credit/no-credit basis (100% vs. 0%) with minimal comment.
 - We will workshop early essay submissions in section and discuss them in lecture.
- 25% Letter grading the two response papers selected by you.
 - Due dates: February 12 (first half) and March 10 (second half).
 - No additional editing of your submitted journal entries is permitted before you submit for letter grading.
- 10% Midterm multiple-choice exam (February 23)
- 15% Final multiple-choice exam
- 12% Section attendance, participation, and peer support including weekly mini-projects.

Required Course Books:

Ken Kollman, *The American Political System*, 3rd ed. Norton. ISBN: 978-0393675283
[Shorthand: “Kollman”]

David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds., *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 8th ed. Norton. 978-0-393-28365-5
[Shorthand: ED]

These books are available new, used, or for rent at the UCSB bookstore, and they are available online. If you purchase new copies directly from the Norton website, you can package the two books and get the *Enduring Debate* reader for only \$10.

Class Schedule

The schedule and assigned readings are subject to change at Prof. Nall’s discretion. Short supplemental readings related to current events or class discussion may be assigned on short notice.

Monday, January 3, 2022 Introduction

Feynman, “Cargo Cult Science.” [Gauchospace]

Kollman, Ch. 1.

Bazelon, “Speaking Truth to Both the Right and the Left,” [Gauchospace]

Rogers M. Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz”, ED, pp. 3-13.

Elazar, “The Three Political Cultures,” ED, pp. 14-25

Debating the Issues: What Does It Mean to Be an American? ED, pp. 34-44.

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Baseline Survey and Knowledge Quiz

The Problem of Original Intent

Saturday, January 8, 2022

Response Question 1 Submission Deadline (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, January 10, 2022 The Constitution, Part I

Kollman, Ch. 2.

Kammen, “The Nature of American Constitutionalism,” ED, pp. 45-53.

Hamilton, *The Federalist*, No. 15, ED pp. 54-58.

Beard, “From *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*,” ED, pp. 59-64.

Debating the Issues: Should the Constitution Be Fundamentally Changed? ED, pp. 65-85.

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 The Constitution, Part II

[In-Class Simulation Style Exercise Related to the Constitution Ratification?]

Saturday, January 15, 2022

Response Question 2 Submission Deadline (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, January 17, 2022 HOLIDAY

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 Federalism

First In-Person Class of Quarter

Kollman, Ch. 3.

Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 46, ED, pp. 86-90.

Peterson, “From *The Price of Federalism*,” ED, pp. 91-99.

Annas, “Jumping Frogs, Endangered Toads, and California’s Medical Marijuana Law,” ED, pp. 100-109.

Debating the Issues: Immigration Reform—More Power to the States? ED, pp. 110-120

Saturday, January 22, 2022

Response Question 3 Submission Deadline (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, January 24, 2022 Federalism

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 Civil Rights and Liberties

Kollman, Ch. 4.

Obama, “Remarks by the President at the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches,” ED, pp. 121-129.

Rauch, “In Defense of Prejudice,” ED, pp. 130-137.

Saturday, January 31, 2022

Response Question 4 Submission Deadline (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, January 31, 2022 Civil Rights and Liberties

Wednesday, February 2, 2022 Congress

Kollman, Ch. 5.
ED, pp. 155-172

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Response to Question 5 (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, February 7, 2022 The Presidency

Kollman, Ch. 6.
ED, pp. 189-218.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022 Multiple Choice Midterm

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Select One of Your Response Papers for Letter Grading (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Response to Question 6 (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, February 14, 2022 The Bureaucracy

Kollman, Ch. 7.
ED, pp. 219-258.

Wednesday, February 16, 2022 The Judiciary

Kollman, Ch. 8.
ED, pp. 259-302.

Saturday, February 19, 2022

Response to Question 7 (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, February 21, 2022 HOLIDAY

Public Opinion

Kollman, Ch. 9.
ED, pp. 303-315.

Video “makeup lecture” posted--watch at your convenience.

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 Voting and Political Participation

Kollman, Ch. 10.
ED, pp. 343-352.
Additional reading TBA.

Saturday, February 26, 2022

Response to Question 8 (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, February 28, 2022 Interest Groups and Social Movements

Kollman, Ch. 11.
ED, pp. 392-428.

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 Political Parties

Kollman, Ch. 12.
ED, pp. 362-391.

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Response to Question 9 (Due 11:59 p.m.)

Monday, March 7, 2022 Elections and Campaigns

Kollman, Ch. 13.
Readings TBA.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 Mass Media and Media Bias

Kollman, Ch. 14.
ED, pp. 316-332

Thursday, March 10, 2022 SELECT AND SUBMIT SECOND RESPONSE PAPER FOR GRADING.

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 8-11 a.m.

Final Exam (Multiple Choice and One Short Essay)