

POL 203Y: U. S. POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

MTWR 12 - 2 pm– SS 1072

Tutorials W 3-4 pm or 4-5 pm – UC 261

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30-4:30, TBA

TAs:

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the U.S. national government and politics. After introducing the logic of political analysis, we will discuss the historical development of the U.S. federal governing system before analyzing the functions played by governing institutions and their interaction with citizens and organizations articulating and aggregating public opinion. We will pay special attention in this term to controversies associated with the new President and his promises of dramatic policy changes.

The course is divided into modules:

- I. Foundations. Key concepts of political science and foundations of the U.S. government.
- II. Public Opinion. A look at how and why American opinion is divided and the role parties and groups play in exacerbating, reconciling or resolving these differences.
- III. The modern presidency. Tweets, the traditional media and the powers of the President.
- IV. Checks (or blessings) on the presidency: Courts and Parties

Class Lectures and Tutorials

There are four, two-hour lectures each week. In these lectures, I will raise and discuss central issues and questions, engage with (and occasionally dispute) the readings, and imbue the course with current political events. In the summer, class sizes tend to be smaller, and that gives us opportunities to engage in more discussion (and proportionately less formal lecturing) than might otherwise be possible. Occasionally, films will be shown during lecture time. Tests and special activities typically take place on Thursdays.

On Wednesdays in UC 261 from 2-3 pm and 3-4 pm, there will also be tutorials led by a teaching assistant. During most of these tutorials, you, the students, will take center stage as you engage your peers in a discussion, game and/or simulation focusing on the week's topic(s). Your active participation in and contribution to the discussions are required.

Attendance and illness

Attendance in lecture and tutorials are required, but health and well-being always take priority over attendance. If you are not feeling well, *or had flu-like symptoms 24 hours before class*, please do not attend lecture or tutorials. Email your teaching assistant. You may be asked to post a comment on the discussion forums or complete a brief assignment to make-up for your missed participation in tutorials.

Required Reading

Kollman, Ken. *The American Political System*. W.W. Norton.

Mason, Liliana. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press, 2018

Other readings are available on Quercus or on-line via e-journals made available through the library. You should not need to pay to access any readings other than the Kollman text and Mason book.

You must also follow U.S. politics and current events on a regular, on-going basis. Any list of useful resources must include the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. There are many websites and blogs that regularly cover U.S. Politics. Several worth mentioning include <http://www.politico.com/>, <http://thehill.com>, and <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>. Students who generally find themselves generally opposing the President are especially encouraged to read news and commentary from a pro-Trump (or at least, pro-populist Trump of 2016) perspective from Fox News, America News Network or Breitbart.

Course Quercus Site

The Quercus website is accessible using your UTORid. On Quercus website you will find course readings, updated versions of this syllabus, details of all assignments, class discussion forums and the course gradebook.

From time to time, class announcements & material will be delivered via e-mail through Quercus. It is the students' responsibility to maintain their e-mail addresses in good working order and to ensure that the e-mail address known to the university (and listed on Quercus) is accurate. Failure to receive important class announcements & messages are NOT legitimate excuses for missing class work.

Grading

In-class essay assignment, May 15 = 15%

Term Test I on "I. Foundations," May 23 = 25%

Term Test II on "II. Presidency & III. Courts," June 6 = 20%

Survey data assignment, June 3 = 10%

Quizzes (on-line, open book, due at midnight): May 13, 21, & 27 + June 4 & 12 = 5%

Participation (in-class and on-line) = 5%

Presentation: Perspectives on the news = 5%

America Divided Essay, June 14 = 15%

Tests

There will be two term tests that will take place during lecture as indicated in the schedule below. The first term test will consist of multiple choice questions, and will require you to demonstrate your knowledge about the historical and institutional foundations of the U.S. government, and an understanding of the key political science concepts. The second test will include both multiple choice questions and a short answer/essay section.

If you miss a term test with an excusable absence, you must notify the instructor or your teaching assistant by phone or email before the test administration. It is your responsibility to take a make-up test as soon as you are able, so you will need to prioritize scheduling a make-up. Whenever possible, we expect that you will make up the test within six days of the original administration. If you miss a make-up test without a legitimate excuse, or the instructor does not accept your excuse, you will be given a grade of zero for the test.

Quizzes

There are five open-book quizzes scheduled during the term. Each one will be made available through the course's Quercus site. This quiz will confirm that you have completed and understand the required reading from that day. Each quiz will contain no more than ten questions and will be due by midnight. No points will be awarded if the quiz is not completed before the deadline nor will any extensions or make-ups be scheduled. Students can expect to find the quiz questions available as a Word Document or PDF at least three days before the quiz.

Assignments

In-class essay. Lecture on May 15 will be devoted to time for answering an essay question in class about Federalist Paper #51. Each student will work independently on their own laptop, tablet or pen-and-paper, and will complete the essay during lecture time. Students may bring a printed outline (printed or handwritten paper) to assist in their writing that will be collected but not graded. Most of the grading for this essay will be on how well you write and how well you organize your paper rather than the substance of what you write.

Presentation: Perspectives on the News. We will assign each student (or pairs of students) a date to prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on a current event. After briefly describing the current event (or on-going controversy), presenters should describe two ways that Democrats are interpreting or spinning the story and two ways that Republicans are interpreting or spinning the story.

Survey Data Assignment: You will analyze survey data from the 2016 Presidential election using web-based software at: <http://sda.berkeley.edu>. No background in statistics is assumed (or necessary). The first section will tell you exactly what to do (in detail) to complete a simple bivariate analysis using variables selected by the instructor. You will then answer multiple choice questions that will ensure that you know and understand what to do before attempting the second section, which will include a choice of variables to better understand what led to the election of Donald Trump or attitudes about minorities and immigrants.

America Divided? In an essay, you will evaluate the causes and consequences of a divided America, drawing especially from the book by Liliana Mason, *How Politics Became Our Identity*. What social and institutional hurdles divide Americans? Can Americans realistically expect to move forward together? You will receive the question(s) for this essay on/by May 28, when we begin reading the book by Mason.

Participation. Participation is essential to a productive learning experience. Your participation grade will be influenced by discussing current events, applying course readings to campaign news, and posing substantive questions on the readings. Participation points can be gained in class and through thoughtful contributions to the discussion forums on Quercus. Contributions to an interesting thread on the Quercus discussion forums are considered to be equivalent to

speaking during class, so the best participation grades will reflect regular contributions during tutorials and/or on-line. Some weeks, the TA will moderate a virtual discussion on-line. Tutorials will take place on Wednesdays. All students are expected to attend tutorials ready and willing to make thoughtful contributions to the discussion. Just showing up and attending tutorials is necessary but not sufficient to get a good ('B') participation grade.

Grading Policy

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day for the first six days of lateness. After six calendar days of lateness, the teaching assistants and the instructor will refuse to accept the work for grading. The first day of lateness begins at 12:01 am the day after the deadline.

All matters of grading, exemptions, and discipline procedures will be handled in accordance with the Faculty of Arts and Science Academic Handbook. Extensions and excused absences for non-health reasons may only be granted prior to the day of the deadline, exam or quiz. The instructor is cognizant that students may have work, job search, religious and family obligations that conflict with class, especially during the summer term. If you are going to miss several classes, or have obligations that may interfere with your ability to complete work on time, please speak to the instructor for accommodations. This summer, the instructor acknowledges that meeting deadlines may be especially challenging for those celebrating Ramadan and related feasts. Please speak to the instructor to arrange accommodations and to ensure that no one falls behind in the class.

Any student who believes that any work has been unfairly graded may ask the instructor to re-evaluate his or her work. Grading appeals should be submitted with a cover letter explaining the basis of the appeal to the instructor or the teaching assistant. No oral or emailed appeals will be considered. Please do not seek to discuss grades with the instructor or the teaching assistants until the Thursday following our return of the marks. Such re-marking may involve the entire piece of work, and may raise or lower the mark. All other appeals and complaints will be handled in a manner consistent with the regulations described in the handbook.

See <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/main/faculty/resources/faculty/acaresources> for the complete handbook.

Academic Integrity, plagiarism & Turnitin.com

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. A list of potential offences can be found here:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/instructors-and-staff/tips-templates/AI-statement-and-checklist.docx>

The above link also includes a checklist that you should consult before you submit written work in any class to avoid any plagiarism issues. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with a severe

penalty. It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. Please see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> for more information and tips on how to avoid plagiarism.

Students agree that by taking this course all required work will be subject to submission for textual similarity review for the detection of plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. These requirements extend in POL203 except when the worksheet (or quiz) is entirely or predominantly multiple choice. The class ID for turnitin.com is 18382761 and the password is: plead5

Accessibility Needs

I wholeheartedly share the University of Toronto's commitment to accessibility and hope that every student is given a fair opportunity to excel in this course. Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. I invite you to discuss any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials with me and/or staffers at Accessibility Services. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services at 416-978-8060 or accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. Appointments and drop-in sessions for accessibility advisors and learning strategists are available. For more information, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Contact

Questions and concerns

Students are encouraged to post all questions about the course material and current events on Quercus, in the appropriate discussion forum. These forums will be moderated by teaching assistants and the instructor with the hope of ensuring that every question receives an answer within two class sessions.

Following the return of marks, if you want to discuss your grade, your teaching assistant is the most appropriate person to contact initially even though they may not have personally graded your work.

Instructor meetings and contact

You are welcome to meet with the course instructor. I will usually be available before, and immediately after, lecture all days of the week although periodically childcare obligations and/or traffic/transit issues may delay my arrival or necessitate a hasty departure. In such circumstances, I will be happy to talk to you on the phone once I am clear of the subway tunnels. The best times to talk to the professor after class will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as I will typically be in the SS 561 computer lab or Sid's Café until 6 pm. Outside of office hours, email is the best way to reach me. Via email, I am happy to arrange a phone conversation at a mutually agreeable time.

Because it is difficult to get to know many students in a large class, any group of three students is invited to arrange Dutch-treat lunches/afternoon teas with me on or near campus. Early dinners may be possible on Tuesdays or Thursdays, or other days if we meet near my home in Thornhill. I especially look forward to talking to you about topics related to the course or current political events.

Childcare and Guest Policies

Students with parents or guardians who would like to come to class to learn a little about American politics, or students with child care responsibilities that would otherwise prevent attendance are encouraged to invite family members to class. Please just let me know in advance (if possible).

Schedule

Part I: Foundations

6-May Introduction

7-May Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence

Declaration of Independence, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Rough draft of Declaration, see paragraph, "he has waged cruel war..." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h33t.html>

Banneker, Benjamin, letter to Thomas

Jefferson <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-22-02-0049>

Stockman, Farah. "Monticello Is Done Avoiding Jefferson's Relationship With Sally Hemings." *New York Times* June 16, 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/16/us/sally-hemings-exhibit-monticello.html>

Spalding, Matthew. "How to Understand Slavery and the American Founding."

Heritage Foundation (2002) <https://www.heritage.org/american-founders/report/how-understand-slavery-and-the-american-founding>

Wood, Gordon S. "Thomas Jefferson, Equality, and the Creation of a Civil Society." *Fordham L. Rev.* 64 (1995): 2133.

<http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3265&context=flr>

8-May Precursors, Revolution and Nation-Building

Articles of Confederation, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp

Declaration of Independence, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp

Roche, John P. 1961. "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action." *American Political Science Review* 55(4), pp. 799-816.

9-May Prisoner's Dilemma & Institutions

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 1

Nyhan, Brendan "Norms Matter." Politico, September 2017.

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/why-norms-matter-politics-trump-215535>

Island of Ted Simulation

13-May Constitutional Convention & Constitution^

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 2

14-May Ratification, Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties

Constitution of the United States (Appendix)

Federalist Paper #51 <http://www.constitution.org/afp/afpchron.htm>

Brutus, Anti-Federalist Paper # 1, 3

<http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus01.htm>

<http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus03.htm>

Tutorial: Discuss Roche; was the American revolution really a revolution? Prepare for in-class essay.

15-May ** In-class essay**

16-May Civil War, Reconstruction, Civil Rights

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 4 & pp. 389-394.

Dred Scott: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2932.html>,

Abraham Lincoln, "House Divided" speech and Gettysburg Address:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2934.html>

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp

Listen to [partial] dramatization:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc5VEBPz8LE>

Recommended: "Africans in America," PBS Narrative, Part 4:

Start here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/narrative.html>

20-May Holiday - No class

21-May American Governance ^

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 3 & pp 163-169.

Schoolhouse Rock "How a Bill Becomes a Law" [YouTube](#)

Azari, Julia and Jennifer K. Smith. "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies." PS: Political Science and Politics, 2012

22-May Congress

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 5

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. *Congress: A political-economic history of roll call voting*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1997. Ch. 4

<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/940465> (&/or Quercus)

Rohde, David W. "Reflections on the practice of theorizing: Conditional party government in the twenty-first century." *The Journal of Politics* 75, no. 4 (2013): 849-864.

Tutorial: What are the implications of conditional party governance for policy-making? What current or broken norms ought to be formally made into laws or Constitutional amendments? Review Term Test I

23-May *** Term Test I ***

Part IV. Public Opinion

27-May Public Opinion I: Sources ^

Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 9, especially pp. 340-354.

Lyons, Jeffrey. (2017) "The Family and Partisan Socialization in Red and Blue America." *Political Psychology*, 38: 297–312.

Kaufmann, Karen M., and John R. Petrocik. "The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 3 (1999): 864-87.

Recommended: Shulman, Hillary C. and DeAndrea, David C., 2014. "Predicting success: Revisiting assumptions about family political socialization." *Communication Monographs*, 81(3), pp.386-406.

28-May Public Opinion II: Division and Polarization
Mason, Liliana. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press, 2018, ch. 1-3
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, pp. 355-358, Ch. 12

29-May Public Opinion III: Division and Polarization (continued)
Mason, Ch. 4-5
Hetherington, Marc J., Meri T. Long, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2016. "Revisiting the Myth: New Evidence of a Polarized Electorate." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80, no. S1: 321-350.
Webster, Steven W., and Alan I. Abramowitz. 2017. "The Ideological Foundations of Affective Polarization in the US Electorate." *American Politics Research*.

Tutorials: In SS 561 to receive help on survey data assignment. Anyone can come to SS 561 starting at 2 pm.

30-May Consequences of sorting
Mason, Ch. 6
Binder, Sarah. "How political polarization creates stalemate and undermines lawmaking." Monkey Cage Blog, Washington Post.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/13/how-political-polarization-creates-stalemate-and-undermines-lawmaking/>

Part III: Modern Presidency

3-June Media, Social Media & the Rise of Trump
Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 14
Lovett, John, Devin Christensen, and John A. Curiel. "The Trump Twitter Presidency and Branding the News."
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/577aa2e459cc68071cff0249/t/5c475774bba223672037e971/1548179317794/LovettChristensenCuriel_SPSA_TrumpTwitter.pdf
Patterson, Thomas E. "News Coverage of the 2016 Presidential Primaries: Horse Race Reporting Has Consequences." <https://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-2016-presidential-primaries/>
Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. "Hunting where the ducks are: activating support for Donald Trump in the 2016 Republican primary." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 28, no. 2 (2018): 135-156.

Recommended: Carmines, Edward G., Michael J. Ensley, and Michael W. Wagner. "Ideological Heterogeneity and the Rise of Donald Trump." In *The Forum*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 385-397. 2016.
Survey Data Assignment Due.

- 4-June Presidency ^
 Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 6
 Mayer, Kenneth R., and Kevin Price. "Unilateral Presidential Powers: Significant Executive Orders, 1949-99." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2002): 367-386.
- 5-June President & Agenda Setting
 Parmelee, J.H., 2014. The agenda-building function of political tweets. *New Media & Society*, 16(3), pp.434-450.
 Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. "Presidential agenda-setting of traditional and nontraditional news media." *Political Communication* 33, no. 1 (2016): 1-20.
 Lovett, John, Shaun Bevan, and Frank R. Baumgartner. "Popular presidents can affect congressional attention, for a little while." *Policy Studies Journal* 43, no. 1 (2015): 22-43.

Tutorials: On what issues can the President and a divided Congress work together on between now and 2021? Review for Term Test II

- 6-June Term Test II in SS 561 (noon-2 pm)

Part IV. Checks (or blessings) on Presidential Power: Courts & Parties

- 10-June Political Parties
 Kollman, Ch.
 McKay, Amy Melissa. "Fundraising for Favors? Linking Lobbyist-Hosted Fundraisers to Legislative Benefits." *Political Research Quarterly* (2018): 1065912918771745.
- 11-June Presidential Actions & Consequences
 Mueller Report
 TBA
- 12-June Judiciary and Precedence ^
 Kollman, K. *The American Political System*, Ch. 8
 Posner, Richard A. "Eighteen Years On: A Re-Review (reviewing William N. Eskridge, Jr., The Case for Same-Sex Marriage: From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment (1996))." *Yale Law Journal* 125 (2015): 533.
 http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12082&context=journal_articles

Discuss: What standards or criteria should judges apply when they want to undo precedent?

- 13-June Courts and Social Controversies
 Film: "School Prayer" <http://www.schoolprayer.com/>
 Putnam, Robert. 1993. "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life." *The American Prospect*.
- 14-June *America Divided* essay + short answers due at midnight.

17-June America Divided? Looking forward

Mason, Ch. 7

Novkov, Julie. "Time for Constitutional Change" A House Divided

<https://ahousedividedapd.com/2018/10/30/time-for-constitutional-change/>

TBA

Note: Topics marked with ^ have short on-line quizzes to complete.