

Political Science 112, Introduction to American National Government and Politics  
Spring 2018 Semester  
Tuesday and Thursday, 1100-1215

Professor: Dr. Ken Moffett  
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1220-1350, and by appointment.

**Course Description** We will explore how American government and politics operate. We will use theories of politics, as well as current and historical events to fully appreciate the structures and processes of our government. By the end of this course, you will be able to draw upon all of these sources to understand the context of current events, as well as the actors and institutions that deal with these events.

**Assigned Text** This book available at Textbook Rental.

Kernell, Samuel; Gary C. Jacobson; Thad Kousser; and Lynn Vavreck 2015. *The Logic of American Politics*. 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

**Learning Objectives** By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the ways in which the Constitution fundamentally structures the way in which American politics plays out;
- 2) Understand the evolution of civil liberties and rights over time;
- 3) Analyze the ways in which American political institutions operate;
- 4) Analyze the factors that affect the levels and types of political participation among Americans; and
- 5) Communicate research findings in writing to broader audiences.

**Course Requirements** I will determine your grade based on two midterm examinations, participation, a paper, two assignments and a *comprehensive* final exam. Your grade breaks down as follows:

Midterm Exams (80 Points Each)	160 Points
Participation	100 Points
Paper	100 Points
Assignments (10 Points Each)	20 Points
Final	120 Points
Total	500 Points

**Grading Policy:** I will use the following point cutoffs to determine letter grades: 450 and above, "A;" 400-449, "B;" 350-399, "C;" 300-349, "D;" and 300 and below, "F." All students who have completed thirteen weeks of the course and do not satisfy the requirements for the grades of "NS," "WR," "I," or "UW," will receive one of the aforementioned letter grades for their performance in the class.

"NS" or "no show" grades will only be assigned if a student: 1) was never in class during the semester; or 2) attended class on the first day, but at no point thereafter.

"WR" (or "withdrawal by registrar") grades will only be assigned if all of the following criteria are satisfied: 1) a student ceases attendance and participation in the course at some point during the semester; 2) the student, his or her designee, or the Dean of Students (or his/her designee) notifies me *prior* to the end of the semester of mitigating circumstances that are beyond the student's direct control; and 3) these circumstances exist such that a grade of "I" (or "Incomplete") is not an appropriate option. I reserve the right to require appropriate documentation of mitigating

circumstances prior to issuing a grade of “WR.” Students who do not produce this documentation, when requested, will receive a grade of “UW.” I reserve full discretion to determine whether the mitigating circumstances are sufficient to warrant the WR grade.

A grade of “I” (or “Incomplete”) will only be assigned if a student has completed, “...most of the work required for a class but is prevented by a medical or similar emergency from completing a small portion of the course requirements” (SIUE Grading Policy 2012, available at <http://www.siu.edu/registrars/class/grading.shtml>). Before the grade of incomplete is assigned, I require all of the following: 1) the student has completed at least 50% of the course requirements; 2) appropriate written documentation of the circumstances surrounding a request for a grade of “I;” 3) s/he meets with me to determine the timeframe in which the remaining requirements will be satisfied; and 4) s/he signs a written agreement agreeing to this timeframe. Copies of this agreement will be forwarded to the Registrar and to the Chair of the Department of Political Science. Students who do not meet all of these requirements will not be eligible for this grade.

A grade of “UW” (or “unauthorized withdrawal”) will be assigned if both conditions are satisfied: 1) the student has attended more than one day of the course, but stopped attending prior to the end of the thirteenth week of the semester; and 2) s/he did not withdraw from the course prior to the end of the thirteenth week of the semester.

Exams: All exams consist of a combination of identification terms and short essays. I will post the complete list of identification terms and essays from which I will draw to compose your exams to the course website. This list will be posted at least one week prior to each exam.

If you need to reschedule an exam for *any* reason, you need to notify me prior to the start of that exam. Generally speaking, students who arrive late for an in-class exam are not allowed to take that test once another student has finished it. I will *only* schedule makeup exams for university-authorized reasons.

Participation: Students are required to participate actively throughout the course. Participation does not merely consist of attendance, though you must be in class to participate. In fact, a good grade is unattainable if you do not regularly attend class. Participation consists of attendance, doing the readings on time, getting involved in discussions, listening to and respecting your classmates, as well as their opinions. Through negative behaviors, it is possible to lose participation points.

I also expect that each student regularly reads a national newspaper like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Wall Street Journal* to follow the national news and class discussions about current events as they relate to the course.

Finally, I expect that you do all of the assigned readings before each class starts and be ready to actively contribute to classroom discussions. It is impossible to do your assignments and readings at the last minute, or immediately before any exam and expect to do well in this class. I will discuss some of the readings in class, but not everything. You will gain much more from the course if you do the readings before class starts, rather than after the fact.

Paper: Drawing upon material presented in class, and some outside research, you are required to write a three to five-page paper that is due on March 27 at the beginning of class on the following topic:

During the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the U.S. Congress passed H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) voted in favor of the bill, while Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) voted against it. What factors might explain why these senators took these positions on this bill? How did each factor that you mention directly lead to each position that was taken on the bill? What is about each of the factors you mention that would explain the vote choice of these senators?

I will provide additional information about this paper in a separate handout.

Assignments: You will complete two assignments worth ten points each during the first portion of the semester. You will have one week in which to do each assignment. I accept late assignments, but with a substantial penalty. I deduct five points on an assignment that is submitted one calendar day late, and 10 points for an assignment that is submitted two calendar days late.

Extra Credit: I reserve the right to assign small extra credit assignments throughout the course.

### **Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments**

January 9: Introduction

Course Introduction Video (on Blackboard)

January 11: The Logic of American Politics

Kernell et al., Chapter One

January 16: The Logic of American Politics (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapter One

**Assignment One Distributed**

January 18: The Constitution

Kernell et al., Chapter Two, Appendices One through Five

January 23: The Constitution (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapter Two, Appendices One through Five

**Assignment One Due!**

January 25: The Constitution (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapter Two, Appendices One through Five

January 30: Federalism

Kernell et al., Chapter Three

February 1: Civil Liberties

Kernell et al., Chapter Five

**Assignment Two Distributed**

February 6: Civil Liberties (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapter Five

February 8: Civil Liberties/Civil Rights (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapters Four and Five

**Assignment Two Due!**

February 13: Civil Rights

Kernell et al., Chapter Five

**February 15: Exam One**

February 22 & 27: Congress

Kernell et al., Chapter Six

March 1: Congress (Continued)

Kernell et al., Chapter Six

Term Paper Podcast (on Blackboard)

**March 6 & 8: No Class. Enjoy Spring Break!**

March 13 & 15: The Presidency

Kernell et. al., Chapter Seven

March 20 & 22: The Bureaucracy  
Kernell et. al., Chapter Eight  
February 22 & 27; March 1: Congress  
Kernell et al., Chapter Six

March 27: The Courts  
Kernell et al., Chapter Nine  
**Paper Due!**

March 29 & April 3: The Courts (Continued)  
Kernell et al., Chapter Nine

### **April 5: Exam Two**

April 10: Social Context of American Politics  
No Reading

April 12 & 17: Public Opinion  
Kernell et al., Chapter Ten

April 19, 24 & 26: Political Participation and Elections  
Kernell et al., Chapter Eleven

### **May 2 (Wednesday): Final Exam, 1000-1140**

#### **Classroom Policies and Procedures**

Academic Misconduct: Students are responsible for knowing when and learning how to cite material using the *Style Manual for Political Science* (APSA Style) for all assignments and the final examination. A student is expected to appropriately cite whenever s/he uses content or ideas that come from a source other than oneself. This expectation includes anything that comes from class notes, PowerPoint slides, or the course website, as these materials are the instructor's intellectual property. For more information, please refer to the Plagiarism Frequently Asked Questions handout.

The APSA style is the only accepted method of citing material in this course. Failure to abide by course or university policies with respect to academic integrity may constitute cheating and/or plagiarism.

I have zero tolerance for cheating and plagiarism and will deal with every instance to the maximum extent allowed by university policies and procedures. Normally, this means that someone who cheats and/or plagiarizes will fail the course and be reported to the Provost for additional disciplinary action.

Cellular Phones, Pagers and Similar Electronic Devices: Please turn these off before the start of this course as they distract me and your classmates. If one has an emergency that necessitates using one or more of these devices during class time, please talk to me before class starts. Finally, students are asked to refrain from using electronic devices to send text messages during class time as such conduct disrespects me and your classmates.

Draft Copies of Student Work: I am willing to read a single, complete draft of each student's assignment or redo prior to submission for a grade provided that it is submitted three days prior to the relevant due date. Multiple draft copies of the same assignment or redo from a student will not be read. Draft copies must be e-mailed to me.

E-Mail Expectations: Students are expected to regularly check their SIUE e-mail accounts, as important information about the course is disseminated in this fashion.

E-Mail Hours: I respond to student e-mails within 24 hours of the time and date that they were sent. If you do not receive a reply within this time frame, please follow-up with me.

E-Mail Limitations: I will not respond to any e-mails related to the contents of an exam on the same day as any test, nor do I provide an answer via e-mail to questions about expected grades in this course. Federal privacy laws and university policies do not allow me to e-mail any information about your grade in the class to you.

Leaving Early: If you must leave early for any reason, please notify me before class starts as doing so is much appreciated.

Sexual Harassment: I do not tolerate any such conduct as it is prohibited by law in addition to university policies and procedures. For more information, please see Southern Illinois University's Policy on Sexual Harassment (at <http://www.siu.edu/policies/2c5.shtml>).

Student Conduct: Pursuant to university policies and procedures, I reserve the right to remove from class, reduce the course grade, and/or assign an "F" for the course to any student who defies directions from the instructor and/or commits behaviors that manifest a lack of respect for others or their learning objectives during class. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to, disrespectful, hostile, racist, disruptive, or demeaning behavior during class. For a more complete discussion of what constitutes such behavior, please refer to the Cougar Creed (at <http://www.siu.edu/parents/cougar-creed.shtml>), Student Conduct Code (at <http://www.siu.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>), and the Student Academic Code (at <http://www.siu.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>).

Students with Disabilities: If a student has a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please go to Disability Support Services (DSS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. DSS is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270. You may contact them to make an appointment by calling (618) 650-3726 or sending an email to [disabilitysupport@siue.edu](mailto:disabilitysupport@siue.edu). Please visit the DSS website located online at <http://www.siu.edu/dss> for more information.

User-Edited Websites: Students are not allowed to use any user-edited, mirror, information aggregating, or social networking websites as a source on any assignment or examination. Examples of such sources include, but are not limited to, Answers.com, Congresspedia, Diffen.com, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia. Students are responsible for knowing whether an internet-based resource is prohibited under this policy, and are strongly encouraged to ask me about any specific website that might fall under the auspices of this policy. Any student who uses such sources will receive a 20% grade penalty on that assignment and/or paper, if s/he cites the material in question.

### **Final Considerations**

The schedule laid out in this document is tentative. Accordingly, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus and will post any changes on the course website. You are responsible for all of the information presented in this document, and anything discussed during class, on the course website, as well as, any podcasts that are posted to the course website. If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this class, please see me as soon as possible. We can more easily resolve such matters sooner rather than later.