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American Government: Practices and Values
POL 1101, Fall 2018
Syllabus

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:05-10:20AM

Room

Instructor: Elizabeth Stone

Email:

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This is an introductory course to the institutions, processes, and history of American government. We will review the foundational concepts and landmark debates in the development of the American political system and relate these concepts and debates to current political issues. On completion of the course students should have:

- Knowledge about the foundations of the U.S. political system.
- Knowledge of all major American political institutions and processes.
- Critical thinking skills including the capacity to assess the kind and quality of evidence writers use to support claims, the ability to reconcile conflicting evidence that seems to support different claims, and the ability to ask probing questions about complex political issues.
- Analytical writing skills including the ability to summarize the main points of an argument succinctly, use language precisely, and demonstrate command of some political science terminology.

Texts

There is no textbook required for this class. All of the readings are available on the Blogs@Baruch course website. **In lieu of a textbook, you are required to bring a copy of the readings to each class.** It is preferred that you print out hard copies of the readings, but you may also bring a tablet or laptop to class to access them. If it becomes clear that you are using your tablet or laptop for something other than accessing the readings or taking notes, I reserve the right to change this policy. NO CELLPHONES.

Current Events

You are expected to stay up-to-date on current issues in U.S. politics while taking this course. If you do not have regular access to the news, Baruch offers all of its students a free one-year subscription to *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* online.

All you need to sign up is your CUNY email address:

<http://guides.newman.baruch.cuny.edu/newyorktimes>

<http://guides.newman.baruch.cuny.edu/wallstreetjournal>

Blogs@Baruch Course Website

This course requires that you log onto the course Blogs@Baruch website regularly to access class readings, submit assignments, and check for announcements. Log in to Blogs@Baruch using your Baruch username and password. Please ensure that you have



access to Course Website the first week of class. Digital versions of the syllabus, the course handouts, and all of the required readings are available there.

Grading & Class Requirements

Your grade is based on the five requirements for this course:

- 1. Attendance & Participation (15% of class grade)**
 - Absences may be excused with documentation, but in all other cases, absences will be unexcused and will negatively affect your grade.
 - Attendance includes being on time and staying for the duration of the class meeting. Attendance will be marked during the first five minutes of class, students arriving after that will be marked as “late.” Two “lates” are equivalent to one absence.
 - If you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes and any assignments from a classmate. After you have received the notes from a classmate, you may schedule a meeting during office hours if you have questions for me.
 - Participation in class discussion is a critical part of the learning process. You are expected to come to every class having read all of the readings, prepared to contribute to class discussion and participate in class activities.
 - You are required to bring a printed or electronic copy of all the readings to each class. Failure to do so will negatively affect your grade.
- 2. Weekly Reading Responses (15% of class grade)**
 - To foster your thinking outside of class and to facilitate discussion in class you are required to submit weekly reading responses. Reading responses should be between 400 – 500 words in length and must include four parts. See the handout (available on the Course Website) for details.
 - Unless otherwise noted, reading responses are due via the Course Website at 6:00PM on Tuesdays.
- 3. Profile Your Politician Presentation (20% of class grade)**
 - For this assignment you will conduct research, write notes, and present to the class a profile of a politician of your choice who represents the area where you live. See the handout (available on the Course Website) for details.
 - Confirm your politician and presentation date by Monday, September 17.
- 4. Midterm Exam (20% of class grade)**
 - The midterm exam will be held on Wednesday, October 31 in class.
- 5. Final Exam (30% of class grade)**
 - The final exam will be held during the week of December 17. Details TBD.

For both exams:

- You will receive a study guide one week prior to the exam. We will not review for the exam during class time.
- The exam will include content from the assigned readings and class lectures. Reading the assigned readings, taking notes during lectures, and participating in class is the best way to prepare for the exam.
- If you have to miss an exam you must inform me by email before the exam is held. Otherwise, you will not be permitted to take a make-up.

Classroom Conduct

Discussing politics can challenge deeply held or unexamined beliefs. Expect to be challenged in this classroom to think critically about the ideas presented in the readings and common assumptions made about American government. Respectful disagreement is expected in this class. This requires both thoughtfully voicing your own opinion and respectfully listening to the opinions of others. The ultimate goal of this course is to provide you with the background knowledge and critical thinking skills to construct well-informed arguments on complex political issues.

Email policy

Email is the best method for getting in touch with me. My policy is to respond to email within 48 hours. Do not email me the night before class and expect that I will read your email or respond to you before class the next day. In order for me to respond to your email, you must include "POL 1101" in the subject line of the email. If your email address is not a variation of your name, indicate in the body of the email who you are.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Baruch is committed to making individuals with disabilities full participants in its programs, services and activities through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the American with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. It is the policy of Baruch College that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in any program, service or activity offered by the universities. Individuals with disabilities have a right to request accommodations. If you have a physical, psychological or learning disability, Baruch College provides services through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD), a division of the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/ossd/disabilityServices.htm>

Academic Integrity

The Department of Political Science supports the Baruch College policy on academic honesty: Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and the students' personal and intellectual growth. Baruch students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for disobeying them. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned." For more information on the college's policy, please visit the college's webpage on academic honesty at: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html. Reports of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. Penalties for academic dishonesty include: loss of points, disciplinary probation, suspension, expulsion, and complaint to Civil Authorities.

Weekly Course Schedule

All dates, readings, and assignments are subject to change.

** Indicates a response paper is due at 6:00pm the day before this class

Part I: Founding Principles

Introduction, Foundations of American Government

Mon Aug 27:

- Welcome and Introduction

Weds Aug 29: **

- Thomas Jefferson. 1776. "Declaration of Independence."

Mon Sept 3: NO CLASS

The Constitution and the Ratification Debates

Weds Sept 5: **

- Second Continental Congress. 1781. "Articles of Confederation."
- Constitutional Convention. 1789. "U.S. Constitution."

Mon Sept 10: NO CLASS

Weds Sept 12: **

- Howard Zinn. 1990. "A Kind of Revolution" in *A People's History of the United States*, 76-101.

Mon Sept 17:

- James Madison. 1787-1788. "Federalist No. 10, 39, and 51."
- Brutus. 1787. "Essay No. 2 and 5" in *The Anti-Federalist: Writings by Opponents of the Constitution*. Herbert Storing, ed. 1981, 117-122, 133-138.
- ****Last day to sign up for Profile your Politician Assignment****

Weds Sept 19: NO CLASS

Federalism

Mon Sept 24:

- Thomas Jefferson. 1798. "The Kentucky Resolutions," in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. Merrill D. Peterson, ed. 1977, 281-289.
- George Wallace. 1963. "School House Door Speech."

American Political Culture

Weds Sept 26: **

- Rogers Smith. 1993. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America" in *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, Canon, Coleman, and Mayer, eds., 9-19.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:

- o TBD

Capitalism and American Democracy

Mon Oct 1:

- Jeffrey A. Winters and Benjamin I. Page. 2009. "Oligarchy in the United States?" *Perspectives on Politics* 7(4): 731-751.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - o TBD

Part II: Government Institutions and Processes

Congress

Weds Oct 3: **

- David R. Mayhew. 1974. "Congress: The First Branch" in *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, 141-145.
- Mary Hawkesworth. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *The American Political Science Review*, 97(4): 529-550.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - o TBD

Mon Oct 8: NO CLASS

Weds Oct 10: **

- John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 1998. "Too Much of a Good Thing: More Representation is Not Necessarily Better." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 31(1), 28-31.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - o TBD

The Presidency

Mon Oct 15:

- George Washington. 1796. "Farewell Address."
- Abraham Lincoln. 1865. "Second Inaugural Address."
- Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1933. "First Inaugural Address" in *The Evolving Presidency*, Michael Nelson, ed., 106-112.
- Donald J. Trump. 2017. "Inaugural Address, Annotated" by NPR.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - o TBD

Weds Oct 17: **

- Andrew J. Polsky. 2010. "The Presidency at War: Unchecked Power, Uncertain Leadership," in *The Presidency and the Political System*, Michael Nelson, ed., 525-544.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - o TBD

The Supreme Court and Civil Liberties

Mon Oct 22:

- Alexander Hamilton. 1788. "Federalist No. 78."
- Cass R. Sunstein. 2005. "Judges and Democracy: The Changing Role of the United States Supreme Court," in *The Judicial Branch*, Kermit Hall and Kevin McGuire, eds., 32-59.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - TBD

Weds Oct 24: **

- First Congress of the United States. 1791. "The Bill of Rights."
- German Lopez. 2017. "Why the ACLU defends white nationalists' right to protest – including in Charlottesville" in *Vox*.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - TBD

Mon Oct 29:

- Justice Blackmun. 1973. U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Roe et.al. v. Wade*, excerpts.
- Justice Kennedy, Majority Opinion and Justice Alito, Dissent. 2015. U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Obergefell et. al. v. Hodges*, excerpts.
- Profile Your Politician Presentations:
 - TBD

Weds Oct 31:

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

Part III: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Contestation

Political Participation and Public Opinion

Mon Nov 5:

- Stephen J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, "The Political Logic of Political Participation" in *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, 10-37.
- Frances Fox Piven. 2000. "Does Voting Matter?" in *Why Americans Still Don't Vote, and Why Politicians Want it That Way*, 1-19.

Tues Nov 6: MIDTERM ELECTION

Weds Nov 7: **

- Echo Through the Fog. 2016. "How to Call Your Reps When You Have Social Anxiety."
- ACLU. n.d. "Know Your Rights: Demonstrations and Protests."

Linkage Institutions: Parties, Interest Groups, & the Media

Mon Nov 12:

- Marty Cohen, David Karol, and Hans Noel. 2008. "Whose Parties?" in *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*, 19-45.

Weds Nov 14: **

- Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3): 564-581.

Mon Nov 19:

- FAIR. n.d. "How to Detect Bias in News Media."

Social Movements

Weds Nov 21: **

- Frances Fox Piven. 2006. "The Nature of Disruptive Power" in *Who's Afraid of Frances Fox Piven*, 207-226.

Civil Rights and Racial Justice

Mon Nov 26:

- Frederick Douglass. 1852. "What To The Slave Is The Fourth of July?" speech to the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Rochester, NY.
- Martin Luther King Jr. 1963. "Letter From A Birmingham Jail," *The Atlantic*.
- Malcolm X. 1964. "The Ballot or the Bullet," speech at Corey Methodist Church, Cleveland, OH.

Weds Nov 28: **

- Michelle Alexander. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*, 178-220.
- Ta-Nehisi Coates. 2014. "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*.

Feminist and Queer Movements

Mon Dec 3:

- Seneca Falls Convention. 1848. "Seneca Falls Declaration."
- Sojourner Truth. 1851. "Ain't I A Woman?" speech to Women's Convention, Akron, OH.
- Combahee River Collective. 1977. "Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies."
- Anonymous Queers. 1990. "Queers Read This."

Immigrant and Undocumented Youth Movements

Weds Dec 5: **

- Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Douglas Massey. 2007. "Borders for Whom? The Role of NAFTA in Mexico-U.S. Migration," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 610(1): 98-118.
- ACLU. n.d. "Know Your Rights: What to do if immigration agents (ICE) are at your door."

Mon Dec 10:

- Walter J. Nicholls. 2013. *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate*, 1-19.

Weds Dec 12:

- Final class discussion and wrap-up

Week of December 17:

- **FINAL EXAM**



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