

## **Political Science 202: Introduction to American Politics**

University of Washington  
Kane Hall 210, 9:00-10:20am, Mon/Wed  
Winter 2017

Professor Megan Francis

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Office Hours: Tues, 10-12:30pm; Wed, 4:30-5:30pm, & by appointment.

Course Website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1102338>

TA's: Ellen Ahlness, Stephanie Stanley, Jared Stewart, and Tan Zhao

### **I. COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course provides an introduction to United States politics. The course topics include an introduction to America's constitutional foundations, elements of mass public politics (public opinion and participation), the role of intermediary organizations (interest groups, media, parties), and the function of institutions (Congress, Presidency, Courts). In addition to mastering the fundamental organization of the national government, students will learn theories addressing "big questions" in American politics, and will discuss different arguments based on the evidence brought to bear on these questions.

All readings on the syllabus are required. Students are also expected to keep up to date with current political events by reading at least one online news source (e.g., BBC, Politico, *The Seattle Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* etc.) each day. Required books for the course are listed below:

1. *By The People: Debating American Government*, James Monroe and Rogan Kersh, BRIEF 3rd Edition (referred to on the syllabus as 'MK').
2. Various readings that I will post on our course website.

The remaining readings on the syllabus are short book chapters and articles that can be found online on the course website.

### **II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Each student should be able to define and describe the roles and responsibilities of the three main institutions of the American political system.
2. Each student should be able to articulate how citizen interests become heard in the policymaking process.
3. Each student will be able to apply theories of government and democracy to contemporary United States politics.

4. Each student should improve her/his oral skills and critical thinking through class discussions.
5. Each student should be able to trace the historical fight for political incorporation of a number of marginalized groups in the United States, including but not limited to: Women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.
6. Each student will be knowledgeable and conversant on current issues in American politics.
7. Each student will develop skills that will lead her or him to become more civically engaged and more responsible citizens.

### III. ACCESS & RESOURCE STATEMENT

Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office as early in the quarter as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. I will accommodate all students with a documented disability. Please visit <http://www.washington.edu/admin/dso/students/index.html> for additional information.

### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION

*Section Participation:* Your participation is required and necessary for success in this course. Students are expected to come to section prepared with questions and with commentary to participate actively in class. Active participation will make class discussions more productive and meaningful, thereby enabling everyone to get more out of the class. Lastly, students who are borderline (in between grades) will be bumped up to a higher grade if they have participated actively in section discussions with thoughtful questions and comments. (15%)

*Response Paper:* You will be asked to write 1 analytical paper on the readings covering 'The Wartime Presidency.' The essay must make a concise and argumentative point on at least one aspect of the lecture/readings. This essay should not simply summarize the readings and classroom discussions. The paper should be 3-4 pages. More details will be provided on the website. (25%)

**Late papers will incur a 5% (out of 100%) deduction per day.**

*Exams:*

- First exam (15%)
- Second exam (20%)
- Cumulative final exam (25%)

\*There are no make-up exams.

*Grading Scale:*

100-90 = A range

89-80 = B range

79-70 = C range

69-60 = D range

below 59 = F range

\*I do not curve. You receive what you earn.

Process for grade disputes: Grade disputes will not be handled over email. If you would like to dispute your grade, please type a memo that addresses the reasons for your grievance and why you believe you received an improper grade. Send the memo via email AT LEAST 48 hours after you received the grade to your TA then she/he will arrange a meeting to discuss the grade further with you. Beware: on review of your performance, once you initiate the grade dispute process—your grade may be lowered. Please be absolutely sure that you received an improper grade.

## V. COURSE CONDUCT

Overall, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. However, I have realized what that entails is confusing to some, so for greater specificity: I expect students to come on time. I expect students to be awake and to pay attention in class and to be respectful of myself, the course TA's, and their classmates. Phone use (texting/talking) is not permitted nor tolerated. Eating is fine as long as it does not disrupt others. I understand that emergencies occur—that is fine—quietly step out of class if such an unfortunate circumstance arises.

Students are required to abide by the UW code of academic integrity. Each student's work must represent his or her own original work. Students found in violation of the code will face disciplinary action. For questions about the Conduct Code, please consult the following website:

<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>

## VI. COURSE OUTLINE

### **Week 1: America's Founding**

January 4: The Constitution

- Chapter 2, MK
- The Commandments: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/17/the-commandments>

## Week 2: Federalism & American Political Thought

January 9: Federalism

- Chapter 3, MK
- Federalist Essays #10 & 51
- Centinel 1: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/centinel-i/>

January 11: American Political Thought & the Presidency

- Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review*, 87 (September 1993), pp.555-566
- Pages: 4-11; 19-31, MK

## Week 3: The Presidency

January 16: MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY

January 18: The Presidency

- Chapter 11, MK

## Week 4: War & Courts

January 23: The Wartime Presidency

- Alexander Hamilton, Federalists 70 (web)
- AUMF: <http://www.businessinsider.com/this-60-word-sentence-started-the-war-on-terror-2014-4>
- Summary of Torture Report Findings: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/world/senate-intelligence-committee-cia-torture-report.html?action=click&contentCollection=Opinion&module=MostEmailed&version=Full&region=Marginalia&src=me&pgtype=article>
- What We Once Were/Are: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/opinion/the-torture-report-reminds-us-of-what-america-was.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=MostVisible&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/opinion/the-torture-report-reminds-us-of-what-america-was.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=MostVisible&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&_r=0)
- Memo on Standards of Interrogation, pg 1-3: <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/legacy/2010/08/05/memo-gonzales-aug2002.pdf>
- Skim: Constitutional Limitations on Wartime Detention: The Guantanamo Cases
  - a. *Rasul v. Bush*, 542 U.S. 466 (2004)
  - b. *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507 (2004)
  - b. *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, 548 U.S. 557 (2006)
  - c. *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. 723 (2008)

January 25: The Judicial Branch

- Chapter 13, MK

### **Week 5: Congress**

January 30: Congress

- Chapter 10, MK

February 1: NO LECTURE

- SECTION for test prep on February 2

### **Week 6: Public Opinion & Media**

February 6: EXAM 1

- NO SECTION

February 8: NO LECTURE

- SECTION: Paper workshop

### **Week 7: Parties & Elections**

February 13: Parties

- Chapter 9, MK

**\*\*\*Response paper on Political Institutions & War on Terror DUE at beginning of section on February 14\*\*\***

February 15: Elections

- Chapter 8, MK

### **Week 8: Exam**

February 20: PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY

February 22: EXAM 2

- No section

### **Week 9: Media and Public Opinion**

February 27: Media

- Chapter 7, MK

#### March 1: Public Opinion & Participation

- Chapter 6, MK

### **Week 10: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties**

#### March 6: Civil Rights

- Chapter 5, MK
- Martin Luther King, I've Been to the Mountaintop (last speech before assassination), <http://www.afscme.org/union/history/mlk/ive-been-to-the-mountaintop-by-dr-martin-luther-king-jr>
- Martin Luther King, Letter From a Birmingham Jail, <http://www.h-net.org/~hst306/documents/letter.html>

#### March 8: Civil Liberties

- Chapter 4, MK
- 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment Questions: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/10/06/law-3>
- *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961): [https://www.themarshallproject.org/2014/12/08/dollree-mapp-1923-2014-the-rosa-parks-of-the-fourth-amendment?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=share-tools&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_content=post-top](https://www.themarshallproject.org/2014/12/08/dollree-mapp-1923-2014-the-rosa-parks-of-the-fourth-amendment?utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share-tools&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=post-top)
- Same-Sex Marriage: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts\\_law/supreme-court-declines-to-review-same-sex-marriage-cases/2014/10/06/ee822848-4d5e-11e4-babe-e91da079cb8a\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-declines-to-review-same-sex-marriage-cases/2014/10/06/ee822848-4d5e-11e4-babe-e91da079cb8a_story.html)

### **Final Exam: Wed, March 15, 2017, 8:30-10:20am**

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