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Office hours: Fri 10-12 & by appointment  
TAs: Chris Colligan, Jeff Grove, Alicia Reese & Tan Zhao

POL S 202: Fall 2018  
Mon/Wed 11:30-12:50  
SMI 120

## **POL S 202: Introduction to American Politics**

This course is designed to introduce students to the structure of American government and the political ideals that inform this structure. In the first part of the course, we will explore what it means to be a citizen in the U.S. Who is included and excluded from political life, and how have the bounds of citizenship evolved over time? We will examine the ways in which informal democratic institutions—electoral systems, political parties, media and social movements—shape our political allegiances, divisions and the bounds of opportunity and constraint in political life. How have democracy and rights protections expanded over time, and to what extent do some groups remain politically marginalized or excluded? Next we will examine the complex interplay and shifting balance of power between the legislature, the presidency and executive departments, an independent judiciary and an increasingly diverse and politically divided American populace. Finally, we will examine several controversial policy outcomes our political system has generated, including a uniquely punishing criminal justice system and a decades-long global war on terrorism.

### **Course Material**

Required: David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, Kenneth Mayer (eds). 2018. *The Enduring Debate: Classical and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. W.W. Norton

Required articles & video clips posted on course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1224615>

### **Course Requirements**

The grading is based on short (1-2 page) reading response papers due each week, two exams, in-class debates and participation in sections. The response paper prompts will ask you to address a question or argument raised in the assigned reading for that week and are meant to serve as foundation for section discussion. Students must turn in a response paper in section every Friday. Late papers are not accepted; there are no make-ups. The responses will be graded as superb (4.0), satisfactory (3.0) or unsatisfactory (no credit). Response paper questions will be posted on the course website (see “pages”). All exams will cover material from the lectures, assigned readings and sections. The debates will take place during Week 10 and will cover material from the entire quarter.

### **Evaluation**

Exam 1 (20%) – October 29  
Exam 2 (25%) – November 19  
In-Class Debates (25%) – December 3-7  
Weekly response papers (15%)  
Section participation (15%)

### **Recommended Daily News Sources**

*National, International & Local news:* The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The BBC, The Seattle Times  
*Blogs:* The Monkey Cage (WaPo), Mischiefs of Faction (Vox), FiveThirtyEight (NYT)

## **Other Course Policies**

### *Diversity Statement*

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that diversity within the classroom be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I will strive to present materials and activities in ways that respect and affirm such differences. I expect the same of you: while discomfort is an important part of the learning process, nobody should be made to feel unsafe in this classroom. I will not create or allow space for offensive language or behavior related to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, political identification, cognitive style, and communication style.

### *Exams & Written Work*

Please note that exams are scheduled at the start of the quarter. Make-up exams will only be given in extreme emergencies (such as a death in the family or a serious illness) justified by a written excuse and accompanied with appropriate documentation. Students should see me IN ADVANCE of any deadlines if something happens that will affect your performance in class or may require an extended deadline. There are no make-ups for quizzes or section participation. All members of the academic community at the University of Washington must abide by the Student Conduct Code. For questions about the Conduct Code, please consult the following website: <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>

### *Expectations/ Your Success in this Class*

During the quarter I am prepared to meet individually with any student enrolled in this course, either during my office hours or by appointment. Students are encouraged to ask question and raise issues at any time regarding the material, the discussion or a contemporary issue of relevance to the course. However, any email communications should be limited to course logistics. TAs and I will answer questions about course content and study guides only in lecture, quiz sections and office hours. We will not answer questions about exam content in writing. We will respond to your emails within 48 hours.

It is necessary to attend lectures and quiz sections in order to do well in this course. Lectures will not simply summarize the assigned readings, but will provide a foundation for discussion of the readings in quiz sections. Finally, please note that the only online component to this class consists of accessing the syllabus, course readings, video clips, daily news sources and lectures slides on the course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1224615>

## **Campus Resources**

### *Reporting Incidents of Bias*

If you or someone you know experiences or witnesses bias at the individual, institutional, or systemic level, the University has created a report form that may be used to document and report these experiences: <https://report.bias.washington.edu/>

### *Counseling & Mental Health*

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their

ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students.

If you are experiencing a psychological crisis and cannot wait until the Counseling Center open, please call the Crisis Clinic at 866-427-4747 or the King County Crisis Line at 206-461-3222.

Hall Health Center also offers mental health care, including individual counseling and therapy, crisis counseling and intervention, medication evaluation and management, group therapy and support groups, campus outreach services, mindfulness meditation, and after-hours care. You can make an appointment at Hall Health by calling 206-543-5030.

### *The Q Center*

The University of Washington Q Center is a primarily student run resource center dedicated to serving anyone with or without a gender or sexuality – UW students, staff, faculty, alum, and community members. Resources include one-on-one advising, support for student groups, regular events, a lending library, and student blog. You can visit the Q Center in the Husky Union Building, Room 315 or online at: <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/wordpress/>

### *Access and Accommodations*

I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disabilities Support Services Office and who provide me with necessary documentation. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu). DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

## **Course Schedule**

### *Part I: Citizenship & Exclusion*

Intro: 9/26 - Course Introduction

Week 1: 10/1– What Does It Mean to Be An American?

Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America” (pp. 3-13)

Michael Schedson, “The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life” (pp. 26-33)

10/3– The Constitutional System

Michael Kammen, “The Nature of American Constitutionalism” (pp. 45-53)

Robert Dahl, “The Constitution as a Model: An American Illusion” - [\*course website\*](#)

James Madison, Federalist Essay #51 - [\*course website\*](#)

10/5 – Debating the Issues: Should the Constitution Be Fundamentally Changed? (pp. 65-83)

Week 2: 10/8- Civil Rights & Liberties I

Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches" (pp. 121-129)  
Jonathan Rauch, "In Defense of Prejudice" (pp. 130-137)

10/10– Civil Rights & Liberties II

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration" – [course website](#)  
*Documentary: 13<sup>th</sup>*

10/12 – Discussion of Coates & *13<sup>th</sup>*

Week 3: 10/15 - Political Parties & Polarization

Morris P. Fiorina, "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics" (pp. 362-372)  
Nicol Rae, "Be Careful What You Wish For: The Rise of Responsible Parties in American National Politics" (pp. 373-383)  
Bill Bishop, "The Big Sort" – [course website](#)

10/17– Public Opinion & Media Effects

V.O. Key, "The Voice of the People: An Echo" (pp. 333-338)  
Louis Menand, "The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters" (pp. 339-347)  
Mark Prior, "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout" (pp. 316-322)  
Lilliana Mason, "Party Polarization is Making Us More Prejudiced" – [course website](#)

10/19 –Is Partisan Media Exposure Bad for Democracy? (pp. 323-332)

Week 4: 10/22: Voting & Elections

David Bateman, "Race, Party and American Voting Rights" – [course website](#)  
Amber Phillips, "Just How Big of a Hurdle is Gerrymandering to Democrats' Taking Back the House This November? –[course website](#)  
How the Electoral College Works – [video clip on course webpage](#)

10/24 - Exam Review

10/26 – Debating the Issues: Voter ID Laws—Reducing Fraud or Suppressing Votes? (pp. 352-361)

## *II. Political Institutions & Policy Controversies*

Week 5: 10/29– Exam 1

10/31 – Congress & Representation

David Mayhew, "Congress: The Electoral Connection" (pp. 155-158)  
Adam Liptak, "Smaller States Find Outsized Clout in Growing Senate" – [course website](#)  
Ezra Klein, "Let's Talk: The Move to Reform the Filibuster" – [course website](#)

11/2 – Debating the Issues: Checks & Balances – Too Many Checks, or Not Enough Balance? (pp. 179-188)

Week 6: 11/5 – The Presidency & Executive Branch

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist #70 – [course website](#)

Will Howell, “A Question of Power: The Robust Presidency” – [course website](#)

Charlie Savage, “Trump and His Lawyers Embrace a Vision of Vast Executive Power” – [course website](#)

Charles O. Jones, “Perspectives on the Presidency” (pp. 199-205)

11/7– The Judiciary

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist #78 (pp. 259-265)

David O’Brien, “The Court and American Life” (pp. 266-272)

Gerald Rosenberg, “The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?” (pp. 273-278)

11/9 - Debating the Issues: Should the Electoral College Be Replaced with a Direct Popular Vote for President? (pp. 206-218)

Week 7: 11/12 – No Class, University Holiday

11/14 – The Global War on Terrorism

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961 Farewell Address – [course website](#)

James Fallows, “The Tragedy of the American Military” - [course website](#)

Steve Coll, “Remote Control: Our Drone Delusion” – [course website](#)

11/16 – Exam II Review & Debate Assignments

Week 8: 11/19 – Exam II

11/21-11/23 – No Class, University Holiday

Week 9: 11/26– The Politics of Punishment

Bruce Western & Becky Pettit, “Incarceration & Social Inequality” – [course website](#)

Livia Luan, “Profiting from Enforcement: The Role of Private Prisons in US Immigration Detention” – [course website](#)

Thomas Edsall, “The Expanding World of Poverty Capitalism” – [course website](#)

11/28– Reserved for Debate Prep

11/30 – Reserved for Debate Prep

Week 10: 12/3- Debates I

12/5: Debates II

12/7 – Debates III