Political Science 100 I Power and Politics in America

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Fall Semester 2017 I Section 150
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:20 I Love Library Room 102

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Course website:	http://canvas.unl.edu

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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INTRODUCTION

This course will focus on the fundamentals of the American political system, particularly the political behavior of American citizens and the political institutions that share in governing this country. Special emphasis will be put on the impact individuals have on the political system and the responsiveness of the government to various groups in our society. By the end of the course, students should have an improved understanding of: (1) how the American political system works, (2) how individual citizens think about and influence politics, and (3) how to analyze current political events critically.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, students will:

1. Understand the origins and history of American democracy
2. Understand the structure and function of U.S. political institutions
3. Understand how, when, and why Americans engage in political behavior

ACE (GENERAL EDUCATION) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

By passing this course, you will fulfill ACE Learning Outcome 6: “Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior” and ACE 8: “Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.” Through this course, you will have several opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the ACE Learning Outcomes. Your work will be evaluated by the instructor according to the assignments described in this course syllabus. You may be asked to provide samples of your work for ACE assessment as well.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND COURSE MATERIALS

1. Bond, J. R., & Smith, K. B. (2016). *Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. [ISBN: 978-1138786349]

2. iClicker – We will be using iClicker in this class. There is an iClicker app available for smartphone/tablet (iOS/Android), or you can use the web version on a laptop. The app is free for 14 days but then requires a subscription (6 months = $14.99). If you don't have a mobile device or laptop, you can purchase an iClicker remote from the UNL bookstore. See https://www.iclicker.com/students for more information.

Required textbooks and course materials are available for purchase or rental from the UNL Bookstore, and textbooks (when possible) will be placed on course reserve for use in Love Library.

In addition to the textbook, you are encouraged to read the politics section of at least one major national newspaper (e.g., *The Washington Post, The New York Times*) on a daily basis.

Any additional readings will be posted on the course website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are expected to attend both lecture and recitation for this course. I will lecture twice a week on course material, and you will get together with your recitation section once a week to discuss relevant course concepts.

Exams (~52%). You are required to take three midterm exams and a final exam. Exams will be multiple choice. Midterm exams will focus on new material only and the final exam will be cumulative (covering material from the entire semester). All exams for this course will be completed at the Digital Learning Center Exam Commons (see additional information on p. 5). Students are responsible for scheduling and completing exams within the specified time window, so please make sure you are familiar with Exam Commons policies and ask us if you have any questions!

Recitation (~17%). Teaching assistants will hand out a separate syllabus for recitation. Your recitation grade will be based on attendance and active participation in discussion. TAs will focus on both the quantity and the quality of your contributions when determining recitation grades. In other words, the goal should be to contribute often, but also to make sure that any contributions are valuable to the class discussion. Completion of readings and in-class activities will also count toward your participation grade. Recitation grades will be determined by TAs and factored into your overall grade for the course.

Final Paper (~12%). Toward the end of the semester, your final paper assignment will be to write a research paper tackling one of the big questions or debates in American politics. We will go over the details of the assignment in class and you will receive a detailed handout with guidelines for the paper. The final product will be a paper that is 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages. Final papers will be due Tuesday, November 21, by midnight, and must be submitted online through Canvas.

Research Component Credits (~8%). To help students learn about political science research you will be required to engage in some research activities during the semester. As such, all POLS 100 students are members of the Political Science Experimental Participant Pool (PSEPP). In short, while you may choose to sign up to participate in studies being run in the UNL Department of Political Science and/or

read about similar research that has been conducted in the department in the past, you must earn a total of 8 research credits. **It is anticipated that most students will do a combination of research participation and article reports to meet the research component but you may earn all the points with research participation or with reports.** One way to learn about political science is to take part in research. In doing so, you help researchers from the department gather new information about human behavior. You also learn about the research process from the "inside." All research projects are reviewed by the University's Institutional Review Board to ensure that your rights are safeguarded. However, if you feel that you have been mistreated as a research participant, please let your TA, Professor, or the University's Institutional Review Board know. There is no requirement that you participate in research. You may choose to do only article reports without any penalty. Complete instructions will be posted on the course website.

Short Writing Assignments (~7%). There will be two short writing assignments (worth 20 points each) that ask you to reflect on or apply some of what we discuss in lecture. Specific instructions for each assignment will be given in class and provided in an additional handout. These deadlines are marked on the course schedule. Responses should be typed and approximately one page double-spaced in length. These must be submitted online through Canvas.

iClicker Participation (5%). Lecture participation and attendance will be tracked using iClicker and this will be factored into your final grade for the course. Participation points can be earned by participating in polls with your iClicker device during lecture.

GRADES

Final grades for this course are calculated based on a possible 600 points using the distribution and percentages below. I don't round up or assign extra points at the end of the semester, so it is your responsibility to earn your desired grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your grade, you should feel free to talk to your TA and/or the instructor--the earlier in the semester the better! Final grades will be curved up for everyone in the class *only* if the overall class average is below a B- (< 80%). We will use Canvas throughout the semester to post grades so that you can keep track of your progress, and you can also calculate your grade using the point distribution below. Incompletes are only given under extreme circumstances, and at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Exam 1	70
Exam 2	70
Exam 3	70
Final Exam	100
Final Paper	70
Recitation	100
Research Component Credits	50
Short Writing Assignments	40
iClicker	30
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Total	600

Points	Percent	Grade	Points	Percent	Grade
582	97%	A+	462	77%	C+
558	93%	A	438	73%	C
540	90%	A-	420	70%	C-
522	87%	B+	402	67%	D+
498	83%	B	378	63%	D
480	80%	B-	360	60%	D-
			< 360	< 60%	F

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines and Completion of Coursework

Late assignments will not be accepted, and make-up exams will not be given. Should you miss any exam or assignment without an approved excuse, you will receive a zero grade for that exercise. In rare circumstances, an exception may be granted to a student who provides a validated excuse to the instructor *prior to the assignment due date or exam dates*. If you foresee being unable to turn in a paper or take an exam on the assigned dates, contact the instructor *immediately*. Excused absences for University sponsored events (field trips, athletic trips) and medical / personal emergencies *must be documented*.

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation

Regular attendance at both lecture and recitation is encouraged, and unexcused absences will hurt your participation grade. Absences will be excused only for medical/personal emergencies or university sponsored events, documentation of the absence will be required, and you must notify us in advance. If you do miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and getting notes from someone in class. Reading assignments are to be completed before class meetings. You should be prepared to discuss the readings and concepts scheduled for each class period. This is genuinely necessary for your success in this course. You must carefully read the assigned material, take notes while you read, and take good notes in class in order to perform well on the exams. Your participation grade and, more importantly, the quality of class discussions hinges largely upon your preparation and your informed contributions. This class will be more enjoyable and productive for all of us if everyone comes prepared!

Communication

The best way to reach me is through email. I check it often (more often than I check voicemail) and will do my best to respond to your questions within 24 hours. Please include “POLS 100” in the subject line of your email. You are also welcome and encouraged to stop by my office during office hours, or make an appointment to meet with me at another time. Your TAs and I will send announcements electronically, so please check your email and the course website often. Please make sure that the email address associated with your Canvas account is one you check frequently. You may also want to make sure that Canvas is set to email you when course announcements are posted, and get into the habit of checking Canvas on a regular basis.

Academic Misconduct Warning

All work must be your own. Plagiarism and all other forms of cheating outlined by the University’s Student Code of Conduct (Section 4.2) will not be tolerated in this class. Cheating or plagiarism will be reported through official university channels, and the consequences will be severe. The minimum punishment is usually failure in the course. No one exam or assignment is ever worth this penalty. To avoid missing out on a good college GPA, or even your degree, keep your eyes on your own test and write your own final paper.

Plagiarism-Checking Software

Writing assignments in this course will be submitted electronically to a Turnitin drop box in Canvas. Turnitin uses plagiarism-checking software to detect text copied from other authors. Further information about Turnitin can be found at turnitin.com.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

DIGITAL LEARNING CENTER EXAM COMMONS
Website: http://dlc.unl.edu

Procedures
Exams for this course will be taken under electronic supervision at Digital Learning Center, which is located in the Adele Coryell Hall Learning Commons in Love Library. All testing times are pre-scheduled and exams will be completed on a computer. Before you begin an exam, you must place your personal items in your pre-assigned locker and check-in with Digital Learning Center staff at the front desk. When you have completed your exam, you must check-out at the front desk.

Guidelines

- All testing times are pre-scheduled by students. All students are responsible for self sign-up and early sign-up is recommended. Time slots fill up quickly (especially during finals week!).
- All students are required to have their current N-Card to test. Other forms of ID will not be accepted as a substitute for N-Cards. DLC staff reserve the right to ask for a second ID if needed for identity verification.
- All students will receive two pieces of barcoded scratch paper for their exam. This paper will be scanned in to students upon check-in and scanned out upon check-out.
- Only permitted items are allowed at your computer station during testing, including your N-Card, DLC provided barcoded scratch paper, and writing utensils. Nothing else is allowed at your computer station unless your instructor has made prior arrangements with the DLC.
- All exams must be submitted for grading at the posted closing time. Students will not be given additional time to finish their exams past the posted closing time.

To schedule your exam, please visit http://dlc-reserve.unl.edu. For more information about the Exam Commons location, operating hours and student guidelines, please visit http://dlc.unl.edu.

POLS 100 I COURSE SCHEDULE

Due dates for assignments and exams, as well as required readings, are listed below on the course schedule. All readings should be completed prior to class. Please note that this schedule represents a tentative plan and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class.

Note: All reading assignments for lecture come from the Bond & Smith textbook *Analyzing American Democracy*.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS / EXAMS
1	T 8/22	Syllabus and Course Introduction	Syllabus and Course Schedule (available on Canvas)	
SECTION I: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY				
	R 8/24	Democracy and the Foundations of American Government	Ch. 1	**complete student information survey and join iClicker course by Thurs. 8/24**
2	T 8/29	The Constitution	Ch. 2 and Appendix C: The Constitution (pp. 676-688)	
	R 8/31	Federalism and the Separation of Powers	Ch. 3 and Federalist No. 10 (pp. 689-693)	
3	T 9/5	Civil Liberties: Speech, Assembly, Press, Religion	Ch. 4, pp. 116-138	
	R 9/7	Civil Liberties: Gun Rights, Law and Order, Privacy	Ch. 4, pp. 139-151	**Short Writing Assignment #1 due Thurs. 9/7 by midnight**
4	T 9/12	Civil Rights: Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination, Race	Ch. 5, pp. 152-173	
	R 9/14	Civil Rights: Gender, Sexual Orientation	Ch. 5, pp. 174-189	**Create PSEPP account by Fri. 9/15**
5	T 9/19	**NO CLASS (Exam 1)**		**Take Exam 1 at DLC Exam Commons between 9/17-9/22**
SECTION II: AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS				
	R 9/21	Congress: what does it do?	Ch. 12, pp. 444-467	**Complete PSEPP prescreening survey by F 9/22**
6	T 9/26	Congress: how does it work?	Ch. 12, pp. 468-493	
	R 9/28	The Presidency: defining the job	Ch. 13, pp. 494-522	
7	T 10/3	The Presidency: public opinion	Ch. 13, pp. 523-551	**Short Writing Assignment #2 due Tues. 10/3 by midnight**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS / EXAMS
	R 10/5	The Bureaucracy	Ch. 14	
8	T 10/10	The Supreme Court	Ch. 15	
	R 10/12	**NO CLASS (Exam 2)**		**Take Exam 2 at DLC Exam Commons between 10/11-10/13 or 10/18-10/20**
SECTION III: AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR				
9	T 10/17	**NO CLASS (Fall Semester Break)**		
	R 10/19	Interest Groups	Ch. 6	
10	T 10/24	Political Parties	Ch. 7	
	R 10/26	Video: *Big Sky, Big Money* (PBS Frontline)		
11	T 10/31	Presidential Elections	Ch. 10, pp. 340-381	
	R 11/2	Congressional Elections	Ch. 10, pp. 382-407	
12	T 11/7	Political Participation and Voter Turnout	Ch. 11, pp. 408-429	
	R 11/9	Vote Choice	Ch. 11, pp. 429-443	
13	T 11/14	**NO CLASS (Exam 3)**		**Take Exam 3 at DLC Exam Commons between 11/12-11/17**
	R 11/16	The Media and Politics	Ch. 8, pp. 274-292	
14	T 11/21	Media Bias	Ch. 8, pp. 293-307	**Final Research Paper due Tues. 11/21 by midnight**
	R 11/23	**NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)**		
15	T 11/28	Measuring Public Opinion	Ch. 9, pp. 308-324	
	R 11/30	Origins of Public Opinion	Ch. 9, pp. 325-339	**Research Component Credit Deadline is F 12/1 by midnight**
16	T 12/5	Intro to Political Psychology		
	R 12/7	Review for Final Exam		
***		**FINAL EXAM**		**Take Final Exam at DLC Exam Commons between 12/9-12/15**