

Political Science 100 | Power and Politics in America

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Spring Semester 2020 | Section 150

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:20 | Louise Pound Hall (LPH) 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. Samples of your work may be collected through Canvas for ACE assessment.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND COURSE MATERIALS

1. Bond, J. R., & Smith, K. B. (2019). *Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
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. Please make sure you set up your iClicker account according to the instructions for this class—more detail will be provided.

Required textbooks and course materials are available for purchase or rental from the UNL Bookstore, and textbooks 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*, *The Wall Street Journal*) on a daily basis. Many of these newspapers offer free or discounted access for students—check their websites for more information.

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 in more depth.

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 starting on p. 6). 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 (~8%). 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 Thursday, April 16, before 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 & POLS 160 students are members of the Political Science Experimental Participant Pool (PSEPP). In short, you must earn a total of 8 research credits this semester as a required component of this course. You may choose to complete these credits 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. **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 of these points through research participation or with article 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 (irb@unl.edu) 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. Please direct any questions about this part of the course to your instructor or TA.

Short Writing Assignments (10%). There will be three 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 detailed in an additional handout. These deadlines are indicated 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 throughout the semester 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. iClicker activities fall under the provisions of our campus's academic honesty policy. Students must not engage in academic dishonesty while participating in iClicker activities. This includes but is not limited to answering polling questions while not physically in class, looking at other students' devices while answering live questions, or using more than one iClicker remote or account at a time. Any student found to be in violation of these rules will lose polling points for the entire term and may be reported to the Dean of Student Discipline for further action.

Extra Credit. Extra credit opportunities may be offered occasionally to all students and are at the discretion of the instructor. Details will be announced in class. I do not offer extra credit opportunities on an individual basis.

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	50
Recitation	100
Research Component Credits	50
Short Writing Assignments	60
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 (please include "POLS 100" in the subject line, or send your message through Canvas). I check it often (more often than I check voicemail) and will do my best to respond to your questions within 24 hours (Monday-Friday). I may or may not check email during the evenings and on weekends, so please plan accordingly and email me well in advance of any assignment deadlines. 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 through Canvas and submitted to Turnitin, which uses plagiarism-checking software to detect text copied from other authors. This includes published articles and books, as well as news articles and websites, and course papers submitted previously to Canvas for other courses. Further information about Turnitin can be found at <http://www.turnitin.com>. You should also feel free to ask Dr. Haas or your TA about it if you have any questions about Turnitin or about plagiarism and how to cite sources in general.

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 | 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 1/14	Syllabus and Course Introduction	Syllabus and Course Schedule (available on Canvas)	
SECTION I: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY				
	R 1/16	Democracy and Foundations of American Government	Ch. 1	complete student information survey and join iClicker course by Thurs. 1/16
2	T 1/21	The American Constitution	Ch. 2 and Appendix C: The Constitution (pp. 642-654)	
	R 1/23	Federalism and Separation of Powers	Ch. 3 and Appendix D: Federalist No. 10 (pp. 655-659)	
3	T 1/28	Civil Liberties: Speech, Assembly, Press, Religion	Ch. 4	
	R 1/30	Civil Liberties: Gun Rights, Law and Order, Privacy	Ch. 4	Short Writing Assignment 1 due Thurs. 1/30 before midnight
4	T 2/4	Civil Rights: Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination, Race	Ch. 5	Create PSEPP account by Fri. 2/7
	R 2/6	Civil Rights: Gender, Sexual Orientation	Ch. 5	
5	T 2/11	NO LECTURE (Exam 1)		Take Exam 1 at DLC Exam Commons between Sat. 2/8 – Tues. 2/11
SECTION II: AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS				
	R 2/13	Congress: what does it do?	Ch. 12	Complete PSEPP prescreening survey by Fri. 2/14
6	T 2/18	Congress: how does it work?	Ch. 12	
	R 2/20	The Presidency: defining the job	Ch. 13	
7	T 2/25	The Presidency: public opinion	Ch. 13	Short Writing Assignment 2 due Tues. 2/25 before midnight

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS / EXAMS
	R 2/27	NO LECTURE (SPSP Conference)		
8	T 3/3	The Bureaucracy	Ch. 14	
	R 3/5	The Supreme Court	Ch. 15	
9	T 3/10	NO LECTURE (Exam 2)		Take Exam 2 at DLC Exam Commons between Sat. 3/7 – Tues. 3/10
SECTION III: AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR				
	R 3/12	Interest Groups	Ch. 6	
10	T 3/17	Political Parties	Ch. 7	
	R 3/19	Presidential Elections	Ch. 10	Short Writing Assignment 3 due Thurs. 3/19 before midnight
11	T 3/24- R 3/26	NO LECTURE (Spring Break)		
12	T 3/31	Congressional Elections	Ch. 10	
	R 4/2	Political Participation and Voter Turnout	Ch. 11	
13	T 4/7	Vote Choice	Ch. 11	
	R 4/9	NO LECTURE (Exam 3)		Take Exam 3 at DLC Exam Commons between Thurs. 4/9 – Sun. 4/12
14	T 4/14	The Media and Politics	Ch. 8	
	R 4/16	Media Bias	Ch. 8	Final Research Paper due Thurs. 4/16 before midnight
15	T 4/21	Measuring Public Opinion	Ch. 9	
	R 4/23	NO CLASS (MPA Conference)		Research Component Credit Deadline is Fri. 4/24
16	T 4/28	Origins of Public Opinion	Ch. 9	
	R 4/30	Course Wrap-up / Final Exam Review		
***		FINAL EXAM		Take Final Exam at DLC Exam Commons between Sat. 5/2 – Thurs. 5/7