

GOVERNMENT 110: POLITICS IN THE U.S.
American University, Spring 2023
Section 005

Instructor: Prof. Elizabeth Suhay, PhD

Time and Location: Mon & Thurs 12:55 – 2:10, Kerwin 5

Email: suhay@american.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 3:00 – 5:00 & by appointment, Kerwin 212

Course Description

Government 110 offers a broad introduction to U.S. politics, examining the structure of the national government as well as the methods by which citizens influence it. Students will learn about the following specific topics: the nation's founding; federalism and the separation of powers; the principal institutions of the U.S. government, including the Presidency, federal bureaucracy, Congress, and Judiciary; civil rights and civil liberties; and democratic politics, including elections, political parties, public opinion, and media. The course will proceed with an eye to current events, particularly the 2016 and 2020 elections.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the structure of our government, including its federal nature, the powers of each branch of government, the process of electing representatives, and the protections for civil rights and liberties in the Constitution
2. Use this understanding of the formal and informal institutions of American politics to explain how individuals, with and without authority, affect outcomes to their liking
3. Apply an understanding of politics to a controversial decision, election or policy
4. Convey coherent analytical arguments about politics in the U.S. in writing and in speech
5. Locate and employ appropriate empirical evidence to evaluate claims and draw conclusions about phenomena in American politics

Academic Integrity

All students are required to follow the University's Academic Integrity Code. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the standards and requirements of the University's Academic Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and will be reported appropriately. You can find more information about the University's Academic Integrity Code here:

<https://www.american.edu/policies/students/upload/academic-integrity-code-2020-2-2.pdf>

Course Assignments and Expectations

Exams | 45% of grade

Midterm (25% of grade)

Final (20% of grade)

Students must take exams at the designated time.

Panels and Quizzes | 20% of grade

Students will appear on at least one in-class discussion panel (5%) and will complete a number of in-class quizzes (15%) to gauge their mastery of course content. Panel participants will be announced ahead of time; quizzes will be unannounced. Students with an unexcused absence on the day of a quiz will receive a zero; however, students may drop their lowest quiz grade from grade calculations.

Participation | 15% of grade

Students are expected to come to class having read and reflected on assigned readings. Students are graded on the quantity and quality of their in-class participation. A person engaging in high quality participation conveys knowledge of, and thoughtful reflections on, assigned readings; actively listens to lectures as well as perspectives of peers; and is respectful of others. Students are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. With each additional unexcused absence, the participation grade falls by one letter-grade level (e.g., B to B-).

Note: Students should not use computers or cell phones in class unless explicitly allowed or instructed. (Some exceptions are permitted for individuals on a case-by-case basis – please see instructor.) No recording of lectures or discussions without permission.

Final Paper | 20% of grade

Students will complete a final paper, 5-7 pages in length, based on a selection of the course readings.

Required Books (available on reserve at Bender Library)

1. Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, Stephen Ansolabehere, and Hahrie Han. 2022. *American Government: Power and Purpose, Seventeenth Edition*. W.W. Norton.
2. Gary Gerstle. 2022. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*. Oxford University Press.
3. Adolph Reed. 2022. *The South: Jim Crow and Its Afterlives*. Verso.
4. John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck. 2022. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press.

All other readings available via Canvas or publicly available on Internet

COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 19: Introduction

Monday, January 23: Politics & Political Science

- Lowi et al., Chapter 1: Five Principles of Politics
- Jane Mansbridge. 2014. What is Political Science For? *Perspectives on Politics* 12(1): 8-17.

Thursday, January 26: Foundations of American Government

- Lowi et al., Chapter 2: Constructing a Government: The Founding and the Constitution

Monday, January 30: Federalism & the Separation of Powers

- Lowi et al., Chapter 3: Federalism & the Separation of Powers
- Sarah F. Anzia. 2021. Party and Ideology in American Local Government: An Appraisal. *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 133-150.

Thursday, February 2: Civil Liberties

- Lowi et al., Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Monday, February 6: The Shifting Politics of Civil Liberties

- Dennis Chong, Jack Citrin, and Morris Levy. 2022. The Realignment of Political Tolerance in the United States. *Perspectives on Politics*.
- Don Herzog. 2020. *A Little Book of Political Mistakes*. (Chapters: More Laws, Less Freedom; Equality Against Liberty.) <https://little-book-of-political-mistakes.pubpub.org/>

Thursday, February 9: Civil Rights

- Lowi et al., Chapter 5: Civil Rights
- Adolph L. Reed, Jr. 2022. *The South: Jim Crow and Its Afterlives*. Verso. (Chapters 1, 2)

Monday, February 13: Race & the American South

- Adolph L. Reed, Jr. 2022. *The South: Jim Crow and Its Afterlives*. Verso. (Chapters 3-5)

Thursday, February 16: Congress

- Lowi et al., Chapter 6: Congress: The First Branch

Monday, February 20: Congress

- David Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press. (excerpt)
- Ken Vogel. 2023. The Powerful Lobbyist Behind Kevin McCarthy. *New York Times*.

Thursday, February 23: The Presidency

- Lowi et al., Chapter 7: The Presidency as an Institution
- Paul Pierson. 2017. American Hybrid: Donald Trump and the Strange Merger of Populism and Plutocracy. *The British Journal of Sociology* 68(S1): 105-119.

Monday, February 27: The Trump Presidency

- John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck. 2022. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 2, 3)

Thursday, March 2: The Federal Bureaucracy

- Lowi et al., Chapter 8: The Executive Branch

Monday, March 6: The Federal Courts

- Lowi et al., Chapter 9: The Federal Courts
- Richard L. Hasen. 2019. Polarization and the Judiciary. *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 261-276.

Thursday, March 9

- Exam 1

SPRING BREAK!

Monday, March 20: The Politicization of Science

- Special lecture & guests

Thursday, March 23: Political Parties

- Lowi et al., Chapter 12: Political Parties
- Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics. *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571-597.

Monday, March 27: Partisan Governance and the New Deal Order

- Gary Gerstle. 2022. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*. Oxford University Press. (Introduction; Chapters 1, 2)

Thursday, March 30: Partisan Governance and the Neoliberal Order

- Gary Gerstle. 2022. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*. Oxford University Press. (Chapters 4-6)

Monday, April 3: Groups, Organized Interests, & Inequality

- Lowi et al., Chapter 13: Groups and Organized Interests
- Lee Drutman, Matt Grossmann, and Timothy LaPira. 2019. The Interest Group Top Tier. In *Can America Govern Itself?* Frances E. Lee and Nolan McCarty, eds. Cambridge University Press.

Thursday, April 6: Public Opinion & Political Ideology

- Lowi et al., Chapter 10: Public Opinion
- Pew Research Center. 2021. Beyond Red vs. Blue: The Political Typology. (Summary only) www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/beyond-red-vs-blue-the-political-typology-2

Monday, April 10: Elections

- Lowi et al., Chapter 11: Elections
- John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, Lynn Vavreck. 2022. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (Chapter 1)

Thursday, April 13: The 2020 Election

- John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, Lynn Vavreck. 2022. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 4-6)

Monday, April 17: The 2020 Election

- John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck. 2022. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 7-9)

Thursday, April 20: The Media

- Lowi et al., Chapter 14: The Media

Monday, April 24: Final Paper Workshop

- Draft of final paper due in class

Thursday, April 27: Social Media & Political Polarization

- Jaime E. Settle. 2019. *Frenemies: How Social Media Polarizes America*. Cambridge University Press. (Excerpts)

Monday, May 1

- Papers due
- Class wrap-up

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS POLICIES & SUPPORT

Academic Support and Access Center

The Academic Support and Access Center supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to providing access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community.

Location: Mary Graydon Center (MGC), Room 243, 202-885-3360, asac@american.edu

Hours: Mon – Thurs 9am – 7pm & Fri 9am – 5pm

Website: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively "Protected Bases") in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the:

Assistant Vice President for Equity and Title IX Officer, Office of Equity and Title IX

Phone: 202-885-8080

Email: TitleIX@american.edu for complaints and reports for sexual misconduct; and equityoffice@american.edu for complaints and reports for other discrimination.

- Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff – with the exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, staff in the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center – who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.
- For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence (OASIS), Health Promotion & Advocacy Center; 202-885-7070; OASIS@american.edu; www.american.edu/ocl/OASIS

Emergencies

In an emergency, AU will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail or Canvas, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (<http://www.american.edu/emergency/>) and the AU information line at 202-885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.