

PSCI 4731-100 (Spring, 2009)
Advanced Undergraduate Seminar
Progress and Problems in American Democracy:
A Transformative Moment or More of the Same
for the American Political System?

Professor Edward Greenberg

Office Hours and Contact information

Ed Greenberg's office hours: W1:00-2:00, Th 2-4, Ketchum 131A. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available at most other times by appointment at the Institute of Behavioral Science (Building #2, 1546 Broadway, 1.5 blocks north of the Starbucks at University and Broadway)• Extra offices hours will be added during weeks 12-15 for paper and web site consulting	Joshua Ryan's office hours (Graduate Assistant and Grader): M,W 1:30-3:00, Ketchum 131A.
Email: Edward.greenberg@colorado.edu Office phone at IBS: 2-2141 Cell phone: 720 839-5077	Email: Joshua.Ryan@colorado.edu

Introduction

This is a critical thinking course organized as a weekly seminar. The central aim of the course is to critically examine the question of whether the United States is in the midst of a fundamental transformation in its politics, governance, and public policies, or whether the recent changes we have witnessed and presently are witnessing in the American political system are within the normal range of change as a new administration takes office.

The case that a fundamental transformation may now be underway is based on the following observations:

- The 2006 and 2008 elections, as well as trends in party identification and public conceptions of the parties, may mean that a new party system dominated by the Democrats now exists and is likely to persist for some time.
- The financial crisis and economic collapse of 2008 may well have triggered a rejection of the Reagan-Clinton "small government/pro-market" approach to public policy among an ever increasing number of public and private elites (including many Republicans) and among the public, and a warm embrace of a more "activist" conception of the appropriate role for government.

- Barack Obama, with a strong mandate in the 2008 elections, strong Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, high levels of public approval, and widespread elite and public expectations for decisive action to do something to solve the financial and economic crises, and to attend to a raft of other problems including health care, energy, education, and the nation's infrastructure, may push a legislative program of historical scope and scale, perhaps rivaling that of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal during the Great Depression.

These observations may prove to be correct in the long run, partially correct, or entirely off the mark. The purpose of this seminar is to think, read, talk, and write about this set of questions in an interactive and collaborative manner. Because we find ourselves in the midst of the very changes we will be examining and evaluating, we are unlikely to reach firm conclusions about any of them, nor are we likely to all come to the same conclusions about these matters. What we can do is sharpen our understanding of the key issues, evaluate the existing evidence on these issues, and identify what areas of additional research and investigation and what kinds of evidence eventually might lead to more solid conclusions.

The Weekly Seminar

Unlike a conventional lecture class, a seminar is more collaborative, interactive, and student-driven. This seminar is modeled on a typical graduate seminar that meets once-per week, requires a great deal of pre-class preparation by all participants, and is guided in large part by student questions, discussion, and presentations. There is also more opportunity for writing than is typical of undergraduate classes. Classes in the seminar format can be quite exciting and educational when everyone is prepared and engaged; seminars can be a disaster when participants are ill-prepared and unengaged.

Here are more details about seminar expectations, requirements, and organization:

- Please attend every session. Missing one session amounts to missing a full week of class.
- Do all the required reading for each week before the seminar meets. The required reading is in my book *America's Democratic Republic**, at the Norlin Library's eReserve, and on the CULearn web site for this course. The amount of required readings is substantial and you quickly can fall behind if you put off your weekly preparation. (**please note that royalties that I earn by using my book in this class will be contributed to a charity designated by students in the seminar*).
 - e-Reserve can be accessed through Norlin Library's web site. Select "course reserves," then enter either the course number (PSCI 4731) or instructor (Greenberg). You will need to supply your Identikey user name and password.
 - The readings on the course web site can be accessed through CULearn. Simply select the course (4731-100), then supply your IdentiKey information. Open the "readings" folder.
- Submit/post a seminar discussion catalyst to the course web site for each seminar session.
 - The discussion catalyst can take one of two forms:
 - Option A: formulate a question for class discussion based on the required reading, along with a brief 3 or 4 sentence response to your own question. Please post these to the class web site no later than noon on the day of the

seminar. Please read a sample of the question/discussion postings of your classmates before the seminar session.

- Option B: identify and post to the course web site a link to a compelling reading or data source or graphic that relates to the required reading. Please include a 3 or 4 sentence comment on how the link you have identified addresses relevant issues and themes in the readings. Again, please post no later than noon the day of the seminar and try to read a sample of items posted by your classmates.
- Do periodic presentations of supplemental materials.
 - Each member of the seminar will have the opportunity three times during the semester to orally present one of the Supplemental Readings to the class and to lead a short discussion on the issues raised in the Reading. Each presenter will write a one-page or a one-and-a-half page, double-spaced response paper on the Supplemental Reading. The paper should be posted on the class web site and emailed to me and to the Graduate Assistant Josh Ryan at <Joshua.Ryan@colorado.edu>.

Grade Determination

Here is a breakdown of how your grade will be determined:

- Weekly seminar participation and discussion catalyst submissions = 5 %
- Supplemental reading oral presentations and written response papers (three during the semester) = 15 %
- Examination in Week 12 or 13 = 35 %
 - This will be an essay exam covering all required course materials. Though the exam will be written in class during a regularly scheduled session, questions will be given out in advance to assist you in preparing for the exam. The specific questions to be answered in class will be selected by me at the start of the exam.
- Semester Project = 35 %

Note: Joshua Ryan will be grading your supplemental reading response papers, the examination, and the semester project. Please rest assured that you are in good hands. First, Josh is highly qualified for this task, having already passed his Ph.D. comprehensive examinations in American politics. He has also twice been my TA. Also, I will be working very closely with him during grading, setting out elaborate guidelines for him to follow and randomly checking his evaluations to be sure that we are, as they say, "on the same page."

The Semester Project

The subject matter for the semester project is some aspect of the 2008 elections, the last days of the Bush administration, and the launch of the new Obama administration. The semester project can be a research paper or a web site you develop. The semester project can be done by a single person or by a small group of collaborators, though no more than 5. The topics for the research paper or the web site must be submitted to me no later than the beginning of Spring Break. For collaborative efforts, students must agree, in writing, to share a common grade. On collaborative efforts, more will be expected. For papers, this will mean a longer page count (5 extra pages, let

us say, for each additional person) and more research going into the final product. For web sites, this will mean more functionality and materials (both links and original), and better design.

I would be happy to look at an outline of your research paper or a design for your web site at any time during the semester.

Research Paper Option

“The Implications of the 2008 Elections and the Launch of a New Administration: a Preliminary Assessment” is a very broad umbrella under which much more focused inquiries will take place. The idea is to use class materials and research materials gathered by you or your team to address issues related to the outcomes, consequences, meaning, implications, of the election and what has followed with the beginning of the new Obama administration.

Your paper should be about 25 pages (give or take a few pages) in length, not counting endnotes and sources. You should use Times New Roman 12 point font with 1” margins all around. Any of the standard endnoting styles is acceptable. Please submit the paper in both hard copy to Josh Ryan (in his mailbox in the Political Science office, Ketchem 106) and in electronic form as an email attachment to Joshua Ryan and to me, no later than noon on May 1.

Please note: the electronic copy of the paper will be submitted to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. A paper with substantial material in it from other sources not that of the student author will be given a grade of F and the violator will be reported to the campus Honors Council as required by campus rules. I don’t expect this to be an issue in this class but it does happen now and then. So, be warned. As far as I know, Turnitin.com has never been wrong.

Here are a few ideas off the top of my head for the semester research paper. ***You are not confined to these.*** Indeed, I hope the readings and class discussions encourage you to come up with original topic ideas.

1. The present and future of the Republican Party.
2. The present and future of the Democratic Party.
3. The 2008 election as a “realigning” election.
4. President Bush’s use of executive orders in the final days of his administration and what he might have been trying to accomplish.
5. President Obama’s use of executive orders in the first months of his administration and what he might be trying to accomplish with them.
5. President Obama’s initial approach to foreign and national defense policy and how it is similar to or different from that President Bush’s.
6. Obama’s One Hundred Days (note: the 100 day mark is the day before papers are due).
7. What the federal government is doing to fight the financial crisis and the economic recession.
8. Has the regulatory state returned?
9. Is the era of big government back?
10. Comparing President Obama’s transition period to that of other presidents (from election day to the inauguration).
11. Did Barack Obama undermine our system for publicly financing presidential elections?

12. Is President Obama's approach to meeting the threat of terrorism different from President Bush's, or is there a basic continuity?
13. What sort of capitalism is emerging in the United States?
14. To what extent has Barack Obama's election and his actions during the first 100 days of his administration altered foreigner's (both governing elites and the public) views of the United States?
16. How has the Obama election altered K Street and its network of lobbyists, interest groups, and advocacy groups? Or is the K Street system relatively unchanged and likely to remain so?

Web Site option

The Web Site you develop should not only have links to information covering the basic questions listed above for the semester paper, but have original content roughly equal to that of the semester research paper, as well as interactive features that users will find useful and engaging, and allow them to use information in innovative ways.

If you choose this option, you will need to contact ITS about your options for launching a web site or you can use a commercial provider such as Google. I am sorry to say that I cannot be of help here; I use web sites but do not know the first thing about how to create one.

Important University Policies

You have probably seen these in one form or another in syllabi from other classes you have taken or are taking at CU. Some have a fairly harsh tone and feel as if they were written by lawyers. Truth be told, they were. Having said that, these policies are reasonable and important and apply to this course.

E-Mail

You are expected to have an email account at the University of Colorado. Regularly check your email for communications from me or from Josh Ryan, my graduate assistant and the grader for this seminar. Such communications are considered to be official. For details of the campus email policy, see Campus Email Policy at www.colorado.edu/policies/email.html.

Students with Disabilities

If you have specific disabilities that require accommodation, please let me know by the end of the third week in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will be required to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office in Willard 322 (303 492-8671). Information about Disability Services may be found on their web site at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/connect.html>.

Religious Observances

The University of Colorado acknowledges a legal and moral obligation to accommodate all students who must be absent from classes or scheduled exams in order to observe religious holidays. Details of this policy may be found on the University of Colorado web site. Students who have a religiously-based conflict with classes or exams must notify me by the end of the

third week of class so that we can arrange a way to make up missed work. For campus religiously-based conflict policies, see www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_cod

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

Academic Integrity and Honesty

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Official course web site on CULearn

Access the course web site by going to CULearn and selecting the appropriate course PSCI 4731-100. You must be registered for this course to be able to log on to the site. The course site includes course announcements, several supplemental readings, exam questions (posted about a week before Spring Break), seminar and reading schedules, professor and grader contact information, your grades for various assignments, and more.

Please look at the course web site at least once a week during the semester for any changes in assignments and schedules. Please note that any changes in assignments and schedules posted in the announcements section of the course web site take precedence over information in the hardcopy syllabus distributed during the first seminar.

Laptops

Because this is a seminar in which discussion and intense interaction is the essence of the class, laptops are not permitted. This requirement is based not only on years of experience in running seminars but the mounting research which demonstrates that less learning and critical thinking goes on while people are “mutli-tasking,” especially when they are spending time during class shopping on-line or enjoying Facebook and other social networking sites.

Having said that, it might be helpful to have three or four laptops going—chosen by lot, perhaps—for looking up materials as the need arises to address questions and issues raised during the course of our discussions.

Schedule of Seminar Topics and Readings

Note: in the following, ADR stands for Greenberg and Page, America's Democratic Republic; e-R stands for electronic reserve at Norlin Library; CW refers to readings on the course web site at CULearn; “supplemental” refers to extra readings from among which each student will select 3 during the semester to read, write a one or one-and-a-half page response paper to, and present to the seminar.

1. Introduction to the Course (January 14)

2. Essentials of the American Democratic Republic

a. Constitutional Foundations (January 21)

Reading: ADR, chs. 1,2, 3 (first two sections in this chapter); *The Federalist*, #10, #51 (in Appendix of ADR)

b. Politics

i. *Public Opinion and Interest Groups* (January 28)

Reading: ADR, chs. 6,8; Wolfe, ch. 2 (e-R)

Supplemental: Bartels, ch. 6; Caplan; Hibbings (all on e-R)

ii. *Parties, Partisanship, and Elections* (February 4)

Reading: ADR, chs. 6, 9; Wolfe, ch 3 (e-R)

Supplemental: Black and Black, chs. 1 and 2; Rosenblum (both on e-R)

c. Government

i. *President and Congress* (February 11)

Reading: ADR, chs. 11, 12; Mahler (CW)

Supplemental: Bartels, ch. 9; Howell; Yoo; Levinson; Crenson (all on e-R)

ii. *Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights* (February 18)

Reading: ADR, chs. 4, 5

Supplemental: Sniderman and Carmines; Katznelson (both on CW)

Stone, Perilous Times (still to be posted on e-R)

3. **2008 as a (Potentially) Transformational Election**

a. Other Transformative Elections and Administrations

i. *The Great Depression, FDR, and the New Deal* (February 25)

Reading: Kennedy (e-R)

Film: "The Great Depression" (PBS)

Supplemental: Yergin and Stanislaw, ch. 2; Greenberg (both on e-R)

ii. *The Reagan Revolution* (March 4)

Reading: Yergin and Stanislaw, Intro and ch. 12; Edsall (both on e-R)

Supplemental: Greenberg, "Reaganism" (CW)

b. 2008, Barack Obama, and the Democratic Surge

i. *Structural Foundations of Realignment: Economy and Society* (March 11)

Reading: Hacker (e-R); Ferguson (CW)

Film: Spike Lee's "Katrina"

Supplemental: Reich, ch. 2; Zakaria; Bartels, ch.9 (all on e-R)

Note: final exam questions will be posted on the course web site during the weekend of March 14-15.

ii. *The 2008 Campaign and Election* (March 18)

Reading: ADR ch. 10; Democracy Corps I and II (CW)

Supplemental: **yet to be selected**

4. [Spring break: have fun, be safe]

5. **Final examination** (April 1 or April 8; class to decide)

6. **Research Period** (Month of April) Professor Greenberg available for very extended office hours for consultations. Additional hours will be posted on the course web site. Outline of your project (paper or web site) due on or before April 17.

7. **Sharing Findings** (April 29)

8. Semester Project Deadline (before noon, May 1, 2009)

